



# THE JIM! GRAM

*TheJIM!gram*® is a publication of [Jim Jatras](#), the *only* [announced](#) prospect for the [2016 GOP Vice Presidential nod](#), addressing the daunting challenges facing our great country. **Reposting and redistribution with attribution is permitted and encouraged.**

October 12, 2015

No. 1

In this inaugural issue of *TheJIM!gram*® I suggest:

## **It's the *Cloture*, Stupid! Bring Back the Filibuster to Restore 'Power of the Purse'**

The chaos surrounding selection of a replacement for House Speaker John Boehner is a symptom of the ongoing civil war tearing the GOP apart.

On the one side, we have Tea Partiers and other conservatives who want Republicans to play hardball with the Obama administration and use Congress's "power of the purse" to defund Obamacare, Planned Parenthood, amnesty via Executive Order, and other outrages. On the other, there is the establishment (of which Boehner is a symbol), who advise caution – in effect, capitulation – in the face of "reality": the MSM will blame any government shutdown on the GOP-ruled Congress, so let's avoid damage that could lessen chances of putting a Republican in the White House in January 2017.

Republicans would have a far better chance of winning the budget blame game if they would send funding bill after funding bill, minus the targeted items, to Barack Obama's desk and force him to veto them. Sure, the media would still blame the GOP, but at some point it would start to dawn on the American people that Congress is sending Obama money for 99.99 percent of the government's operations and *he* is the one forcing a shutdown over the 00.01 percent he imperiously demands.

That hasn't happened, though. In fact, during his tenure Obama has cast only *four* vetoes, far fewer than any recent president. (Counting pocket vetoes, George W. Bush cast 12, Clinton 37, George Bush the Elder 44 (in just one term), Ronald Reagan 78. FDR still holds the record with a whopping 635!) Failure of the Republican Congress to dump spending bills in Obama's lap continues to give him a free ride while degrading the GOP brand and spurring Republicans' intra-party bloodletting.

Observers of this failure often blame the "Democratic filibuster" in the Senate for blocking House-passed legislation. (A *Google News* search of "Democratic filibuster" yields over a thousand hits.) Some deride Majority Leader Mitch McConnell for failing to apply the "[nuclear option](#)" [used in 2013 on Executive nominations by his Democratic predecessor](#), Harry Reid. It's a step Republicans are loath to take in anticipation of the day they are back in the minority.

But the fact is, *there is no Democratic filibuster in the Senate*. The filibuster in its classic form – a tag-team of minority-party Senators inveighing at length on the floor to delay a vote they are sure to lose – hasn't existed for decades. (The commendable filibuster-like speeches by GOP Senators [Rand Paul](#) and [Ted Cruz](#) in 2013 were essentially dramatizations.) Today, the proximate obstacle to getting legislation through the Senate with a simple majority of 51 votes is *cloture*, specifically [Senate Rule XXII](#), which provides for limiting debate following a vote of three-fifths of Senators present. Ironically intended as a means to streamline Senate business, in practice Rule XXII means not much can get done without a 60-vote super-majority.

The cloture rule enables a lazy man's filibuster. It allows a minority (today, the Democrats) of 41 Senators to "filibuster" a bill – including spending bills that ax funds for Obamacare, Planned Parenthood, etc. – from the comfort of their offices or fundraising receptions. They don't have to haul their carcasses down to the Senate floor and speechify as long as their feet and bladders can hold out before they eventually have to fold and a simple majority vote proceeds.

Let's stop making it easy for them. The Senate should revoke Rule XXII and go back to the archetypal filibuster that generally existed in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Set up the cots in rooms abutting the Senate chamber, empty the [spittoons](#), send out the Sergeant-at-Arms to round up stragglers! It's [Mr. Smith Goes to Washington](#) on live TV! Especially with C-SPAN coverage, let's see how much time Democrats want to burn defending Obama's enormities in front of the nation – and then make 'em vote, up-or-down.

A return to the old-timey real-life filibuster would be magnificent political theater and valuable public education on the issues. It would also respect the [World's Greatest Deliberative Body](#)'s tradition of affording the minority their right of unlimited debate while allowing for an eventual majoritarian vote to proceed. Best of all, it would provide a much better chance of throwing the dead cat of the spending issue on Barack Obama's desk, where it belongs.

**MY PLEDGE:** Presiding over the Senate is the Vice President's only specified Constitutional duty [Art. I, Sec. 3, Cl. 4], yet no incumbent in that office has assiduously applied himself to that task. If I am selected for the [Republican Vice Presidential nomination](#) and am privileged to assume that august post in January 2017, I pledge to be the most active President of the Senate in American history, in which my almost 18 years of experience working at the U.S. Senate will serve me in good stead. I further pledge to use my influence as presiding officer to ensure, without favor or bias, full and fair debate of public business followed by a simple majority vote.

This *TheJIM!gram*® is being tweeted to each of the Republican Presidential candidates.

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If you liked this *TheJIM!gram*®, please endorse me for [Vice President](#) by tweeting with the hashtag **#JimJatrasVeep**. I am more than pleased to answer non-frivolous media questions about issues of public interest. Tweet me at [@JimJatras](#). Contributions to support my issue education and public information activities can be made at [www.repealfatca.com](#), and purchases of my unique phonetic conversion font [www.EurAlfabet.com](#) are appreciated. If you *didn't* like this *TheJIM!gram*®, then just mind your own business.

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***HE'S SECOND TO ONE***

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