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U.S. House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., speaks to reporters at the U.S. Capitol in Washington Feb. 7, 2025. (OSV News/Reuters/Nathan Howard)

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House Republicans Feb. 25 narrowly passed a budget resolution calling for $4.5 trillion in tax cuts and a $2 trillion reduction in federal spending over a decade, clearing a first hurdle for key parts of President Donald Trump's domestic agenda.

House Republican leadership was ultimately able to pass the resolution in a nearly party-line vote of 217-215 after a chaotic day on Capitol Hill. It remains to be seen how the Senate will consider the resolution, as Senate Republicans expressed skepticism about House Speaker Mike Johnson's fiscal framework.

Meanwhile, some Catholic policy analysts expressed concern about potential cuts to key safety net programs, such as Medicaid, a health care program for low-income Americans, and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, which is run by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

John Carr, founder of the Initiative on Catholic Social Thought and Public Life at Georgetown University, told OSV News that a budget is a "moral document" and that it should prioritize those who Christ spoke of as "the least of these," such as the poor, sick and vulnerable.

"Reductions of this size will certainly take away nutrition and health assistance from those who need it," Carr said.

Laura Peralta-Schulte, senior director of government relations and public policy for Network, a faith-based political advocacy organization, told OSV News that "so often people think, 'Well, you know, if you cut back federal money, philanthropic groups are gonna come in, and a lot of our churches are doing awesome work in in places where folks are struggling.'"

"But the reality is, a lot of times, those programs utilize funds from SNAP, from USDA," she said.

The resolution is not a budget itself, but is a framework for a budget, which would allow the budget process to proceed if approved by the Senate.

Johnson could afford to lose only one vote from his side of the aisle to pass the resolution, and he did: Rep. Thomas Massie, R-K.Y., who argued it did not cut the federal deficit enough. For several hours, as questions remained about whether Republicans would have sufficient support for their resolution, House Democrats ensured even members of their party facing limitations, like being on maternity leave, were present for the vote. Rep. Brittany Pettersen, D-Colo., voted against the resolution with her weeks-old newborn son in tow.

Matthew Green, a politics professor at The Catholic University of America in Washington who studies Congress and American elections, told OSV News that "on the one hand, it shows how the speaker combined with the president have demonstrated the ability to keep their party unified in very difficult circumstances, voting for a controversial bill" that no Democrat would support.

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"It's just the beginning of the process, though," he added, "which is the concern I'd have if I were the speaker."

"The budget resolution is pretty vague about how it's going to find savings, and the House will almost certainly have to vote for it again," as the Senate passed a related but different resolution Feb. 21, so the two chambers will have to reconcile their blueprints, Green said.

In a joint statement, House Republican leadership, including Johnson, said they "moved Congress closer to delivering on President Trump's full America First agenda — not just parts of it."

"This momentum will grow as we work with our committee chairs and Senate Republicans to determine the best policies within their respective jurisdictions to meet budgetary targets. We have full confidence in their ability to chart the best path forward," the statement said.

"While there is still much more to do, we are determined to send a bill to President Trump's desk that secures our border, keeps taxes low for families and job creators, restores American energy dominance, strengthens America's standing on the world stage, and makes government work more effectively for all Americans," it continued.

But House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries, D-N.Y., argued in comments to the press that "the reckless Republican budget will cut taxes up to $4.5 trillion for the wealthy, the well-off and the well-connected, and then they are sticking working-class Americans, middle-class Americans and everyday Americans with the bill."

"They're going to slash and burn Medicaid, slash and burn veterans benefits, and slash and burn nutritional assistance for children and families," Jeffries said.

But Peralta-Schulte expressed more optimism and said people of faith should engage in the process.

"I have never heard the argument that the government systems cannot be improved," she said, adding that steps to reduce waste can still coincide with safety net programs.

But she noted that funding for many issues of concern to Catholics, like caring for those who are poor through Medicaid and SNAP, could be impacted.

"I think (there are) many reasonable members, folks that we think really have a heart for it, many of whom are Catholic, and we are engaging in a very good conversation," about those programs, she said.

This story appears in the **Trump's Second Term** feature series. View the full series.