ENTITLEMENTS LARGELY SPARED, MAGNIFYING IMPACTS FOR REST

By Jonathan Weisman

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WASHINGTON — In the first week of March, a furloughed person — a civilian — learned that the automatic spending cuts, known as sequestration, would be applied to their salary in the event that the Senate and House of Representatives did not pass a bill giving agencies a vague sense that they had the power to furlough employees to avoid a shutdown.

If the stalemate in Washington continues, most federal agencies, including the Defense Department, will see their budgets cut to the bone.

Those cuts would probably add to the current budget deficit, which President Barack Obama managed to reduce to just under $1 trillion in FY2013, but would cost federal employees in the event that a temporary federal funding agreement is not passed.

Furloughs affect workers in both the White House and the State Department, as well as tens of thousands of non-defense federal employees. The Office of Management and Budget estimated that the cuts would affect millions of workers.

The Defense Department said that it had already furloughed about 4,000 civilian workers in the event that a bill giving agencies a vague sense that they had the power to furlough employees to avoid a shutdown.

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