

House Declares Solidarity With Israel in First Legislation Under New Speaker

The resolution pledges to support Israel with whatever it needs as it fights Hamas. It passed overwhelmingly, but a small group of mostly Democratic holdouts remained.

By Karoun Demirjian
New York Times

The House voted overwhelmingly on Wednesday to pass a resolution declaring solidarity with Israel, pledging to give its government whatever security assistance it needs to fight and win its war with Hamas.

The vote, 412 to 10, was the first piece of legislation considered under Speaker Mike Johnson, Republican of Louisiana. He was elected to the post on Wednesday after three tumultuous weeks in which G.O.P. members struggled to replace Representative Kevin McCarthy, Republican of California, following his ouster.

Nine Democrats and one Republican opposed the resolution. Six Democrats voted present, even though five of them had previously co-sponsored the resolution.

The vote reflected the sweeping, bipartisan support that lawmakers have voiced for [Israel's efforts to rout Hamas from the Gaza Strip](#), which it seized control of in 2007, in retaliation for its attacks of Oct. 7 that killed more than 1,400 civilians and soldiers.

But it also reflected the defiance of a small but determined minority of House Democrats who have called for a cease-fire, arguing that Israel's bombing campaign of Gaza has caused the deaths of too many Palestinians. The Hamas-run Gazan health ministry says Israeli strikes have killed more than 6,500 people, a number that could not be independently verified.

The resolution asserts Israel's right to defend itself, condemns Hamas and calls for the release of hostages it seized. It was written by Representatives Michael McCaul of Texas and Gregory W. Meeks of New York, the Republican chairman and top Democrat on the Foreign Affairs Committee. It is similar to a resolution expressing solidarity with Israel that the Senate [adopted unanimously](#) last week.

"It condemns in the strongest possible terms the atrocities of Hamas and reiterates Israel's right to defend herself along with America's unwavering support for the state of Israel," Mr. McCaul said on the House floor, arguing the resolution "will send a clear message across the world that terrorists and their sponsors will be held to account."

“This Congress will have Israel’s back as it degrades and eliminates Hamas terrorist infrastructure,” Mr. Meeks said on the floor. “We will not waver, we will not quit, we will stand with our ally Israel.”

While both the House and Senate resolutions pledged to provide Israel with military, intelligence, diplomatic and other forms of assistance, they do not fund weapons and other forms of aid. That fight is still to come, as lawmakers dissect [President Biden’s request for \\$105 billion](#) in emergency funds to address national security issues, including the wars in Israel and Ukraine, the mounting threat China poses to Taiwan and the Indo-Pacific region, and the security of the U.S.-Mexico border.

House lawmakers are starting a step behind because of the speaker drama, which has paralyzed the chamber for most of this month. No legislation could be moved while Republicans fought through deep fractures in the conference, finally electing a new speaker after three other nominees had failed.

Several Republicans have called for separating the \$14.3 billion of security aid Mr. Biden requested for Israel from the rest of the package, arguing that the urgency of Israel’s war and the bipartisan interest in helping the Jewish state should not be hamstrung by partisan discord that has arisen around Ukraine aid. Last month, over half of House Republicans voted against a bill to send \$300 million in weapons and training to Ukrainian fighters.

Many Republicans have also argued that the package’s border security provisions need to be more extensive. Some G.O.P. lawmakers have also raised objections to the humanitarian aid Mr. Biden’s package would direct to Palestinian civilians, expressing concerns that it would end up in the hands of Hamas.

Those simmering partisan divisions were largely sidelined during debate about the Israel resolution, which Republicans and Democrats alike hailed as an important message of unified support for Israel.

But one Republican accused the lawmakers who voted against the resolution of cowardice and complicity in compromising Israel’s security.

“They are not worthy of serving in this body,” said Representative Mike Lawler, Republican of New York. “If you cannot stand with Israel, our greatest ally in the Middle East, a beacon of democracy, hope and freedom, you do not belong in this body — those members should resign in disgrace.”

One of the resolution’s opponents, Representative Rashida Tlaib, Democrat of Michigan, defended her vote as a protest against what she said was its unfairness.

“I voted against this resolution because it is a deeply incomplete and biased account of what is happening in Israel and Palestine, and what has been happening for decades,” Ms. Tlaib said in a statement. “This resolution rightly mourns the thousands of Israeli civilians killed and wounded in the horrific attacks but explicitly does not mourn the

thousands of Palestinian civilians, including [over 2,000 children](#), killed and wounded in the collective punishment of Palestine.”