

Ohio's Sen. Sherrod Brown calls on Biden to refreeze Iranian assets in wake of Hamas attack on Israel

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COLUMBUS, Ohio — U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown says the Biden Administration should refreeze the \$6 billion in assets the White House recently agreed to release to Iran as part of a prisoner swap deal, in light of the weekend attack on Israel by Hamas, an Iranian-backed militant group.

Brown, the chairman of the Senate Banking Committee, called for the move on Wednesday as part of a broader statement that also said that the committee will investigate how the attack was financed, including whether cryptocurrency played a role.

“As we work to hold anyone who supports terrorism accountable, the administration must freeze the \$6 billion in Iranian assets,” Brown said.

While not directly critical of President Joe Biden, Brown’s statement offers a somewhat rare example of Brown, Ohio’s top Democrat who’s running for reelection next year, [being at odds politically with the White House](#). It comes as the Biden Administration has sought to downplay the \$6 billion in the wake of the attack, calling it an unrelated issue in response to criticism from Republicans and others. Jake Sullivan, the White House National Security Advisor, refused to directly answer on Tuesday when he was asked whether the \$6 billion should be refrozen.

“Not a dollar of that money has been spent. And I will leave it at that,” Sullivan said, according to C-SPAN.

A White House spokesperson pointed to Sullivan’s comments when asked about Brown’s statement on Wednesday.

Under the terms of the deal, Iran must spend the \$6 billion on humanitarian purposes. But Republicans have said the money, even though it won’t directly be spent on supporting terrorism around the world, will free up Iran to fund Hamas and other militant groups in the Middle East that are aligned with the country’s geopolitical interests.

Republican U.S. Sen. JD Vance of Ohio has gone as far as to say [the asset transfer amounts to U.S. tax dollars funding the attack](#), although the \$6 billion actually

belongs to Iran, profits the country made selling oil to South Korea in recent years, White House officials have said.

The money was frozen in the first place due to U.S. sanctions on Iran.