

House Passes Aid Bill for Israel but Not for Ukraine

The Republican-led House approved \$14.3 billion for Israel's war with Hamas, tying the aid to spending cuts. The Senate plans to craft its own bill that will include aid for Ukraine and Gaza.

By [Catie Edmondson](#)
New York Times

A divided House on Thursday passed a Republican-written bill that would tie \$14.3 billion in military aid for Israel to domestic spending cuts and provide no money for Ukraine, defying President Biden and dooming its chances in the Senate.

Republicans pushed through the measure on a mostly party-line vote of 226 to 196. That's rare for an Israel aid package, which would normally enjoy broad bipartisan support.

All but a dozen Democrats opposed the legislation, put forward by the newly elected Republican speaker, Mike Johnson, because it would slash President Biden's plan to bolster the Internal Revenue Service's tax collection efforts. This sets up a showdown in the Senate, where members of both parties favor a bill that would include aid to Israel, Ukraine and Taiwan without the I.R.S. cuts.

Mr. Biden has requested such a package, [totaling \\$105 billion](#), and White House officials said on Tuesday that he would veto the House bill because it was limited to Israel and contained "partisan poison pill offsets."

Senator Chuck Schumer, Democrat of New York and the majority leader, said in a speech ahead of the House vote on Thursday that the Senate would not take up the House-passed proposal at all, and would instead craft its own bipartisan bill containing aid for Israel and Ukraine, and humanitarian aid to Gaza.

The Senate could then try and force its version of the legislation on the House — and see which chamber blinks first. The resulting dispute could extend for weeks, delaying the aid.

"It still mystifies me that when the world is in crisis and we need to help Israel respond to Hamas, the G.O.P. thought it was a good idea to tie Israel aid to a hard-right proposal that will raise the deficit and is totally, totally partisan," Mr. Schumer said.

Republicans pressed ahead anyway, arguing that the House must pass aid to Israel without delay and in a fiscally responsible manner.

“It provides Israel with the aid it needs to defend itself, free its hostages and eradicate Hamas, which is a mission that must be accomplished,” Mr. Johnson said at a news conference. “All of this while we also work to ensure responsible spending and reduce the size of the federal government to pay for that commitment to our friend and ally.”

His bill posed a dilemma for many pro-Israel Democrats, who were eager to support the Jewish state at a time of crisis but reluctant to embrace a bill that omits help for Ukraine and humanitarian aid and takes aim at their domestic policy priorities. Leading Democrats including Representative Hakeem Jeffries of New York, the minority leader, made the case privately on Thursday for Democrats to oppose the bill, as did several top administration officials.

Representative Lois Frankel of Florida, one of the 12 Democrats who supported the bill, said in a statement following the vote that she wanted to “send an unequivocal message to the world that we stand with Israel.”

“The United States has a moral duty and national security urgency to aid Israel in defending herself,” Ms. Frankel said. “Make no mistake, Hamas terrorists and others in the region are out to destroy Israel and kill all Jews.”

But in the end, many pro-Israel Democrats opposed the legislation, saying it was unacceptable for Congress to put such conditions on emergency aid for a cherished ally.

“In my worst nightmares, I never thought I would be asked to vote for a bill cynically conditioning aid to Israel on ceding to the partisan demands of one party,” Representative Brad Schneider of Illinois said. “I also never thought that a day would come that I would be asked to consider voting against an aid package for Israel, our most important ally in the Middle East, and maybe in the world.”

But he said he could not back the Republican-written bill, calling it “terribly flawed, weak and dangerous.”

The bulk of the money in the G.O.P. measure would go toward helping Israel replenish and bulk up its weapons systems, including \$4 billion for the Iron Dome and David’s Sling missile defense systems. It also includes \$200 million for the protection of U.S. personnel and evacuation of U.S. citizens. It leaves out humanitarian aid for Gaza, which Mr. Biden has requested and many Democrats regard as crucial.

Mr. Johnson said he did not attach the spending cuts “for political purposes,” but because House Republicans were “trying to get back to the principle of fiscal responsibility.”

But the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office [said on Wednesday](#) that the spending cuts laid out in the bill would actually increase the deficit by \$12.5 billion over the next decade, because cutting back on I.R.S. enforcement would reduce revenue collections. In total, the funding and cuts in the bill would add \$26.8 billion to the deficit.

Mr. Johnson appeared to have tailored the Israel legislation to keep his conference, which is deeply divided over funding foreign wars, united in the early days of his speakership. His predecessor, former Speaker Kevin McCarthy, was ousted after he passed two bills — one to [avert the nation's first default](#) on its debt and the [other to avert a shutdown](#) — that did not have majority backing from his House Republicans.

Two Republicans, Representatives Marjorie Taylor Greene of Georgia and Thomas Massie of Kentucky, opposed the legislation, arguing that American taxpayer money should be spent on Americans.

“Soaring inflation and high interest rates are due to overspending,” Mr. Massie wrote on social media. “We can’t afford more foreign aid. I voted against the billions for Ukraine, and I am voting against \$14+ billion of foreign aid for Israel tonight.”

A stand-alone bill sending aid to Israel without any spending cuts likely would have won overwhelming support. But the inclusion of the measure infuriated many Democrats.

Representative Rosa DeLauro of Connecticut, the ranking Democrat on the Appropriations Committee, said the bill “failed Israel.”

“What the House Republicans have done is unprecedented and will mean any aid to Israel will be delayed,” Ms. DeLauro said.

She added: “This bill tells our allies that should they find themselves in an existential war for their democracy and their freedom, we will not put aside our partisan wars.”

The legislation also leaves Mr. Johnson out of step with all three other congressional leaders. Senator Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, the minority leader, said on Tuesday that he and Mr. Schumer were “conceptually” on the same page when it came to linking aid for Ukraine, Israel, the southern border and Taiwan.

“We view all of these problems as connected,” said Mr. McConnell, a leading proponent in Congress of sending aid to Ukraine.

Mr. Johnson said on Thursday that he intended to attach legislation to deal with immigration at the southern border with aid for Ukraine, a pairing that acknowledges how toxic stand-alone funding for Kyiv has become among Republicans.

“It’s just a matter of principle that, if we’re going to take care of a border in Ukraine, we need to take care of America’s border as well,” he said.