

Senate Passes Budget Resolution After All-Night ‘Vote-a-Rama’

Republicans put in place framework for border and military spending after Democrats force votes on politically sensitive issues

By **Siobhan Hughes**
Wall Street Journal

WASHINGTON—Senate Republicans took their first step Friday toward securing new funding for [border security and the military](#), after Democrats forced GOP lawmakers to take uncomfortable amendment votes all night on hotly contested issues on Capitol Hill.

The Senate passed Republicans’ budget blueprint aimed at unlocking \$342 billion in spending—and the same amount of offsetting cuts—over four years. The blueprint, which Republican senators have cast as a backup to a far broader House GOP plan, cleared the Senate by 52-48 on Friday morning. Only one Republican—Sen. Rand Paul (R., Ky.)—voted no.

A budget resolution—if adopted by both chambers—would unlock a process known as budget reconciliation, which allows the Senate to bypass its filibuster rules and pass legislation with a simple majority instead of the 60-vote threshold for most measures. The process could allow Republicans to pass Trump’s fiscal agenda later this year without needing Democratic help. The Senate and House would then have to agree on final legislation.

“We’re one step closer to fulfilling a promise Republicans made to make you safer,” said Senate Budget Committee Chairman Lindsey Graham (R., S.C.).

The process also empowered Democrats to propose as many amendments as they wanted, leading to an all-night “vote-a-rama” that started Thursday evening and stretched overnight into Friday morning. While the amendments are nonbinding, they offer a rare chance for the minority party to force the majority to follow its lead.

A series of Democratic-proposed measures related to housing and energy costs, as well as blocking tax breaks for the wealthy, were defeated. Republicans have a 53-47 majority in the chamber, and vote tallies were largely along party lines.

“Democrats are going to hold the floor all day long—and all night long—to expose how Republicans want to cut taxes for billionaires while gutting things

Americans care about most: healthcare, jobs, public safety, national security, housing, education,” Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D., N.Y.) said.

A vote on reinstating fired Park Service, Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management employees also failed. Sen. Mike Lee (R., Utah) spoke in opposition, saying the amendment turns land management into a “political football.”

Republicans also defeated a Democratic amendment to ramp up defense-sector support for Ukraine. “There’s a place to talk about Ukraine, but it’s not this budget,” Sen. Roger Wicker (R., Miss.) said.

“I am not enjoying my first vote-a-rama,” freshman Sen. Elissa Slotkin (D., Mich.) said as she introduced an amendment that aimed to prevent defunding of bird flu-related efforts. The amendment failed along party lines.

Senate Republicans have cast their spending proposal as a narrower and more quickly achievable backup plan to a more wide-ranging effort by House Republicans, which takes on extending and expanding Trump’s 2017 tax cuts. Trump has said he favors the House plan, which wraps up all of his priorities into one “big, beautiful bill.”

But the future of the House plan is unpredictable. House Speaker Mike Johnson (R., La.) is refereeing a tug of war between spending hawks and GOP factions concerned about protecting Medicaid programs in their districts, among other disputes.

GOP senators said passing their plan would allow Republicans to claim a win early in Trump’s term on border security before pivoting to an extension of the 2017 tax cuts and dealing with the debt ceiling.

“Nothing would please me more than Speaker Johnson being able to put together the bill that President Trump wants,” Graham said. “But I cannot sit on the sidelines and not have a Plan B. This nation is under threat—the illegal immigrants who have come here by the millions need to be sent back by the millions.”

Democrats are already going on the attack against Republicans over their goal of extending the 2017 tax law. The law’s corporate rate cut—to 21% from 35%—was made permanent, leaving much of the action focused on individual taxes. Democrats said that the wealthy will benefit the most from renewing the tax cuts.

Looming over this year’s exercises are memories of the challenges that Republicans faced during Trump’s first term, when they moved quickly out of the

gate to repeal the Affordable Care Act, only to have the effort languish for months before they scrapped the effort and drove through the 2017 tax law.

“The president has learned a lot about how D.C. works,” Vice President [JD Vance](#) said Thursday at a conference bringing together conservatives from around the country. He said Trump told him, “Look, it’s very rare that you can get two reconciliation bills done in one Congress.”