

Senate Rejects Bipartisan Measure to Undo Trump's Tariffs

Only three Republicans joined Democrats in voting to end the national emergency President Trump declared to impose tariffs on most U.S. trading partners, leaving the measure short of the support needed to pass.

By Robert Jimison
New York Times

The Senate on Wednesday rejected an effort to undo President Trump's sweeping tariffs on most U.S. trading partners, even as a small group of Republicans joined Democrats in delivering a rebuke to a trade policy that many lawmakers fear is causing economic harm.

The vote deadlocked at 49 to 49, meaning it failed despite three Republicans joining Democrats in favor of a measure that sought to terminate the national emergency declaration Mr. Trump used this month to impose 10 percent reciprocal tariffs.

Senator Rand Paul, Republican of Kentucky and a cosponsor of the resolution, crossed party lines to support it, as well as Senators Susan Collins of Maine and Lisa Murkowski of Alaska. But the defections were not enough to make up for the absences of two supporters: Senators Sheldon Whitehouse, Democrat of Rhode Island, and Mitch McConnell, Republican of Kentucky, who backed a similar measure this month.

"It's still a debate worth having," Mr. Paul said of the failed resolution. He noted that many of his Republican colleagues are privately expressing consternation over Mr. Trump's trade war but have carefully calibrated their public responses to defer to the president.

A subsequent procedural vote on the measure prompted Vice President JD Vance to go to Capitol Hill on Wednesday evening to cast the deciding vote to table it, formally ending the effort to challenge Mr. Trump's use of the emergency power for wide-ranging tariffs.

Even if the resolution had passed the Senate, it had no path to enactment. The White House has threatened a veto, and House Republican leaders [moved pre-emptively to prevent any such measure from being forced to the floor](#) until the fall at the earliest. The maneuver was [aimed at shielding their members from politically tricky votes on the matter](#).

The attempted intervention by a bipartisan coalition of senators followed weeks of rising frustration on Capitol Hill, where lawmakers have continued to fret about the tariffs even after Mr. Trump announced a 90-day pause on some of them. The president's whipsawing moves on trade have prompted even some Republicans to begin [pressing for Congress to claw back its constitutional power over the issue](#).

"The United States Senate cannot be an idle spectator in the tariff madness," Senator Ron Wyden, Democrat of Oregon and one of the resolution's co-sponsors, said ahead of the vote.

He pleaded with Republicans to vote for terminating the tariffs by repeatedly pointing to an economic report from the Commerce Department released on Wednesday that showed that the U.S. economy slowed in the first three months of the year.

"A major culprit is unquestionably Donald Trump and his senseless global tariffs," Mr. Wyden declared.

Weeks earlier the Senate [approved a similar resolution](#) to block 25 percent tariffs imposed on Canadian imports under the same emergency powers. That measure has stalled in the House as a result of the maneuvering by Republican leaders to block the consideration of such resolutions.

Ahead of Wednesday's vote in the Senate, Republican leaders in that chamber had sought to dissuade their members from backing the resolution. During a weekly party lunch, Senators John Thune of South Dakota, the majority leader, and John Barrasso of Wyoming, his No. 2, privately urged their colleagues to give Mr. Trump time to see through his economic agenda without challenge from Republicans in Congress, according to an attendee.

"Many of us in this chamber have heard from constituents concerned about the economic impact of the tariffs," Senator Mike Crapo, Republican of Idaho, said. But he praised Mr. Trump's decision to pause the reciprocal tariffs on most countries, excluding China, and urged senators not to disrupt ongoing negotiations by voting to rescind the paused tariffs altogether.

"We should not undermine these negotiations by the president at this critical juncture," Mr. Crapo said.

Speaker Mike Johnson said Wednesday morning that any president, no matter their party, had a "broad degree of latitude" to deal with trade matters, as Mr. Trump is doing. Speaking [at an event](#) reflecting on the administration's first 100 days hosted by Axios, he added that he did not "think it is appropriate for Congress to jump in the middle of that and try to legislate."

The speaker said he might be open to asserting congressional authority over tariffs if he saw an "imbalance" between the powers of the executive and legislative branches on the topic. But he did not elaborate on what might prompt such action.