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Schumer warns ‘Ukraine will fall’ if Senate doesn’t pass new aid bill: ‘Americans will feel the impact’

Шумер попереджає, що «Україна впаде», якщо Сенат не ухвалить нового законопроекту про допомогу: «Американці відчують вплив»

Лідер демократичної більшості у Сенаті США Чак Шумер заявив, що переговорники працюють над схваленням ще одного раунду допомоги Україні та посилення безпеки кордонів, але деякі положення все ще не виконані. Лідер республіканської меншості у верхній палаті Конгресу США Мітч Макконнелл об'єднався з Ч. Шумером, закликаючи до фінансування військових зусиль України проти росії, незважаючи на протидію з боку правих республіканців, які хочуть насамперед забезпечити безпеку кордону. Політичний репортер «New York Post» Джош Крістенсон пише, що Ч. Шумер та Білий дім звинуватили як консервативних сенаторів Республіканської партії, так і М. Джонсона у зупинці прогресу, оскільки спікер Палати представників стикається із сильним тиском з боку правого флангу своєї фракції.

<https://nypost.com/2024/01/24/news/ukraine-will-fall-if-senate-doesnt-pass-new-aid-bill-schumer/>

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer said Wednesday that negotiators “are working furiously to approve another round of Ukraine aid” and border security enhancements — but some provisions are “still outstanding.”

“One thing is certain: We’re going to keep going to get this done,” Schumer (D-NY) said in a floor speech. “If we don’t act, Ukraine will fall. ... And everyday Americans will feel the impact, not years but months away.”

The \$106 billion national security supplemental proposed in October by President Biden would also include funds for US security in the Indo-Pacific, military assistance for Israel amid its war with Hamas, as well as humanitarian aid for Ukraine, the Jewish state, and the Gaza Strip.

It includes \$61.4 billion in aid for Ukraine as it nears the second anniversary of the Russian invasion, \$14.3 billion for Israel, \$13.6 billion to enhance border enforcement and \$10 billion in humanitarian assistance.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky told House Speaker Mike Johnson (R-La.) in December that his nation was not in dire need of aid until February — contradicting statements from the White House that funds would dry up by the end of 2023.

The Pentagon allocated another \$250 million to help Kyiv restock artillery rounds, anti-aircraft missiles and other weapons on Dec. 27, but Schumer stressed Wednesday that Russian President Vladimir Putin was “gloating” about further aid being stalled as Moscow restocks its own munitions with help from North Korea.

Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) has stood united with Schumer in calling for funding Ukraine’s war effort against Russia — despite opposition from right-wing Republicans who want to secure the border first.

“This has never been about charity,” McConnell told his colleagues Wednesday morning. “It’s not about virtue-signaling or abstract principles of international relations. This is about cold, hard American interests.”

United States Senator Joni Ernst (Republican of Iowa) offers remarks during a press conference following the Senate Republican policy luncheon in the Ohio Clock corridor at the United States Capitol in Washington, DC, Tuesday, January 23, 2024.

“This is in the United States’ direct interest for authoritarians not to feel free to redraw maps by force,” he added, noting that Putin’s re-election campaign bears the slogan “Russia’s borders do not end anywhere.”

Conservatives have expressed skepticism about the bill, worrying that leadership will jam them with a rush to vote before debating what could be the largest legislative overhaul of immigration policy since 1986.

In a Wednesday afternoon press conference, six GOP senators called on their colleagues to help them block the legislation and criticized their leadership for leaving them out of the negotiations.

“Without consulting the conference, he took away most of our leverage by saying that we would not even ask to tie Ukraine funding to actually securing the border,” Sen. Rick Scott (R-Fla.) said of McConnell.

“We don’t want drugs; We don’t want criminals; We don’t want terrorists; We don’t want human traffickers,” Scott added. “When President Trump was president, the border was secure. So it’s not about the laws.”

Many of their criticisms focused on a leaked version of the border bill, which included a provision that would allow up to 5,000 migrants per day into the US, as well as proposed funds for sanctuary cities such as New York.

Sen. Ron Johnson (R-Wis.) likened the negotiations to a “Rube Goldberg” machine, making a simple problem of increased migrant crossings complex, and pointed out that Obama’s Homeland Security secretary, Jeh Johnson, had said just 1,000 migrants per day “overwhelm the system.”

None have been able to review the bill yet, but Scott warned that codifying any aspect of Biden’s current immigration policy could “make it harder” for the next Republican president to shut down the border.

Regardless of their votes, Scott added that the bill was most likely “dead on arrival in the House.”

“The only purpose of taking this up is getting Democrats political cover to say, ‘Gosh, we want to secure the border. But those pesky House Republicans didn’t let us,’” added Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas).

“It’s a good talking point. It’s complete baloney. But it’s a good talking point. This bill represents Senate Republican leadership waging war on House Republican leadership.”

US Customs and Border Protection have apprehended more than 8.5 million migrants since January 2021 — with 7 million of those encounters occurring on the southern border. At least 1.5 million migrants more have evaded detection entirely.

Roughly 85% of those asylum seekers are subsequently released into the US, Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas has reportedly admitted, as he faces a potential House impeachment for his alleged mishandling of the crisis.

“The only language that I’ve seen coming through, in terms of their supplemental request, was the White House requested the ability to ‘reprogram,’” Sen. Bill Hagerty (R-Tenn.) told Fox Business on Wednesday.

“That’s Washingtonspeak for turning upside down the entire budget of [Immigration and Customs Enforcement], to turn ICE from a law enforcement agency to a resettlement agency,” he added. “They’re so unserious; it’s pathetic.”

Sen. James Lankford (R-Okla.), who has led negotiations with Sens. Chris Murphy (D-Conn.) and Kyrsten Sinema (I-Ariz.), told reporters Tuesday that the full text of the bill could be released this week.

A vote could then occur within a few days, with 60 senators needed to advance the legislation.

Schumer and the White House have accused both hardline GOP senators and Johnson of halting its progress, as the House speaker faces intense pressure from the right flank of his caucus.

“Both sides must accept that they won’t get everything they want,” Schumer cautioned. “It means that maximalist demands, stonewall tactics and attempts to sabotage negotiations before they even finish must be shunned by the membership of this body.”

In a Tuesday statement, Johnson said Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris “can’t be trusted to solve the catastrophe they, themselves, created.”

“Vice President Harris has had three years to secure the border and stop the open flow of illegal immigrants into our country,” he said in response to a recent CNN interview of Harris.

“Yet, when asked about her solutions, she recommended that Congress grant mass amnesty and spend taxpayer dollars to process — not stop — more illegals. Her ‘solution’ is to spend billions of additional taxpayer dollars and incentivize the lawlessness and chaos,” Johnson added.

“Their idea is to attract millions more aliens, cause more pain, and further surrender America’s national and economic security.”