

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez joins House Democrats in vote for Trump war budget

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The Democratic-controlled House of Representatives passed a two-year budget resolution Thursday, with nearly all Democrats endorsing a deal between the Trump administration and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi that includes \$738 billion for the military, a record amount for the Pentagon.

The bill now goes to the Republican-controlled Senate, where it is expected to pass next week by an overwhelming bipartisan margin. The Senate leaders of both parties have already endorsed it. Trump tweeted his support for the deal June 22 and aides have reiterated his commitment to signing the bill into law once it passes the upper house.

The 284-149 vote in the House of Representatives showed the Democratic Party acting as Trump's political partner, establishing what amounts to a coalition government for the next year and a half, until the 2020 election. Democrats backed the Trump budget by 219-16, while Republicans opposed it by 132-65. Former Republican Justin Amash, now sitting as an independent, also voted "no."

Of the 16 Democrats voting against the bill, 13 were conservative or "blue dog" Democrats who opposed the budget for the same reason as the majority of Republicans: too much spending on domestic social services and too big a deficit. Only three liberal Democrats opposed the budget because they objected to the level of military spending.

The most politically significant backing for the budget—and its record \$738 billion for the Pentagon—came from Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Rashida Tlaib, the two representatives who are members of the Democratic Socialists of America and who have been targeted by Trump for racist and anti-communist vitriol.

Their vote demonstrates the real political allegiance

of the DSA, which supports American imperialism and its military machine, the largest in the world and the greatest threat to the democratic rights and even the physical survival of humanity. The DSA has nothing in common with socialist internationalism, which takes as its starting point the unity of the international working class and opposition to imperialist war.

The three House Democrats who are running for president—Tulsi Gabbard, Seth Moulton and Tim Ryan—all voted for the budget legislation, as did Eric Swalwell, who abandoned his presidential campaign earlier this month. Representative Ro Khanna, co-chairman of Bernie Sanders' presidential campaign, voted for the Trump budget too.

Also voting for the budget were the co-chairs of the House Progressive Caucus, Mark Pocan and Pramila Jayapal, and virtually every member of that liberal grouping, along with every member of the Hispanic Caucus and all but two members of the Congressional Black Caucus.

The budget vote also demonstrates the cynical unseriousness of last week's effort to put a resolution to impeach President Trump before the House. Nearly all Republicans and a majority of Democrats voted to table the impeachment resolution. Of the 95 Democrats who voted against tabling the resolution (thereby seeking to demonstrate their support for impeaching the president), 92 voted Thursday to support the president's budget.

The legislation passed Thursday sets "top-line" budget numbers for military and discretionary domestic spending for the next two years, with a total of \$1.32 trillion for the current fiscal year, \$1.37 trillion for fiscal year 2020, which begins October 1, and \$1.375 trillion for fiscal year 2021. This does not include spending on "entitlement" programs like Social

Security, Medicare and Medicaid, or payments on the federal debt, which come automatically from the Treasury.

The deal on overall discretionary spending must still be implemented in detail through appropriations bills providing money for each of the 12 federal departments and many independent agencies. Failure to pass these bills could still lead to the shutdown of various departments, as took place earlier this year for one-quarter of the federal government.

The bill also extends the federal debt ceiling through mid-2021, ensuring that there will be no “fiscal cliffs” that might disrupt financial markets through the remainder of Trump’s term in office. Leaders of both parties cited the need to reassure Wall Street, under conditions of considerable uncertainty about the stability of financial markets.

In her remarks before the vote, Speaker Pelosi cited the debt ceiling as a key issue, saying, “The full faith and credit of the United States of America should never, ever be in question... This is about paying for what we have invested in already.”

Most House Republicans voted against the bill despite Trump’s public support, including a tweet just ahead of the vote, “House Republicans should support the TWO YEAR BUDGET AGREEMENT which greatly helps our Military and our Vets. I am totally with you.”

House Republican leaders for the most part supported the budget, even as the majority of their caucus did not. House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy, Minority Whip Steve Scalise and Conference Chairwoman Liz Cheney all joined forces with Pelosi and Ocasio-Cortez in the vote.



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