

House narrowly passes \$1.9 billion Democratic bill to expand funding for Capitol Police

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On Thursday, the House of Representatives narrowly passed a Democratic-sponsored bill to massively increase funding for the US Capitol Police, whose sparsely deployed forces were quickly overrun by the fascistic mob incited by then-President Trump in the January 6 coup attempt.

The bill would allocate \$1.9 billion, nearly four times the Capitol Police's 2020 budget, to upgrade and expand existing surveillance and screening procedures, provide mobile fencing, cover the costs of National Guard deployments on and after January 6, and hire hundreds more Capitol Police officers in the coming months.

It would also provide \$200 million to establish a "quick reaction force" within the D.C. National Guard that could be called out at the request of the Capitol Police chief without requiring authorization by civilian authorities or Congress.

The bill was passed by a vote of 213 to 212. No voting Republican lawmakers supported the measure, for the most part in keeping with the overwhelming backing of the Republican Party for the coup plotter-in-chief, Donald Trump, who remains the de facto leader of the party. The bulk of the party and its entire leadership have lined up behind Trump's lying claim that there was no coup attempt on January 6, the election was "stolen" and the Biden administration is illegitimate.

Their position was summed up by Representative Tony Gonzales of Texas, who said the "true emergency" was not the attempted overthrow of the 2020 election and creation of a presidential dictatorship under Trump but rather the "border crisis" and the need for the US to increase its already massive funding of

the Israeli military machine in the wake of the latest US-backed slaughter of Palestinians in Gaza.

However, the measure was also opposed by the small number of anti-Trump House members, who have defied the Republican leadership and refused to back the "stolen election" lie, including some of the 10 Republicans who voted to impeach Trump following the coup attempt.

In the Senate, the Democratic chairman of the Appropriations Committee, Patrick Leahy of Vermont, has raised objections to the House bill's plan to establish a "quick reaction force" outside of civilian control. Presently, mobilization of the D.C. National Guard requires the approval of the Secretary of the Army or the Secretary of Defense.

Official reports by the inspectors general of the Capitol Police and the Department of Homeland Security, as well as congressional testimony by the then-commander of the D.C. National Guard and the Pentagon's own timeline of the events of January 6, have substantiated what was already clear as the day's events played out in real time on national television: The ability of Trump's insurrectionists, directed by militarily trained militia leaders such as the Proud Boys, to breach the Capitol and spend hours looking to take Democratic lawmakers and even then-Vice President Mike Pence hostage, was the result of a deliberate stand-down of the huge police/military apparatus that surrounds the Capitol and its environs.

It was not the result of any lack of funding or personnel within the Capitol Police or other police forces in the US capital. Indeed, the size of the Capitol Police has more than doubled over the past three decades, particularly in the aftermath of the 9/11

attacks and the declaration of the “war on terror.”

With a territorial mandate of only two square miles, it is larger than the police departments in Atlanta, St. Louis, New Orleans and Denver. Its budget nearly quadrupled between the early 1990s and 2016, eclipsing that of the police department of Seattle, with a population of 620,000.

Dozens of members of the Capitol Police force have been investigated by federal prosecutors, and at least six have been suspended for their active support of the attackers.

Biden and the Democrats have sought from the outset to cover up the extent of the conspiracy within the state, the military, the police and the intelligence agencies that led to the January 6 coup attempt. Above all, they have worked to obscure the complicity of the Republican Party and its ongoing promotion of far-right and fascistic forces.

This is the significance of the Democrats’ push for a bipartisan commission to investigate the January 6 events, modeled after the 9/11 Commission. That earlier body carried out the official cover-up of the complicity of US intelligence agencies in allowing the Al Qaeda attack on Washington and New York to be carried out.

On Wednesday, House Democrats were able to secure only 35 Republican votes for the passage of their bill to establish such a commission, having already acceded to terms demanded by the Republicans. That measure faces likely defeat in the Senate, where the Democrats would have to gain 10 Republican votes to override a filibuster.

Similarly, their bill to expand the Capitol Police and further militarize the government complex is unlikely to be approved by the Senate.

It is a reactionary measure, which demonstrates that the overriding concern of the Democratic Party is not to reveal to the American people the truth of what happened on January 6 and the ongoing conspiracy to install a dictatorship but the opposite. The factions within the ruling elite that back the Democrats fear the explosive social and political consequences of a real exposure, under conditions of growing opposition in the working class and anticapitalist sentiment fueled by the murderous policies of the entire ruling elite in response to the pandemic.

That is why the cover-up is combined with a rush to

build up the repressive powers of the state—the police, the military, the intelligence agencies—as well as the corporatist trade unions. They are being prepared to be thrown against an eruption of working class struggle.

In this context, the decisive role of the so-called “progressive” faction within the Democratic House caucus in securing passage of the Capitol Police bill is politically significant.

Members of the so-called “Squad,” including Democratic Socialists of America members Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Rashida Tlaib, Jamaal Bowman and Cori Bush, along with Ilhan Omar and Ayanna Pressley, threatened to vote against the measure, stating correctly that the failure to prevent the overrunning of the Capitol was not due to a lack of resources.

This led to an eleventh hour scramble by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Majority Leader Steny Hoyer to prevent the measure from going down to defeat. After what *Politico* described as “intense conversations with Democratic leaders on the floor,” three of the six—AOC, Tlaib and Bowman—agreed to vote “present” instead of “no,” thereby allowing the bill to pass.

Later on Thursday, Bush, Omar and Pressley issued a joint statement promoting the Democrats’ racist presentation of the January 6 coup and police violence in general, declaring: “This bill prioritizes more money for a broken system that has long upheld and protected the white supremacist violence we saw on display that day.”

They did not comment on the role of their fellow “progressives” in ensuring the bill’s passage.



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