

Democrats provide votes to pass procedural motion, paving the way for adoption of Ukraine war funding by Republican-controlled House

Jacob Crosse
19 April 2024

In two crucial votes, the first late Thursday evening and the second on Friday, Democrats provided the necessary support to overcome objections from far-right Republicans and advance over \$95 billion worth of military funding for Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan in the House of Representatives.

Republican House Speaker Mike Johnson has split the Biden administration's supplementary military funding request into three separate bills. He has also brought forward a fourth bill, dubbed the "21st Century Peace Through Strength Act." The latter legislation would impose economic sanctions on Russia and Iran as well as organizations alleged to have engaged in trafficking fentanyl and Iranian commodities, such as oil. The sanctions bill also targets the social media platform TikTok. It would force the parent company, China-based ByteDance Ltd., to sell TikTok within a year, the alternative being a ban on TikTok in the US.

Despite the fact that the critical procedural measures were introduced by Republicans, Democratic House members provided the swing votes needed to overcome objections from far-right Republicans. President Joe Biden has already indicated he will sign the war funding bills if they make it through Congress, which is expected to happen next week.

The first vote took place in the House Rules Committee late Thursday evening. In a 9-3 vote, four Democrats joined five Republicans to pass the rules that set the terms of the war funding package, as well as the sanctions bill that targets Russia, Iran and TikTok.

Normally, the majority party provides all of the votes

required to adopt a rules package so as to bring legislation to the floor for a vote. If it fails to do so, the legislation in question normally does not advance.

Thursday's vote marked the second time in the 118th Congress that Democrats bailed out Republicans in order to advance a bill to the full House. Last year, Democrats joined Republicans in providing the necessary votes to allow then-Speaker Kevin McCarthy to bring up for a floor vote a bill to raise the debt ceiling.

Far-right Republican members of the House Rules Committee—Ralph Norman (South Carolina), Thomas Massie (Kentucky) and Chip Roy (Texas)—all voted "no" on the rules package, not because they are anti-war, but because they oppose more spending without corresponding cuts to social programs.

Had four Democratic members of the committee—Teresa Leger Fernandez (New Mexico), Jim McGovern (Massachusetts), Mary Gay Scanlon (Pennsylvania) and Joe Neguse (Colorado)—also voted "no," the rules package would have failed, delaying a vote on the war funding bills.

But instead of voting "no," the four Democrats joined their "Republican colleagues" Reps. Guy Reschenthaler (Pennsylvania), Michelle Fischbach (Minnesota), Nick Langworthy (New York), Austin Scott (Georgia) and committee Chair Michael C. Burgess (Texas) in voting to advance the bill to the House with few amendments.

On Friday, the full House adopted the rules package from the committee, clearing the way for up-and-down votes on each of the bills beginning on Saturday. Friday's vote was 316-94, with the leadership in both parties, Speaker Mike Johnson and Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries, voting in favor of the bill.

Fascistic Republicans, including Georgia Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene and Arizona Rep. Paul Gosar, have endorsed a "motion to vacate" Speaker Johnson for bringing the bills to the floor. However, it is unlikely Johnson will lose the Speaker's gavel, as Democrats, including Jeffries, have pledged to save him if he brings the war bills to the floor.

Underscoring the fact that the number one priority of the Biden administration, and the Democratic Party as a whole, is global war, Democrats provided more votes for the bill on Friday than did the Republicans. The Democrats supplied 165 "yes" votes compared to the Republicans' 151. Fifty-five Republicans voted against the rules package, while only 39 Democrats opposed it.

The \$95.3 billion war package closely mirrors the National Security Supplemental passed in a bipartisan vote by the Senate two months ago. However, unlike the Senate bill, the House will vote separately on funding for Ukraine, for Israel and for Taiwan. There are strong majorities in both House delegations to pass all of the bills, but small minorities in each party will vote against one or another of the separate military aid bills.

The Israel bill includes \$26.4 billion, most of which is slated to further arm Israeli in preparation for war with Iran. A small fraction of the aid is allotted to "humanitarian assistance" for Gaza.

Another \$8.1 billion is dedicated to preparing for war with China. This includes \$4 billion in military aid to Taiwan and \$3.3 billion towards submarine infrastructure and cruise missiles.

The largest of the bills is the Ukraine weapons package bill. A total of \$60.8 billion is earmarked for continuing the US-NATO war in Ukraine against Russia. Of the \$60.8 billion, \$23 billion is to be spent replenishing US arms reserves that have already been transferred to

Ukraine.

In an article published Friday by the *Washington Post*, unnamed Pentagon officials said the military infusion to Ukraine was "ready to go." The *New Voice of Ukraine* reported Wednesday that the bill would include 155mm artillery shells used in NATO howitzer cannons and Army Tactical Missile Systems, or ATACMS, which have been used to launch long-range strikes into Crimea.

In a highly revealing exchange during an April 18 hearing, imperialist war propagandist Timothy Snyder and New York Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, a member of the Democratic Socialists of America, discussed their joint support for the Ukraine war bill.

Ocasio-Cortez, in a video she shared on her social media account, began by thanking Snyder for his "very illuminating" opening remarks. She proceeded to solidarize herself with Snyder over their shared goals of "defending democracy domestically and globally." The phony socialist then invited Snyder to opine on the "necessity of passing aid to Ukraine as quickly as possible."

Following Snyder's war-mongering contribution, Ocasio-Cortez stated that "US military assistance and broader global assistance to Ukraine should be one of our top geopolitical priorities, because it is the key in defending democracy geopolitically.

"Whether your interest is in China, whether the interest is in anywhere else, all of the focus here is in Ukraine and in supporting and ensuring that Putin and an authoritarian regime in Russia does not prevail..."

Concluding her full-throated support for virtually open-ended military aid to the far-right regime in Ukraine, Ocasio-Cortez added that "anything that impedes the swiftness and the urgency of our ability to get that support to Ukraine is overall contributing to the volatility of our situation."



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact