58 Democrats join House vote to grant Trump additional war and tariff powers

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Fifty-eight Democrats in the House of Representatives voted with Republicans Wednesday to grant US President Donald Trump additional war and tariff powers, including the authority to put tariffs as high as 100 percent on goods from China and India.

The 58 House Democrats included former Speaker Nancy Pelosi of California, former Majority Whip James Clyburn of South Carolina and former Majority Leader Steny Hoyer of Maryland, who co-wrote the bill in the House.

The vote is only the latest expression of the fact that the Democrats, far from opposing Trump's program of global war, support escalating it and criticize Trump for being insufficiently aggressive against Russia.

The majority of House Democrats, who voted against the bill, fully support the sanctions against Russia and Iran, and the ongoing wars but objected to giving Trump additional tariff authority.

The bill is named after the warmongering Republican Senator Lindsey Graham of South Carolina, who died suddenly in July after returning from a trip to Kiev. It comes amid a spiraling escalation of the Ukraine war. On Sunday Russian forces struck a passenger train with a drone at Yahodyn station, 2 kilometers from the Polish border, shortly after a train carrying former British Prime Minister Boris Johnson had left it.

On Tuesday Polish Defense Minister W?adys?aw Kosiniak-Kamysz announced that soldiers of the 18th Engineer Regiment were reinforcing the checkpoints and border guard posts on the Ukrainian border; and on Thursday Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk, in a provocative speech to parliament, accused Russia of planning drone or rocket strikes on Poland and other countries supplying Ukraine. Early Tuesday an Italian fighter jet flying for NATO shot down a drone carrying an explosive charge over Lithuania, and Poland and Romania scrambled jets against Russian drones near their borders.

The Russian strike was the response to months of NATO escalation: Germany's lifting of range restrictions on the weapons it supplies to Ukraine, Germany's agreement in Kiev in May to build "deep-strike" drones jointly with Ukraine, Ukraine's attacks on oil refineries in Perm and Tatarstan on September 7, and the visit of Johnson and other European officials to Kiev.

The sanctions and tariffs are instruments of the US-NATO war against Russia in Ukraine, and the bill turns them against China and India, two of the largest buyers of Russian crude oil.

It also extends for five years the US sanctions on the energy and arms industries of Iran, which the United States and Israel attacked on February 28 and which US warships are blockading.

The Senate voted 86 to 11 for the bill on August 7, with 36 of the 45 Democrats voting yes, among them Minority Leader Charles Schumer of New York.

The bill directs the president to raise tariffs within 30 days to as much as 100 percent on all goods from the five largest importers of Russian crude oil and of Russian natural gas, which include China and India.

It directs the same tariffs against the five countries that do the most to help Russia evade oil sanctions and boosts tariffs of up to 500 percent on Russian goods.

The bill requires sanctions on Russian President Vladimir Putin, Russian officials, banks and companies, and on foreign firms that supply Russia's arms industry.

On February 20 the Supreme Court ruled 6-3 that the emergency powers law Trump had used to impose tariffs on most of the world did not actually give him that authority, and that the president needed clear

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authorization from Congress.

The bill gives him that authority to tax imports from China and India, the world's two most populous countries, at up to 100 percent.

House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries of New York told reporters Monday that Democrats had concerns about "giving Donald Trump authority that the Supreme Court recently made clear he does not currently have." Two days later 58 members of his caucus voted to give Trump that authority anyway.

Republican House Speaker Mike Johnson said Wednesday in a statement that the bill "gives the administration every tool in the toolbox to help bring this war to a just end."

Democratic Senator Richard Blumenthal of Connecticut, the bill's lead Democratic cosponsor in the Senate, said after Wednesday's vote: "China and India, you better clean up your act, buy your oil and gas somewhere else."

The Democrats who voted against the bill, led by Jeffries, Minority Whip Katherine Clark of Massachusetts and Democratic Caucus Chair Pete Aguilar of California, argued that Trump is insufficiently aggressive against Russia. Jeffries told the House Wednesday that Democrats "will continue to stand with the Ukrainian people in Ukraine until victory is won."

In a statement on the August 7 vote, Schumer said Trump "has pandered to Vladimir Putin," and added: "Continuing to appease Putin won't work."

Graham negotiated the bill, formally the Lindsey O. Graham Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act, with the White House for more than a year.

In March 2022 Graham wrote on Twitter, referring to Putin: "The only way this ends is for somebody in Russia to take this guy out."

CNN reported Wednesday that in his last public appearance in Kiev the day before he died on July 11, Graham stood in front of tanks and announced Trump's support for the bill.

Trump's envoy Steve Witkoff and son-in-law Jared Kushner met Putin at the Kremlin on Saturday, September 5.

Dmitry Peskov, the Kremlin spokesman, told reporters Thursday that the bill "falls under the category of unfriendly actions" and that new US sanctions "would certainly complicate efforts to find a peace settlement in Ukraine."

Jeffries, Clark and Aguilar, who voted no Wednesday, were among 115 House Democrats who voted on December 10, 2025, for the $900 billion military policy bill.

On January 22, 149 House Democrats voted for the $839 billion military spending bill, and five weeks later the United States attacked Iran.

The Democratic leaders who voted no and the Democrats who voted yes both demand that Trump confront Russia more aggressively.

All factions of the US political establishment support the US-NATO war against Russia, the subjugation of Iran and the preparations for war with nuclear-armed China. The working class must oppose these wars independently of both parties.

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