

# [***The House passes billions in aid for Ukraine and Israel after months of struggle. Next is the Senate***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BV8-3H41-DYMD-63GM-00000-00&context=1516831)

The Associated Press

April 20, 2024 Saturday 11:33 PM GMT

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**Section:** WASHINGTON DATELINE

**Length:** 1263 words

**Byline:** STEPHEN GROVES and LISA MASCARO, Associated Press

**Dateline:** WASHINGTON

**Body**

WASHINGTON — The House swiftly approved [*$95 billion in foreign aid*](https://apnews.com/article/ukraine-israel-gaza-aid-speaker-johnson-9097da3511a7cd9b0e9a7b9ce52141b3) for Ukraine, Israel and other U.S. allies in a rare Saturday session as Democrats and Republicans banded together after months of hard-right resistance over renewed American support for repelling [*Russia’s invasion.*](https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine)

With an overwhelming vote, the $61 billion in aid for Ukraine passed in a matter of minutes, a strong showing as American lawmakers race to deliver a fresh round of U.S. support to the war-torn ally. Many Democrats cheered on the House floor and waved blue-and-yellow flags of Ukraine.

Aid to Israel and the other allies also won approval by healthy margins, as did a measure to clamp down on [*the popular platform TikTok*](https://apnews.com/article/tiktok-us-ban-sale-china-congress-de12b4d22aa8095e62cb0982a6e62235), with unique coalitions forming to push the separate bills forward. The whole package will go to the Senate, which could pass it as soon as Tuesday. President Joe Biden has promised to sign it immediately.

“We did our work here, and I think history will judge it well,” said a [*weary Speaker Mike Johnson*](https://apnews.com/article/house-ukraine-aid-speaker-ouster-c525efc953d532242d6d441c55724992), R-La., who risked his own job to marshal the package to passage.

Biden, in a statement, thanked Johnson, Democratic leader Hakeem Jeffries and the bipartisan coalition of lawmakers “who voted to put our national security first.”

“I urge the Senate to quickly send this package to my desk so that I can sign it into law and we can quickly send weapons and equipment to Ukraine to meet their urgent battlefield needs,” the president said.

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy of Ukraine said he was “grateful” to both parties in the House and “personally Speaker Mike Johnson for the decision that keeps history on the right track,” he said on X, formerly Twitter.

“Thank you, America!” he said.

The scene in Congress was a striking display of action after months of dysfunction and stalemate fueled by Republicans, who hold the majority but are deeply split over foreign aid, particularly for Ukraine. [*Johnson*](https://apnews.com/article/house-ukraine-aid-speaker-ouster-c525efc953d532242d6d441c55724992) relied on Democrats to ensure the military and humanitarian funding — the first major package for Ukraine since December 2022 — won approval.

The morning opened with a somber and serious debate and an unusual sense of purpose as Republican and Democratic leaders united to urge quick approval, saying that would ensure the United States supported its allies and remained a leader on the world stage. The House’s visitor galleries were crowded with onlookers.

“The eyes of the world are upon us, and history will judge what we do here and now,” said Rep. Michael McCaul, R-Texas, chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee

Passage through the House cleared away the biggest hurdle to Biden’s funding request, first made in October as Ukraine’s military supplies began to run low.

The GOP-controlled House struggled for months over what to do, first demanding that any assistance for Ukraine be tied to policy changes at the U.S.-Mexico border, only to immediately reject a bipartisan Senate offer along those very lines.

Reaching an endgame has been an [*excruciating lift for Johnson*](https://apnews.com/article/ukraine-israel-taiwan-congress-aid-house-speaker-21cc09d310a33d1d8ca88eadea896a36) that has tested both his resolve and his support among Republicans, with a small but growing number now openly urging his removal from the speaker’s office. Yet congressional leaders cast the votes as a turning point in history — an urgent sacrifice as U.S. allies are beleaguered by wars and threats from continental Europe to the Middle East to the Indo-Pacific.

“Sometimes when you are living history, as we are today, you don’t understand the significance of the actions of the votes that we make on this House floor, of the effect that it will have down the road,” said New York Rep. Gregory Meeks, the top Democrat on the House Foreign Affairs Committee. “This is a historic moment.”

Opponents, particularly the hard-right Republicans from Johnson’s majority, argued that the U.S. should focus on the home front, addressing domestic border security and the nation’s rising debt load, and they warned against spending more money, which largely flows to American defense manufacturers, to produce weaponry used overseas.

Still, Congress has seen a stream of world leaders visit in recent months, from [*Zelenskyy*](https://apnews.com/hub/volodymyr-zelenskyy) to Japanese Prime Minister [*Fumio Kishida*](https://apnews.com/hub/fumio-kishida), all but pleading with lawmakers to approve the aid. Globally, the delay left many questioning America’s commitment to its allies.

At stake has been one of Biden’s top foreign policy priorities — halting Russian President Vladimir Putin’s advance in Europe. After engaging in quiet talks with Johnson, the president quickly endorsed Johnson’s plan, paving the way for Democrats to give their rare support to clear the procedural hurdles needed for a final vote.

“We have a responsibility, not as Democrats or Republicans, but as Americans to defend democracy wherever it is at risk,” Jeffries said during the debate.

While aid for Ukraine failed to win a majority of Republicans, several dozen progressive Democrats voted against the bill aiding Israel as they demanded an end to the bombardment of Gaza that has killed thousands of civilians. A group of roughly 20 hard-right Republicans voted against every portion of the aid package, including for allies like Israel and Taiwan that have traditionally enjoyed support from the GOP.

At the same time, Donald Trump, the presumptive Republican presidential nominee, has loomed large over the fight, weighing in from afar via social media statements and direct phone calls with lawmakers as he tilts the GOP to a more isolationist stance with his “America First” brand of ***politics***.

Ukraine’s defense once enjoyed robust, bipartisan support in Congress, but as the war enters its third year, a majority of Republicans opposed further aid. Trump ally Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene, R-Ga., offered an amendment to zero out the money, but it was rejected.

The ultraconservative House Freedom Caucus has derided the legislation as the “America Last” foreign wars package and urged lawmakers to defy Republican leadership and oppose it because the bills did not include border security measures.

Johnson’s hold on the speaker’s gavel has also grown more tenuous in recent days as three Republicans, led by Greene, supported a “motion to vacate” that can lead to a vote on removing the speaker. Egged on by far-right personalities, she is also being joined by a growing number of lawmakers including Reps. Paul Gosar, R-Ariz., and Thomas Massie, R-Ky., who is urging Johnson to voluntarily step aside.

The package included several Republican priorities that Democrats endorsed, or at least are willing to accept. Those include proposals that allow the U.S. to seize frozen Russian central bank assets to rebuild Ukraine; impose sanctions on Iran, Russia, China and criminal organizations that traffic fentanyl; and [*legislation*](https://apnews.com/article/tiktok-ban-house-vote-china-national-security-8fa7258fae1a4902d344c9d978d58a37) to require the China-based owner of the popular video app TikTok to sell its stake within a year or face a ban in the United States.

Still, the all-out push to get the bills through Congress is a reflection not only of ***politics***, but realities on the ground in Ukraine. Top lawmakers on national security committees, who are privy to classified briefings, have grown gravely concerned about the tide of the war as Russia pummels Ukrainian forces beset by a [*shortage of troops*](https://apnews.com/article/ukraine-parliament-recruit-army-russia-war-5b7d9f58bb398b4ad1296311b8130b92) and [*ammunition*](https://apnews.com/article/italy-g7-ukraine-russia-israel-gaza-iran-73d2a4a62a0bbd5f6d60fb1b4338d207).

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., announced the Senate would begin procedural votes on the package Tuesday, saying, “Our allies across the world have been waiting for this moment.”

Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell, as he prepared to overcome objections from his right flank next week, said, “The task before us is urgent. It is once again the Senate’s turn to make history.”

**Load-Date:** April 20, 2024

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