

# [***Speaker Mike Johnson considering inviting Netanyahu to address Congress***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BKR-5BJ1-DY7V-G004-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

House Speaker Mike Johnson is considering inviting Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to address Congress after House members raised the idea in their closed-door conference meeting Wednesday morning.

"It's one of the things that we have in mind, and we may try to arrange for that," Johnson told reporters when asked about inviting Netanyahu to address Congress. "I think it's very important for us to show solidarity and support for Israel right now in their time of great struggle, and we certainly stand for that position, and we'll try to advance that in every way that we can."

Johnson said he spoke with Netanyahu on Wednesday morning.

"I had a lengthy conversation this morning with Prime Minister Netanyahu and reiterated to him the House Republicans' strong support for Israel," he told reporters.

Johnson's consideration of inviting Netanyahu to address Congress [*was first reported by Axios.*](https://www.axios.com/2024/03/20/scoop-house-gop-weighs-inviting-netanyahu-to-address-congress)

An invitation to address a joint session of Congress would require buy-in from Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, who sharply criticized Netanyahu in a floor speech last week, when he also called for Israel to hold new elections.

The consideration of having Netanyahu also comes at a time when additional military aid to Israel appears stalled on Capitol Hill. The House passed a standalone military aid bill to Israel in November that the Senate did not advance because the House bill offset the cost with cuts to the IRS. The Senate passed a bill [*with aid to Ukraine and Israel*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/02/12/politics/senate-foreign-aid-bill-ukraine/index.html) in February, but Johnson has made no effort to put that legislation up for a vote in the chamber as House Republicans have mulled several alternatives for sending aid overseas.

In a statement [*posted*](https://x.com/LeaderMcConnell/status/1770498969904287829?s=20) on X, Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell again criticized Schumer for his criticism of Netanyahu, and said the US should "stay out of" Israeli ***politics***.

"Israel's government and unity war cabinet report to the Israeli people, not the US Senate. America rightly rejects foreign interference in our own democratic ***politics***. And we owe it to our friends and allies to stay out of theirs," the Kentucky Republican said.

Netanyahu was sharply critical of Schumer's speech, when he addressed the Senate Republican policy lunch Wednesday.

"Clearly, the Prime Minister was not happy with Sen. Schumer's speech. Nor was he happy with President Biden's praise of Sen. Schumer's speech. But I think the Prime Minster understands the ***politics*** of all of it," Louisiana Republican Sen. John Kennedy said afterwards.

"We made it clear to the Prime Minister that in our judgment, the American people overwhelmingly support Israel's war," Kennedy added. "And he made clear he intends to prosecute the war against Hamas to the full extent of his power."

Kennedy said Netanyahu spoke for about 15 minutes via video link to the GOP meeting in the Capitol, and then took about 45 minutes of questions.

Texas Republican Sen. Ted Cruz was asked if Netanyahu was critical of Biden and he said no.

"He said he was grateful of the support he's gotten from President Biden and he hopes that support continues," Cruz said.

This story has been updated with additional developments.

CNN's Ted Barrett, Kristin Wilson and Morgan Rimmer contributed to this report.

By Haley Talbot and Melanie Zanona, CNN

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