

# [***House Democrats want Speaker Johnson to outline path on Ukraine aid before agreeing to save his job***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BMJ-3RW1-JBSS-S004-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

(CNN) &#8212; House Democrats may save Mike Johnson's speakership - but he first must [*outline a pathway to approving aid*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/03/19/politics/lloyd-austin-ukraine-aid/index.html) to Ukraine, multiple Democratic sources told CNN.

If Johnson were to announce he would take up the Senate's $95 billion aid package, Democrats would vote in droves to keep him in the position, sources said.

Yet Johnson has already signaled an openness to a separate bipartisan plan emerging in the House, and he'd [*already told GOP lawmakers*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/03/03/politics/mike-johnson-ukraine-funding/index.html) that he may schedule floor time on that plan when lawmakers return from their Easter recess.

But that bipartisan plan has generated little Democratic enthusiasm, in large part because of its new border security restrictions, including reinstating the so-called "Remain in Mexico" policy. Plus, Johnson has signaled a willingness to turn the Ukraine aid into a loan for the country, an idea floated by former President Donald Trump that has prompted Democratic skepticism.

If Johnson tries to move on the House plan, Democrats may opt to save him but in smaller numbers, one Democratic source said.

While the exact timing remains unclear, the first procedural vote to oust Johnson is expected to take the form of a "motion to table" - or kill - fellow Republican Rep. [*Marjorie Taylor Greene's resolution to vacate*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/03/22/politics/marjorie-taylor-greene-mike-johnson/index.html) the speakership. Democrats are weighing whether to kill the resolution on the first procedural vote, but say they need to hear the speaker publicly outline his intentions on Ukraine aid.

"If he does the responsible thing, which is allowing members of Congress to vote on a bill that will pass and that is in our national security interests, and subsequent to that a non-serious actor that doesn't want to govern brings a motion to vacate, yes I would motion to table in that circumstance," Rep. Abigail Spanberger, a Virginia Democrat, told CNN.

In a meeting Friday before Greene announced her intention to force a vote seeking Johnson's ouster, the speaker already was telling Republicans he was ready to move on an aid package for Ukraine when they return. But it's unclear what form that package will take.

"He said that's going to come to the floor when we come back," Rep. Greg Pence, an Indiana Republican, told CNN after meeting with Johnson on Friday morning. "And I think that's good."

Republicans warn Greene's move could cost them the House

Several House Republicans have also warned that Greene's move to oust Johnson could cost them the House in November, though some hardliners are weighing whether they would ultimately vote to remove him.

Greene, for her part, indicated Sunday that she may not even force a vote this Congress.

"I filed this motion to vacate but I haven't called it," she said on Fox News. "(I'm) giving our conference notice saying that we have got to find a new speaker. This may take weeks, it may take months, it may not even happen until next Congress. But Speaker Johnson cannot remain as Speaker of the House."

Greene did not call up her resolution before the House left for a two-week recess on Friday, which means the two-legislative-day clock to force a vote has not yet started. It is ultimately up to Greene when and whether she forces a vote.

Pence said the chaos in the House is "turning people off" ***politics***.

"You know, when I go home, people are telling me they're not following what's going on here anymore because they are tired of it. And when I mentioned that on the floor this week, talking to my peers, they're hearing the same thing," he said. "These games, not working together, it's turning people off. And we want people to be engaged in ***politics*** and we're working the wrong way."

Pressed on whether it could cost them the majority, Pence replied, "Oh, it surely could. It's possible, right? It's not helpful."

House Homeland Security Chair Mark Green, meanwhile, told CNN, "I'm disappointed. ... I think it's a distraction. We need to just - unfortunately this bill passed, and we've got a lot of other stuff now to do, some articles to walk over... we don't need anything that's going to disrupt that."

He said he hoped Greene will ultimately decide not to call up [*her resolution*](https://www.cnn.com/videos/politics/2024/03/22/marjorie-taylor-greene-mike-johnson-motion-to-vacate-vpx.cnn) for a vote. "I don't think we'll let that happen this time. I mean, we'll see how it goes, but I don't think that's going to happen."

But Rep. Richard Hudson, the chair of the House Republican campaign arm, downplayed the damage another speaker's fight could cause in an election year. "I just don't think people out there in the real world, outside of this bubble we're standing in right now, care as much about who the speaker of the House is as they do about how expensive it is to buy the things they need for their family," he said. "We are going to grow this House majority despite things that go on the House floor day to day."

He argued that "Speaker Johnson is going to remain speaker" despite the threat to oust him. "The House has to have a speaker to function. So, we need a speaker and I think Speaker Johnson has been an outstanding speaker and I stand behind him. I think we'll get through this," he added.

Some hardliners are weighing whether they will vote to oust Johnson once it is brought up. "I'm open to that conversation," said Rep. Eli Crane, one of the eight Republicans who voted to oust former Speaker Kevin McCarthy last fall.

Rep. Chip Roy on Sunday appeared reluctant to support Greene's motion to vacate. But Roy did say "Mike was wrong" for not allotting members a full 72 hours to consider the funding package.

"I opposed the use of the motion to vacate against Kevin McCarthy, very openly and very loudly against my right-flank colleagues and everybody across the entire body," the Texas Republican told CNN's Jake Tapper on "State of the Union."

But Roy declined to directly say whether he would support his former House Freedom Caucus colleague's motion, instead slamming the media for focusing on "inside-the-Beltway palace drama."

Rep. Ralph Norman indicated that he was still considering it as well. "We'll see what happens. Look, I take this minute by minute," he said. Pressed on whether he was comfortable overthrowing their leadership at this point, Norman replied, "I'm not saying that. Let's see how we come out on this bill. Let's see what he does, and we'll go from there."

He added, "Anything's possible."

McCarthy on Sunday urged Johnson to "not be fearful" of a potential vote to oust him from the speakership. "I do not think they could do it again," McCarthy said on CBS' "Face the Nation."

"I don't think the Democrats will go along with it too," McCarthy added. "Focus on the country. Focus on the job you're supposed to do, and actually do it fearlessly. Just move forward."

CNN's Sam Fossum, Morgan Rimmer and Avery Lotz contributed to this report.

By Manu Raju, CNN

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