

# [***Capitol Hill is redefining how nothing gets done***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B8J-X5T1-DY7V-G044-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

(CNN) &#8212; A plague on both these houses:

The [*Senate seems to lack the political will*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/02/06/politics/republican-opposition-senate-border-bill/index.html) for a bipartisan border deal.

The [*House lacks an effective majority*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/02/06/politics/house-vote-mayorkas-impeachment/index.html) for a partisan impeachment effort as GOP leaders scramble for votes.

And so the knot of US immigration policy seems likely to stay hopelessly tied even though both sides of the aislenow agree there's a disaster at the border. Additional aid for Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan is also locked up.

Partisan impeachment effort flailing

House Republicans should be taking a victory lap. Their pressure helped create an environment in which a Democratic president was [*promising to shut the US border*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/01/29/politics/border-shutdown-biden-what-matters/index.html) with Mexico to new arrivals, confirming their years of warning about the flow of asylum-seekers from Central and South America and other continents.

In return, President Joe Biden wanted additional funding for Ukraine and Israel, something many Republicans also support.

Rather than respond to acknowledgment of the border crisis by working with Democrats and the White House on a deal, House Republicans planned instead to impeach Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas as a protest of Biden's immigration approach.

Except, as the vote approached, they seemed to realize they might not have the votes to impeach Mayorkas after all. Their majority is so small they can only afford to lose two or three votes, depending on how many lawmakers show up to vote. Two Republicans, Reps. Ken Buck of Colorado and Tom McClintock of California, oppose the impeachment.

"Maladministration or incompetence does not rise to what our founders considered an impeachable offense," Buck wrote in an [*op-ed for The Hill*](https://thehill.com/opinion/congress-blog/4448278-principles-matter-republicans-should-follow-the-constitution-and-not-impeach-mayorkas/) in which he eviscerated Mayorkas but rejected impeachment.

The impeachment articles "stretch and distort the Constitution in order to hold the administration accountable for stretching and distorting the law," McClintock wrote in [*a memo*](https://mcclintock.house.gov/The-Case-Against-the-Impeachment-of-Mayorkas-Memo).

The [*only other time a Cabinet member was impeached*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/02/06/politics/mayorkas-impeachment-cabinet-what-matters/index.html), back in 1876, it was with a unanimous House vote. With hours to go before the Mayorkas impeachment vote is set to occur, there is a real possibility it could fail, and it can only pass by the slimmest of margins.

Bipartisan border deal imploding

Partisanship isn't working. And neither is bipartisanship.

Senate Democratic negotiators came nearly all the way to Republicans on what was billed as [*a bipartisan border deal*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/02/04/politics/senate-border-bill-takeaways/index.html).

Abandoning hope of giving children of undocumented immigrants permanent legal status or creating a pathway to citizenship for migrants who built their lives in the US, Democratic negotiators appeared ready to give the president - which could be Donald Trump next year - broad new temporary authority to essentially shut down the border when crossings reach certain thresholds, raise the bar for people to seek asylum in the US and cut down on the practice of allowing people to work in the US while their cases are in immigration court.

On "Inside ***Politics***" on Wednesday, as news broke of Republican leaders turning against the deal by opposing procedural votes this week, CNN's Dana Bash interviewed Sen. James Lankford of Oklahoma, who spearheaded negotiations for Republicans.

"Are you gobsmacked?" she asked, listing off the GOP immigration priorities that opponents are willing to leave on the table rather than work with Democrats.

"I'm legitimately surprised at where we are at this moment because, as Republicans, we've done lots of press conferences at the border, had lots of conversations, saying things have to change," Lankford said.

"At the end of it, the worst-case scenario is to do nothing," Lankford said. "We need to do something. And I think American people, regardless of your political persuasion, want to see actually something change on the border."

House Speaker Mike Johnson doesn't think any new law is required for Biden to shut down the border and argued at a press conference that even a bill House Republicans passed last year was unnecessary, other than it would compel the president to do more.

"We will continue to remind the American people that it is one individual, the commander in chief, the most power political figure in this country, who could end the catastrophe that he, specifically, and we believe intentionally, created," Johnson said.

Biden, meanwhile, was [*trying out campaign-trail material*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/02/06/politics/biden-border-bill/index.html) in an appearance at the White House.

"Every day between now and November, the American people are going to know that the only reason the border is not secure is Donald Trump and his MAGA Republican friends," he said.

This story has been updated with additional information.

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