

# [***Senate takes first step toward debating foreign aid package without border policy - but key test vote looms***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B8W-F6X1-DY7V-G013-00000-00&context=1516831)

CNN Wire

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**Body**

The Senate voted on Wednesday to take the first step toward debating a major foreign aid package with assistance for Ukraine and Israel without border security provisions, but a key test vote looms ahead and it is unclear if that will succeed.

The Senate is expected to hold a procedural vote at a 60-vote threshold as soon as Thursday, and it's not clear if there will be 60 votes to move forward as Republicans are demanding an agreement to have their amendments to the underlying bill considered.

"We will recess until tomorrow and give our Republican colleagues time to figure themselves out," Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer said on the Senate floor on Wednesday evening. "We'll be coming back tomorrow at noon, and hopefully that will give the Republicans the time they need. We will have this vote tomorrow."

If the package passes out of the chamber, the Senate will be on a collision course with the House, where many Republicans oppose sending further aid to Ukraine.

The move to take up a foreign aid package without border provisions comes after Senate Republicans [*blocked a foreign aid package*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/02/07/politics/senate-border-ukraine-israel-aid-vote/index.html) that included a bipartisan border deal.

The border deal's failure to advance in the Senate was a stunning rebuke by Republicans of a deal that would have enacted more restrictive border measures and was crafted over four months by one of their most conservative members: Sen. James Lankford of Oklahoma, who conducted bipartisan negotiations with several Democrats.

Republicans had initially demanded that border security be part of the broader package only to line up in opposition as the deal faced attacks from top House Republicans and former President Donald Trump, who is making the border a central campaign issue in his race for the White House. Speaker Mike Johnson had said that the border deal would be dead on arrival in his chamber.

The foreign aid package includes billions of dollars to support Ukraine in its fight against Russia and security assistance for Israel, as well as humanitarian assistance for civilians in Gaza, the West Bank and Ukraine.

The bill includes $60 billion to support Ukraine, $14.1 billion in security assistance for Israel, $9.2 billion in humanitarian assistance and $4.8 billion to support regional partners in the Indo-Pacific region, among other provisions, according to the Senate Appropriations Committee.

The White House publicly expressed support for the security package stripped of border provisions ahead of the vote.

"We support this bill which would protect America's national security interests by stopping Putin's onslaught in Ukraine before he turns to other countries, helping Israel defend itself against Hamas terrorists and delivering live-saving humanitarian aid to innocent Palestinian civilians," White House spokesman Andrew Bates said in a statement to CNN.

The White House also reiterated Biden's commitment to passing border reform.

"Even if some congressional Republicans' commitment to border security hinges on ***politics***, President Biden's does not," Bates said. "We must still have reforms and more resources to secure the border. These priorities all have strong bipartisan support across the country."

As Republican opposition to the border deal grew early in the week, Senate GOP leader Mitch McConnell on Tuesday argued that the Senate should change course on the national security package and focus on providing foreign aid to Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan.

"There are other parts of this supplemental that are extremely important as well: Ukraine, Israel, Taiwan. We still, in my view, ought to tackle the rest of it, because it's important. Not that the border isn't important, but we can't get an outcome," McConnell told CNN. "So that's where I think we ought to head." CNN's Betsy Klein contributed to this report.

By Clare Foran, Ted Barrett and Morgan Rimmer, CNN

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