

# [***Speaker Mike Johnson to House GOP: Senate immigration deal 'absolutely dead,' members say***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B72-N8X1-JBSS-S00G-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

Speaker Mike Johnson privately told House Republicans the Senate's bipartisan immigration deal has "no way forward," according to lawmakers who attended a closed-door meeting Tuesday - the latest blow to a major national security package intended to unlock critical aid to Ukraine as former President Donald Trump urges Republicans to kill it.

Leaving their conference meeting, House Republicans said Johnson made clear the immigration deal is "absolutely dead.""I just heard Speaker Johnson saying it's absolutely dead, which is what I wanted to hear," Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene of Georgia told CNN. "As a matter of fact, he said so clear, 'I don't know why people keep asking me about it,' because as it stands right now, there's no way forward."Rep. Roger Williams of Texas added that Johnson, "said it's not going anywhere."

The House GOP's warning to the Senate comes as Trump has called on Congress to tank the border deal as he rails against chaos at the border in his fight for the White House. Democrats and even some Republicans believe that Trump is simply trying to preserve a potent campaign issue and deny President Joe Biden a legislative achievement by derailing a deal cut by one of the most conservative senators, James Lankford of Oklahoma.

At a news conference later on Tuesday, Johnson denied pushing to kill the Senate border deal in order to help Trump on the campaign trail, but the speaker said that he has spoken to Trump "at length."

"No, Manu, that's absurd," Johnson told CNN. "I have talked to former President Trump about this issue at length and he understands that we have a responsibility to do here."

Johnson added, "The president of course, President Trump, wants to secure the country. President Trump is the one that talked about border security before anyone else did. He ran on, as you remember, building the wall. Why? Because he saw this catastrophe coming. He knew that if we did not get control of it, we would be in this situation."

Attacks on the Senate compromise have ramped up from House Republicans and Trump now that negotiators have a deal in hand, though final text of an agreement has not yet been released. The House GOP push to kill the deal puts aid to Ukraine in peril at a key moment in its fight against Russia and underscores Trump's strong hold over the conference as well as the stark divide between House and Senate Republicans.

Senate negotiators [*have agreed to empower*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/01/26/politics/senate-deal-shutdown-border/index.html) the US to significantly restrict illegal migrant crossings at the southern border, according to sources familiar with the matter, a move aimed at ending the migrant surge that has overrun federal authorities over the past several months.

[*Biden*](https://www.cnn.com/politics/joe-biden) said in a statement on Friday the deal that Senate negotiators have worked toward is both tough and fair.

"What's been negotiated would - if passed into law - be the toughest and fairest set of reforms to secure the border we've ever had in our country," he said. "It would give me, as President, a new emergency authority to shut down the border when it becomes overwhelmed. And if given that authority, I would use it the day I sign the bill into law."

But House Republicans have dismissed the deal, insisting that any border security legislation must closely mirror HR 2, a hardline conservative immigration bill that is dead on arrival in the Democrat-controlled Senate. Trump, meanwhile, has argued that Republicans should not accept any kind of compromise and said on Monday that a bill is not necessary.

The attacks from House Republicans and Trump have set up a major contrast with the Senate where Lankford has been one of the key negotiators working to get a deal and Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell has repeatedly stressed the importance of continuing aid to Ukraine in its war against Russia.

Senate GOP leaders debate whether to ditch border deal in order to approve funds for Israel and Ukraine

Senate Republican leaders are debating whether to shelve the emerging bipartisan border security deal and instead move ahead with a separate bill that includes money for Ukraine and Israel, according to Sen. John Cornyn, the top Republican from Texas.

Cornyn told reporters if there are no votes for the border deal, they should move forward with the rest of the funding package.

"I support the aid to Ukraine and Israel and the Indo-Pacific. It would be nice to change the status quo on the border. But if there is not the political support to do that then I think we should proceed with the rest of the supplemental," he said.

The issue was debated behind closed doors in McConnell's office Tuesday evening.

"No decision," said Cornyn. "Just a lot of discussion about the fact that we're kinda stuck."

McConnell [*raised these same concerns*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/01/24/politics/mcconnell-senate-gop-border-ukraine-package/index.html) last week at a private meeting for all Republican senators, arguing that the ***politics*** of the issue had changed with Trump's opposition and senators may need to break up the package.

Asked if enough Republicans would back a bill that didn't include the border provisions so it could get 60 votes to break a filibuster, Cornyn said, "I don't know. That's what each side needs to whip and count the votes. Because this is not where we started."

House Republicans slam immigration deal

Senior House Republicans on Tuesday attacked the Senate's immigration compromise, despite not having final text, and vowed that it will not pass the House.

House Judiciary Chairman Jim Jordan told CNN, "I haven't seen it, but based on what I've heard, I think that's a nonstarter."

He added, "Everyone knows that the border is not secure and even Democrat mayors know that. So why don't we just say 'stop, timeout, no more, no more migrants come in.' You can have some special exception if someone needs a special surgery or something. Other than that, just stop it."

The Senate deal would speed up the asylum process to consider cases within six months - compared with the current system, under which it could take up to 10 years for asylum seekers.

The Department of Homeland Security would also be granted new emergency authority to shut down the border if daily average migrant encounters reach 4,000 over a one-week span. If migrant crossings increase above 5,000 on average per day on a given week, DHS would be required to close the border to migrants crossing illegally not entering at ports of entry. Certain migrants would be allowed to stay if they prove to be fleeing torture or persecution in their countries.

Republican Rep. Byron Donalds of Florida called the deal "trash," and attacked senators for considering it.

"It's a ham-handed deal that does not make sense in the real world. That's my position," he said. "If the biggest compromise you can get in the United States Senate is for 5,000 entrants per day, then we need new United States Senators across the board. What they're talking about over there is insane."

Other more moderate House members threw cold water on it as well.

Republican Rep. Dusty Johnson of South Dakota added, "the border's an absolute disaster and we should not be looking at half-measures."

This story has been updated with additional information.

CNN's Ted Barrett, Kristin Wilson and Haley Talbot contributed to this report.

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