

# [***Republicans Sound Alarm On Efforts To Shield Ukraine Funding From American Voters***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BWH-N2P1-DXXD-700S-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

[*Link to Image*](https://cdn01.dailycaller.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Rodger-RoundyDaily-Caller-CollagePhoto-credits-from-Getty-Images-Drew-Hallowell-joe-bidenAndrew-Harnik-mitch-mcconnellChip-Somodevilla-Mike-Johnson--scaled-e1713982400711.jpg)

As President Joe Biden signed legislation Wednesday to send billions of dollars more in aid to Ukraine, officials from Brussels to Washington are working to hamstring former President Donald Trump from taking a different route should he win back the White House.

With [*Congress granting*](https://dailycaller.com/2024/04/22/congress-ukraine-aid-package-ukraine-war-russia-experts/) Biden additional “drawdown” authority to send weapons to Kyiv, and NATO allies in Europe seeking to take the power to send aid away from the White House, multiple Senate Republicans, strategists and former Trump officials told the Daily Caller efforts to “Trump-proof” foreign aid are misguided and futile.

“There are things that they're setting in motion here that are going to make it very difficult for Trump to, if he's elected president, to undo this, to extricate us, from these arrangements,” Utah Sen. [*Mike Lee*](https://dailycaller.com/2024/04/24/exclusive-texts-newsmax-mislead-topic-mike-lee-interview-edit-ukraine-criticism/) said. “I mean, look there are a thousand things you can do with government contracting that can make it either easier or harder for a subsequent administration to take a different approach.”

Lee is among the lawmakers and officials who opposed the [*aid package*](https://dailycaller.com/2024/04/24/pentagon-announces-1-billion-ukraine-aid-minutes-biden-signs-national-security-bill/) that will send $26.4 billion of funding to Israel, $8.1 billion of funding to Taiwan and $61 billion of more aid to Ukraine. Several of the opponents noted that, in their view, Ukraine is unlikely to prevail in the long-term against Russia and a settlement must be negotiated sooner rather than later.

“The fact is that the strategy isn't working. There is no strategy,” Fred Fleitz, the vice chair of America First Policy Institute's Center for American Security said. “And Trump understands that. And it's just not fair for these Democrats to say, well, we're going to Trump-proof NATO. We're going to Trump proof aid for Ukraine.”

Polling also [*shows*](https://dailycaller.com/2024/04/15/exclusive-poll-battleground-state-voters-ukraine-aid/) that sending additional aid to Ukraine is not particularly popular with battleground state voters, who are more focused on border security in the U.S. as border crossings and illegal immigrant apprehensions have hit record highs under the Biden administration.

A growing constituency in the Republican Party has endorsed halting further aid to Ukraine until progress is made on stemming the tide of illegal immigration in the U.S. While Trump has not expressed blanket opposition to more aid for Ukraine, some of his strongest allies at the Capitol are the biggest proponents of putting America's border first.

In early April, Politico [*reported*](https://www.politico.com/news/2024/04/02/allies-consider-moving-ukraine-arms-group-into-nato-to-shield-it-from-trump-00150151) that the “U.S. and other Western countries are considering transferring to NATO a U.S.-led multinational group that coordinates the shipment of weapons to Ukraine, one of several new proposals that could help maintain the flow of arms to Kyiv under a second Donald Trump presidency.”

The group was created at the beginning of the war by Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin and former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Mark Milley with a goal “to coordinate Western support for Kyiv's defenses.”

Several Democrats in the Senate [*told*](https://www.politico.com/news/2024/02/12/democrats-guardrails-nato-trump-00141041) Politico in February that they need to take new steps to protect NATO from a potential second Trump term.

Conservatives pushed back on these efforts, and characterizations of Trump as anti-NATO, in conversations with the Caller. [***(RELATED: Senate Passes Foreign Aid Package, Bill That Could Ban TikTok)***](https://dailycaller.com/2024/04/23/senate-votes-pass-foreign-aid-supplemental-ukraine-israel-taiwan/)

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Sen. Mike Lee (R-UT) speaks during a press conference with other senators and House impeachment managers at the U.S. Capitol on April 16, 2024 in Washington, DC. (Photo by Win McNamee/Getty Images)

“We're seeing fear mongering by President Trump's political opponents. And I think a lot of it has to go to the fact that they are absolutely standing with President Biden's policy on Ukraine. That has no strategy. Trump has said, I want to stop the killing. He hasn't said he wants to cut off Ukraine,” Fleitz said. [***(RELATED: EXCLUSIVE: 'This Is Our Opportunity' - Top GOP Senators Game McConnell's Ouster After Botched Border Deal)***](https://dailycaller.com/2024/02/07/senate-border-bill-mitch-mcconnell-rick-scott-jd-vance-ted-cruz-mike-lee/)

“Now, I read in the article that there's some members of Congress who want to prevent Trump from pulling out of NATO. Trump doesn't plan to pull out of NATO. As far as I know. He hasn't said that,” Fleitz continued. “But what he has said is that he wants to hold NATO members accountable for their treaty obligations, to spend 2% of the GDP on defense. And Trump is not the only president to call for that. He's just the only president who's been serious about it.”

Richard Grenell, the former Acting Director of National Intelligence under Trump, told the Caller that the idea of Trump-proofing weapons for Ukraine is “silly ***politics*** during an election year.”

“What I would say is nothing undermines NATO more than being a member of a military alliance and yet not being able to contribute to that military alliance in any meaningful way,” Grenell said. “I don't even want to speculate because Donald Trump made NATO stronger. You know, hundreds of billions of dollars more came into NATO than ever before.”

“Everyone knows exactly what Donald Trump is going to do for NATO, because they saw it for four years. There are no surprises. He's going to absolutely demand that countries pay their 2014 commitment and their obligations. We don't see that from the Biden team. They don't demand it. They don't bring it up,” Grenell added.

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Richard Grenell, former acting Director of the United States National Intelligence, speaks during the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) at The Rosen Shingle Creek on February 25, 2022 in Orlando, Florida. (Photo by Joe Raedle/Getty Images)

Republican Wisconsin Sen. Ron Johnson said after reading the Politico report, “the first thought through my mind was, in terms of danger to world peace, President Biden has posed a far greater danger than anything Trump could pose.”

“I'm getting a little sick of Europe relying on U.S. debt to provide a defensive shield for Europe. Their combined economies are as big as the U.S.. They do this themselves,” Johnson added.

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Sen. Ron Johnson (R-WI) participates in a press conference with other Republican Senators and Representatives to demand a trial of Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas following delivery of articles of impeachment to the Senate, Washington, DC, April 16, 2024. (Photo by ALLISON BAILEY/Middle East Images/AFP via Getty Images)

Fleitz echoed that sentiment: “If there's an effort by Democratic politicians and members of, and European leaders to somehow Trump proof Ukraine by having Europe provide more military aid. I'm all for that. Because the big problem here is that countries like Germany and France are giving a pittance when it comes to aid to Ukraine. We're bearing the majority of the burden, and they really shouldn't be criticizing us when they are not doing nearly enough to help Ukraine.” [***(RELATED: EXCLUSIVE: GOP Civil War Deepens As Senators Claim McConnell Threw Party's Voters 'Under The Bus' On Ukraine, Border)***](https://dailycaller.com/2024/02/20/republican-senate-mitch-mcconnell-border-deal-ukraine-aid-funding-vote-mike-lee-ron-johnson-rick-scott/)

John Ullyot, a National Security Council spokesman under Trump, told the Caller that “Democrats who say otherwise and take steps to jam up Trump on NATO are putting Europe First, not America First. That simply doesn't fly with U.S. taxpayers and voters as a matter of common sense.”

Trump had expressed support for giving some additional aid to Ukraine in the form of a loan, and Congressional Republicans sold him on that as part of the latest aid package. About $10 billion of the $60 billion was enacted as a loan, but it is forgivable if the White House opts not to make Kyiv pay it back.

“I believe $10 billion of the $60 billion aid package it has designated as a loan. And that's for humanitarian aid. And we expect Ukraine to pay it back. Realistically, given how their economy has been devastated, even when the war is over, it doesn't seem likely we'll be able to pay that in the immediate future,” Fleitz said.

Florida Republican Sen. Rick Scott told the Caller that a loan makes more sense than grants for foreign aid, but that it should not be forgivable.

“I mean, I think having a loan makes a lot more sense than just grants. I think that's what we ought to be doing with our foreign aid. If you want to give your money away, that's one thing, for your federal government to give your money away, that's something totally different,” Scott said. “So I think that this ought to be in the form of a loan and it shouldn't be forgivable.” [***(RELATED: 'Weaponized His Leadership': Insurgent Senate GOP Forms Post-McConnell Plan)***](https://dailycaller.com/2024/03/28/senate-majority-leader-mitch-mcconnell-replacement-john-thune-cornyn-rick-scott/)

Johnson referred to the loan as “mere window dressing” and “political cover” saying: “We are going to be discussing when this war finally ends, how do you rebuild Ukraine to the tune of what, something around a $1 trillion price. Do you think a $10 billion loan is going to even enter that equation? So no, it's window dressing. It's nothing but mere political cover for those members whose constituents, by and large, would prefer they not vote for sending $60 billion down the drain.”

[*Link to Image*](https://cdn01.dailycaller.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Photo-by-ALLISON-BAILEYMiddle-East-ImagesAFP-via-Getty-Images-e1713974377636.jpg)

Sen. Rick Scott (R-FL) speaks during a press conference with other Republican Senators and Representatives, demanding a trial of Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas following delivery of articles of impeachment to the Senate, Washington, DC, April 16, 2024. (Photo by ALLISON BAILEY/Middle East Images/AFP via Getty Images)

“It's not really a loan. It's a loan that has a thousand different ways that the loan can be waived built into the bill. And it's pretty plain to me on the text of the statute that what they've got in mind is, getting this set up and then making sure the Biden administration forgives the loan. They've made it very, very easy to do that. And so to call something a loan when you've built into the law mechanisms to make it sort of optional. It's very deceptive,” Lee said. [***(RELATED: EXCLUSIVE: Senate Republicans Sound Off On Leaked Border Deal Proposals, Say They Will Absolutely Not Vote For Them)***](https://dailycaller.com/2024/01/24/senate-republican-josh-hawley-mike-lee-ted-cruz-border-deal-leak-proposal/)

Despite the anger over the aid package from the Republican base, Trump, for his part, did not try to stop it. He [*even provided encouragement*](https://nypost.com/2024/04/23/us-news/trump-defends-house-speaker-mike-johnson-amid-ouster-threat-trying-very-hard/) to the increasingly-maligned Speaker Mike Johnson, saying he's “trying very hard.”

**Graphic**

Rodger Roundy:Daily Caller Collage:Photo credits from Getty Images: Drew Hallowell (joe biden):Andrew Harnik (mitch mcconnell):Chip Somodevilla (Mike Johnson)

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