

# [***Interview with Sen. Mitch McConnell (R-KY)***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BW5-R3F1-F072-X3YM-00000-00&context=1516831)

Fox News AMERICA'S NEWSROOM 9:00 AM EST

April 24, 2024 Wednesday

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**Section:** NEWS; International

**Length:** 1073 words

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**Guests:** Sen. Mitch McConnell (R-KY)

**Body**

DANA PERINO, FOX NEWS ANCHOR: Fox News Alert, last night the Senate passed a $95 billion foreign aid bill. It includes money for Ukraine, Israel, and Taiwan.

Joining us now is Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, and you think this is a good day for America. Let me ask you something. Is $60 billion enough money for Ukraine to push back Russia decisively?

SEN. MITCH MCCONNELL (R-KY): Well, we hope so. It's actually only 0.2% of our gross domestic product, so put in -- in that context, it's not a whole lot of money for us, but it's a very significant step for them because it gives them the more sophisticated weapons they need to hold the Russians at bay. And we're optimistic these people are going to win.

I mean, the Russians are trying to take their country, and they have enormous incentive, and it doesn't require any of our personnel. We're not getting any Americans killed. We're helping them defend their independence and also degrade the military of one of our biggest adversaries, the Russians.

PERINO: Do you think that President Biden was too slow to give Ukraine what it needed initially so that we wouldn't get to this point, where they could have, you know, maybe been in a better position by now, instead of, it feels kind of like they're just losing slowly.

MCCONNELL: Yeah, much slower than it should have. The President made two big mistakes. Number one was the withdrawal from Afghanistan, which was not at war. We kept the lid on terrorism there. We shouldn't have withdrawn the troops. When we did, that was like sending a green light to Putin, who was already thinking seriously about moving his troops up against the border.

Secondly, we didn't give them sufficient weaponry soon enough. We tended to react too slowly. So the administration did make a number of mistakes. But at least at this point, after a long delay, we've all come together and done what needed to be done to help the Ukrainians. And you know, this is a huge issue to the whole world.

PERINO: Yeah.

MCCONNELL: The Prime Minister of Japan the other day, in an address to the Congress, talked about Ukraine. So it's a big deal for every country in the world that elects its own leadership.

PERINO: So the vote was 79-18, and you've talked about your concern about an isolationist strain in the Republican Party. It's -- you know, that comes up from time to time in our history, if you look back. And there are people wondering, and you can understand their reluctance, even though it is such a small part of the GDP, this foreign aid piece. But they're upset that nothing was done on the southern border, and they feel like Americans aren't being well taken care of. Is there anything that the Republicans can do this summer before the election to make them feel better about that?

MCCONNELL: Well, I certainly agree with that sentiment. But I think our southern border has been an unmitigated disaster for this administration and for our country. We can walk and chew gum at the same time. We ought to be able to fix that border, as well as help democratically elected countries around the world stand up to the Chinese, the Russians and the Iranians.

We had a negotiation with the administration over trying to get some legislation they would agree to. That fell by the wayside because a lot of my members, including myself, were hoping we could make a better deal with them. We have to deal with them because they have the White House, they have the Senate. I think we ought to address that as soon as possible.

PERINO: OK.

MCCONNELL: If I were the -- if I were the President, I'd fix this myself and take the heat away.

PERINO: Do you think that having the TikTok force, the sale of TikTok, not a TikTok ban, people would still be able to do TikTok, do you think that helps you get to the number 79-18?

MCCONNELL: Well, let me tell you what that was about. That was about national security. And I'm a big defender of the First Amendment and free speech. But when it comes to national security, we were all concerned about the control of TikTok by the Chinese.

PERINO: OK, let's switch to ***politics*** a little bit because you are in your last efforts as leader, you're not leaving the Senate, but your -- this is your last few months as the leader. And your goal is to try to return Republicans to the majority in the Senate.

I have two questions for you. What race are you most confident about? And which one are you most concerned about?

MCCONNELL: Well, certainly the one I'm most confident about is West Virginia. A very, very popular governor, Justice, is running there. We're almost certain that's number 50.

So obviously we need another one somewhere else to get to the majority. And there'd be nothing wrong with getting more than that if we could. Montana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, all very, very competitive. And there are other states that could come into play.

PERINO: Do you think that Maryland is realistic for the Senate Republicans?

MCCONNELL: Glad you brought that up. I should have mentioned that myself. Yes, we have a fabulous candidate in Maryland. And who would have ever thought Maryland would be competitive? Former Governor Hogan has incredible approval ratings. And so I should have actually mentioned Maryland the first time.

PERINO: Well, it was on my mind. I saw he had a big ad buy today, about a million dollars that he's going to spend there.

My last question for you is about President Trump and President Biden. So it's the rematch that people are waiting for to watch to see what happens. We know throughout history, incumbents usually win a second term, but not always. Based on your experience, the polls where they are today, and your instincts, do you believe that it is possible for Joe Biden to be a one- term president? What will it take for President Trump to win?

MCCONNELL: Well, look, we know it'll be decided in about seven states. So everybody will vote all across America, but there are about seven states that will determine who actually wins. And it looks like we're going to have another close race like we had in 2020. Very difficult to predict who will win. But we're encouraged by the fact that President Biden has very bad approval numbers on almost every issue.

PERINO: Senator Mitch McConnell, great to have you this morning. I know that you were up late working on that bill. So we appreciate it. And the President Biden is likely to sign it today and make comments. Thank you so much.

MCCONNELL: Thanks, Dana.

**Load-Date:** April 24, 2024

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