

# [***Congress Moves Cautiously Closer to TikTok Crackdown***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BKR-B6T1-DY68-10M8-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Byline:** Alex J. Rouhandeh

**Highlight:** Senators called for hearings on forcing TikTok's Chinese owner to sell the popular app or have it banned.

**Body**

The effort in [*Congress*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/congress?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) to force a sale of [*TikTok*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/tiktok?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) gained traction today as Senators exited a closed-door briefing with national security officials and made calls for hearings on the matter.

On March 13, the House voted 352-65 in favor of a bill that would force TikTok's Chinese owner, ByteDance, to sell the company in six months or risk having the popular app banned in the United States.

The [*Senate*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/senate?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) Intelligence Committee, one of two committees charged with overseeing the matter, has seen bipartisan support from its leaders. Senator Mark Warner, a Virginia Democrat, and Senator [*Marco Rubio*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/marco-rubio?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships), a Florida [*Republican*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/republican?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships), have both announced support for the House bill.

However, Commerce Committee Chair Maria Cantwell, a Washington Democrat, has expressed a willingness to make changes to the legislation, which would require it to pass the House again. She reaffirmed that stance when *Newsweek* asked whether the briefing made her more inclined to support the House bill as the right path forward.

"I think [the officials who briefed us] would say they'd like something more robust, but they will take what they can get, and so I think that's what happened with the House," Cantwell said. "The next steps might be more public hearings by the two committees."

Lawmakers in favor of TikTok legislation worry that having the app, which boasts 150 million U.S. owners, in Chinese possession poses national security risks. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has passed a series of laws that require companies to comply with government requests, as a matter of national security.

Those who oppose TikTok warn that such laws pose risks to U.S. user data. They warn China could also launch disinformation campaigns through the app, given its popularity as a news source for millions of Americans. ByteDance admitted in 2022 that an internal investigation found employees had inappropriately obtained the data of tech journalists using the app.

TikTok did not respond to *Newsweek*'s request for comment but has previously rejected claims that it could be used to carry out objectives of the CCP. On the day of the House bill's passage, TikTok shared [*a study*](https://newsroom.tiktok.com/en-us/tiktok-economic-impact-report-2024-smb) detailing how it has contributed $24 Billion to U.S. economy in 2023 alone.

Nonetheless, a bipartisan coalition is pushing forward. Cantwell's Republican counterpart on the Commerce Committee, Senator [*Ted Cruz*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/ted-cruz?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) of Texas, appears aligned with the Washington Democrat, saying after the briefing: "We need to have a markup on it. I expect the Commerce Committee will do so, and we'll consider the House bill on the merits, we'll consider amendments."

The Intelligence Committee seems aligned with that plan, with Warner stressing the need to have the issue addressed before new lawmakers are sworn in for the next Congress in January of 2025.

"How many times do you get 350 votes for anything?" Warner said. "The more we can do to have the public understand, we want. This is less about a ban on TikTok and more about a transition to an American, non-controlled by CCP owner."

With the election drawing near, some worry that ***politics*** could derail the bill's passage if Senators spend too much time reviewing it and then send a version of the bill back to the House that no longer appeals to the lower chamber.

Former President [*Donald Trump*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/donald-trump?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships), who previously supported banning the app, has come out against the effort. However, the Biden administration has expressed a desire to see the bill pass Congress. Most [*Republicans*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/republicans?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) are on board.

"This is an important thing that we're doing because it has commercial implications too, so I want us to make sure it's the best bill possible," Rubio told *Newsweek*. "I think it benefits from having a committee hearing and things like that, but what that process looks like, as long as we get it done, that's what I care about."

[*Link to Image*](https://d.newsweek.com/en/full/2365273/congress-moves-cautiously-closer-tiktok-crackdown.jpg)

**Graphic**

Congress Moves Cautiously Closer to TikTok Crackdown

Photo by BRENDAN SMIALOWSKI/AFP via Getty Images

A person holds a sign during a press conference about their opposition to a TikTok ban on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. on March 22, 2023. Despite this opposition, lawmakers largely remain united in forcing a sale or implementing a ban, viewing TikTok as a national security threat.

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