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government spending running out at midnight Eastern time on Friday.

Dec. 22, 2022



By Aidan Quigley, CQ-Roll Call (via TNS).

The Senate overwhelmingly passed the mammoth fiscal 2023 spending package in a burst of activity on the floor Thursday after finally nailing down an amendments deal it took all day Wednesday and into the morning to hammer out.

The vote was 68-29 in support of the 4,155-page legislation. It includes the dozen

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the previous fiscal year, and \$787 billion in nondense spending, close to an 8% increase. It also would provide roughly \$85 billion in supplemental funding for Ukraine and disaster relief.

Senate passage paves the way for the House to clear the legislation ahead of government spending running out at midnight Eastern time on Friday.

Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., said midday Thursday she hoped the House could pass the measure on Thursday night, though that depended on how long it took the Senate to send the amended version across the Capitol. Most of the amendment attempts were unsuccessful, but several were tacked on:

—A Bill Cassidy, R-La., amendment to attach a bipartisan bill he co-authored with Bob Casey, D-Pa., that would put in place protections for pregnant workers against workplace discrimination. The amendment was adopted on a 73-24 vote.

—An amendment from Jeff Merkley, D-Ore., to require employers to provide employees with space in the workplace and time off to pump breast milk. It was adopted 92-5.

—A Kirsten Gillibrand, D-N.Y., amendment to provide \$1 billion to the World Trade Center Health Fund for first responders who got sick after the 9/11 cleanup effort and extend the program to 2027. It was adopted on a 90-6 vote.

—An amendment proposed by Sens. Bob Menendez, D-N.J., and Tom Cotton, R-Ark., to provide \$6 billion in compensation payments to a fund for victims of state-sponsored terror, from 9/11 families to families of victims of the 1983 Marine barracks bombing in Beirut. It was adopted, 93-4.

—An amendment from Sen. Mike Lee, R-Utah, to extend pay and benefits for Navy Lt. Ridge Alkonis—who is serving time in a Japanese prison for killing two people in a

2021 car crash — was adopted by voice vote.

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seized assets of Russian oligarchs to provide aid to the Ukrainian people. It was adopted by voice vote.

It wasn't immediately clear how long it would take to package up all the amended paperwork for transmittal to the House. And even after the House clears the bill, it will take time for the measure to be enrolled for Pelosi's signature, the last step before it's ready to go to the White House.

So with Christmas fast approaching, it was possible a very short-term stopgap measure to buy a few extra days next week could be needed with the latest continuing resolution expiring at midnight Friday.

House Appropriations Chair Rosa DeLauro, D-Conn., said she didn't think that would be necessary, however. And she expressed confidence the omnibus wouldn't face any hurdles in the House later on Thursday.

"We're going to pass it. It's going to happen," DeLauro said.

Border dispute

Thursday's passage followed drama Wednesday night when a dispute over an amendment related to Trump-era border restrictions during the public health emergency delayed passage.

Republicans wanted a simple majority vote on Lee's amendment to bar the Biden administration from ending the Title 42 pandemic-era asylum restriction policy, claiming it was germane to the underlying spending bill. Democrats sought a 60-vote threshold.

Democrats allowed consideration of Lee's amendment with a simple majority threshold in exchange for a vote on an amendment proposed by Sens. Kyrsten

Sinema, I-Ariz., and Jon Tester, D-Mont., that, in addition to blocking funds for

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sheep's clothing to mislead the American people to believe Dems are doing something to secure our borders." He added that it "merely provides them cover to vote against my extension of Title 42 protections."

Zelenskyy's plea

The Senate's passage of the legislation came the day after Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy [addressed a joint meeting of Congress](#), thanking lawmakers for their support and pleading for more as Ukraine continues to fend off Russia's invasion. The bill includes nearly \$47 billion in new military, economic and humanitarian aid for Ukraine.

Republicans praised the measure's higher level of defense spending and smaller increase on the nondefense side as a win in negotiations, and highlighted the retention of the Hyde amendment, that blocks federal funding for abortion in most cases, and flat-funding the IRS.

Senate Minority Leader [Mitch McConnell](#), R-Ky., said earlier this week the package "equips our armed forces with the resources they need while cutting nondefense, nonveteran spending in real dollars."

Democrats also highlighted priorities in the package, including the first funding increase for the National Labor Relations Board in over a decade, increased clean energy funding in the Energy-Water bill and more funding for affordable housing.

Pelosi said Thursday the package featured "the highest nondefense, domestic number ever" though noted "we always want more."

The legislation also included a bevy of provisions unrelated to the annual appropriations process, including legislation banning TikTok on government phones and horse racing industry rules. High-profile legislation clarifying the role of

the vice president in counting electoral votes and raising the number of members

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the legislation.

Minority Leader [Kevin McCarthy](#), R-Calif., who is struggling to secure the votes needed to become House speaker in January, is adamantly against the omnibus. Just nine Republicans voted for the one-week CR needed last week to pave way for omnibus passage.

(CQ-Roll Call staff writer Lindsey McPherson contributed to this report.)

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