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clash with Democrats over tax law enforcement.

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Newly elected House Speaker Mike Johnson speaks after his election at the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C., on Oct. 25, 2023. (Tom Brenner/AFP/Getty Images/TNS)

By Erik Wasson, Bloomberg News (TNS)

House Republicans, led by newly installed Speaker Mike Johnson, passed a \$14.3 billion Israel aid package tied to cuts in IRS funding, triggering a clash with Democrats over tax law enforcement that risks delaying U.S. financial help.

Lawmakers from both parties are largely united in supporting assistance for Israel in

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Johnson was able to keep fractious ultraconservatives in the GOP largely united behind the plan by including the IRS cuts. Just two Republicans voted no. Twelve Democrats voted in favor of the legislation.

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, a New York Democrat, vowed Thursday that the Senate won't vote on the House bill and instead will produce a broader emergency package without cuts to the IRS.

"We will work together on our own bipartisan emergency aid package that includes aid to Israel, Ukraine, competition with the Chinese government, and humanitarian aid for Gaza," Schumer said.

That risks a time-consuming impasse with the Republican-controlled House.

Johnson told reporters before the House vote that he would insist on the IRS cuts because of the growing U.S. budget deficit.

"We are in dire straits as a nation," he said. "I'm ready to have that debate."

The new speaker and his Republican allies disputed a CBO estimate that the IRS provisions would increase the deficit by \$12.5 billion.

They argued the IRS will unfairly target the middle class with funding for tax enforcement included in President Joe Biden's signature Inflation Reduction Act. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen last year ordered the agency not to use the money to increase audits on small businesses or taxpayers making less than \$400,000 a year.

Swing-district Republicans said the fight is good politics for them against the Democrats.

"If they want to choose the IRS over Israel that's their choice. I choose Israel," said New York's Marc Molinaro.

The Biden administration last month requested a \$106 billion emergency aid package

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Senate Democrats and Republicans are preparing to release their own emergency spending bill as soon as next week. Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, a Kentucky Republican who is a long-time supporter of assistance to Ukraine, said assisting the country's counter-offensive against Russia is a critical national interest.

"We don't have the luxury of closing our gates and hoping for evil to leave us alone," he said. "Now is not the time for the leader of the free world to go to sleep."

— *Steven T. Dennis and Billy House contributed to this report.*

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