

Republicans block “bipartisan” infrastructure bill

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21 July 2021

On Wednesday, Senate Republicans unanimously voted against a procedural motion advanced by Democratic Majority Leader Chuck Schumer to begin debate on a bipartisan infrastructure plan negotiated last month by a group of five Republican and five Democratic senators.

The infrastructure bill is part of the Biden administration’s imperialist agenda to upgrade and secure the home front in preparation for economic warfare and future military conflict with China, while making certain improvements in the nation’s crumbling infrastructure deemed essential to the operations of US big business. It is limited to “brick and mortar” items such as bridges, water systems, roads, rail transportation and broadband internet service.

The near-party line 51-49 vote was 11 “yes” votes short of the 60 required to advance the legislation past a Republican filibuster. Schumer had originally voted “yes” on the measure, but switched his vote to “no” after the voting was completed. He explained that the move was necessary to bring the bill forward again at later date, perhaps as early as this coming Monday.

Leading up to the vote, Republicans who had previously negotiated with the Democrats on the bipartisan infrastructure package signaled their intention to vote against it, insisting that they needed more time to horse trade with the Democrats. That the vote was destined to fail was telegraphed by the lead Republican negotiator on the package, Senator Rob Portman (Ohio), who told CNBC’s “Squawk Box” Wednesday morning: “Today we’re not going to be able to support moving forward, we will be able to on Monday.”

After the vote failed, Portman and 21 other Republican and Democratic senators released a statement claiming “significant progress” had been

made on the bill and the “bipartisan” proposal would be advanced “in the coming days.” Republican Senator Mitt Romney (Utah) likewise indicated he thought an agreement would be forthcoming. “In my view, we’ll have the agreement completed over the weekend,” said Romney.

Despite the bipartisan announcement last month that an agreement had been reached, in the ensuing weeks the Republicans have chipped away at the bill, including axing a mechanism to fund the bill by providing additional money for the Internal Revenue Service to enforce existing tax laws.

Biden has dropped his pitiful proposal to increase the corporate tax rate by 7 percent, partially reversing the Trump tax cuts of 2017, which reduced corporate taxes to 21 percent, well below the previous rate of 35 percent.

Biden claims he will include the corporate tax increase in the \$3.5 trillion “human infrastructure” package the Democrats will attempt to pass without Republican support in the evenly split Senate. They promise to push that measure through under the “budget reconciliation” process, which bypasses the filibuster rule and requires only a bare majority.

However, that remains in doubt due to opposition from right-wing senators within the Democratic caucus.

The smaller \$1.2 trillion bipartisan proposal includes only \$579 billion in new funding. It has the support of Wall Street and K Street and has been hailed both by business lobbies and the AFL-CIO. The bill would dole out money to corporations and contractors though “public-private partnerships.”



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