

House Democrats join majority of Republicans in passing Elon Musk-approved government funding bill

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On Friday, the House of Representatives appeared to avert a prolonged government shutdown by voting to pass a stripped-down budget bill that would keep the US government funded through March 14, 2025. As of this writing, the “continuing resolution” (CR) is being debated in the US Senate ahead of a 12:01 a.m. Saturday deadline.

The budget resolution passed the House in a lopsided bipartisan vote after it received approval from the world’s richest man, Elon Musk, who said on X before the vote: “The Speaker did a good job here, given the circumstances. It went from a bill that weighed pounds to a bill that weighed ounces.”

Following Musk’s tweet, the vote in the House was 366-34, with not a single Democratic representative voting against the bill. All 34 Republicans who opposed it are on the fascist right and rejected it for not cutting enough from social programs that benefit the working class and retired people.

Notably, the legislation does not include a suspension or rise in the debt ceiling, a core demand of President-elect Donald Trump two days ago. As of this writing, several hours after the House bill was passed, Trump has yet to issue a statement on social media. Earlier in the day, he posted that if “there is going to be a shutdown of the government, let it begin now, under the Biden Administration, not after January 20th, under ‘Trump.’ This is a Biden problem to solve, but if Republicans can help solve it, they will!”

On Wednesday, Musk and Trump intervened to tank the initial budget proposal, which had been agreed to by Johnson and Democratic Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer of New York. At that time, Trump threatened to primary election challenge any

Republican who voted for the proposal because it did not include raising the debt ceiling.

In order to enact more sweeping tax cuts for the wealthy and his corporate backers, Trump is proposing an extension of his 2017 multitrillion-dollar tax cut for the rich measure that will greatly increase the national debt, even with substantial cuts to social programs.

In opposition to the previously agreed to resolution, Musk and Trump proposed a new CR which included many cuts to programs previously championed by the Democrats while also suspending the debt limit until 2026.

This proposal failed on Thursday after virtually every Democrat and far-right Republicans voted against it. After it appeared a government shutdown was likely, on Friday afternoon Speaker of the House Mike Johnson (Louisiana) revealed a third iteration of the continuing resolution that mirrored Thursday’s bill without the debt limit suspension.

The bill includes \$110 billion in financial support to address climate change-fueled disasters—tens of millions of which will be allocated to military installations located throughout the Southeast United States that were ravaged by hurricanes earlier this year.

Addressing the media after the vote in the House, Speaker Johnson pointed to the immense role Trump and the un-elected billionaire Musk played in the negotiations. Johnson said he “was in constant contact with President Trump throughout this process,” and that he “spoke with him most recently about 45 minutes ago. He knew exactly what we were doing and why.”

Johnson then revealed, “Elon Musk and I talked

within, about an hour ago, and we talked about the extraordinary challenges of this job, and I said, ‘Hey do you want to be speaker of the House?’ I don’t know. He said this may be the hardest job in the world. I think it is.”

Johnson added, “We are going to unify this country and we are going to bring the America First agenda to the people in January.”

Friday’s stripped-down resolution does not contain several proposals that Democrats had previously championed that benefit working class families. This includes an authorization to reimburse states with citizens who were victims of food stamp theft. The *Washington Post* reported that the program had served more than 300,000 households since being initiated in 2023, paying states \$150 million.

The Musk-approved bill also stripped out a series of reforms that concerned pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs). Benefit managers are the “middlemen,” who negotiate drug prices with pharmaceutical companies on behalf of the government. The bill would have ended the practice of PBMs “spread pricing,” which gives PBMs the ability to charge programs like Medicaid more than they pay the pharmacy for the prescription, allowing them to keep the difference as profit.

The resolution also stripped out the Gabriella Miller Kids First Research act, named after a 10-year-old Virginia girl who died from an inoperable brain tumor. The *Post* reported that the bill was first signed into law by President Barack Obama and had “historically drawn bipartisan support.” Since its passage a decade ago, some \$125 million has been spent on pediatric cancer research.

Politico reported on Friday that despite the stripping of this and several other measures previously supported by the Democrats, Senate Majority Leader Schumer was “confident” the Senate would pass the budget bill “as soon as possible.”

Schumer told the media outlet that while the bill “does not include everything Democrats fought for,” it still had “major victories.”

While the current president, Joe Biden, has yet to issue a statement or even post on social media about the intervention of Musk and the possibility of a government shutdown, *Politico* reported that the White House approved the new CR bill.

If the Senate does not send the resolution to Biden’s desk by midnight Friday, the US government will begin a partial shutdown. It is likely the bill will become law by Monday morning, but if it does not, furloughs could begin for more than 2 million workers, according to the *New York Times*. This includes over 400,000 Department of Defense employees, over 55,000 at the Department of Treasury, and 93 percent, or over 17,000 workers, at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).

Thousands of workers at the Securities and Exchange Commission, Department of Agriculture, Department of Health and Human Services, Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Education and the Smithsonian Institution, among many other government departments, could also be laid off or have their paychecks delayed.

That Biden remained and continues to remain silent even amid the threat of over a million workers being laid off before the holiday is a testament to the level of “resistance” the Democratic Party will put forward in the coming period. While Musk constantly incites Republicans and fascists on his social media platform, the Democrats do nothing to rouse popular opposition to the rule of the oligarchs.

Instead, as Friday’s vote demonstrates, the Democrats are more than willing to work with Trump, Musk and far-right Republicans to approve legislation that eliminates social and science programs that benefit workers and their families. In the last month, Democrats from California Representative Ro Khanna to (nominally independent) Senator Bernie Sanders have pledged to work with Musk’s “Department of Government Efficiency” to “reform” the government.



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