

Senate Sets Wednesday Vote for 9/11 Bill Veto Override

Friday, just hours before the deadline, President Obama vetoed the Justice Against Sponsors of Terrorism Act, a bill that would have allowed the families of 9/11 victims to sue the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia over its involvement in the nation's worst terrorist attack.

Republicans in the House and Senate had promised to vote on an override if that happened. Both chambers passed the measure unanimously by voice vote, all but ensuring the votes exist for an override—potentially a first for Obama's presidency.

Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump had weighed in on the matter over the weekend. In an official statement distributed by his campaign, he said:

"President Obama's veto of the Justice Against Sponsors of Terrorism Act is shameful and will go down as one of the low points of his presidency. This bipartisan legislation was passed unanimously by both houses of Congress and would have allowed the families of the nearly 3,000 people slaughtered by radical Islamic terrorists on Sept. 11, 2001, the opportunity to seek justice in an American court of law.

"That President Obama would deny the parents, spouses and children of those we lost on that horrific day the chance to close this painful chapter in their lives is a disgrace. These are wonderful people, and as a lifelong New Yorker, I am saddened that they will, for now, not have that opportunity. If elected president, I would sign such legislation should it reach my desk."

Monday afternoon, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) announced there will be an override vote scheduled for Wednesday. It must pass with a two-thirds majority—67 votes—to

force the bill into law.

The stumbling block could be in the House, however. There, a two-thirds majority would be 290 votes. Speaker of the House Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) has dragged his feet a bit more than McConnell, though.

Asked last week if he would bring up an override vote before Congress goes on its pre-election recess, Ryan more or less left it up to the Senate. The override vote could provide an additional motivator for voters in the general election—any Democrat who votes against it faces almost immediate electoral peril.

Republicans need Democratic votes to override the veto. In the Senate, Republicans need the help of just six Democrats, while in the House, if just 43 Democrats vote for the measure, it will pass.