

Harris Uses First Tiebreaker Vote to Back Biden's \$1.9 Trillion Aid Plan

Early Friday, Senate lawmakers voted to approve President Joseph R. Biden's \$1.9 trillion stimulus package for coronavirus relief in a marathon voting session in which Republicans forced Democrats to take votes on a number of critical issues. After the session—known as a vote-a-rama—that included 141 roll call votes, the Senate adopted the package 51-50, with Vice President Kamala Harris casting her first tie-breaking vote.

The bill will allow the Senate to proceed toward a final bill under the body's budget reconciliation rules; the House, which had already adopted its plan, will need to vote again today to agree on the Senate's language. The amount of stimulus money to be received per taxpayer remains uncertain, however.

Budget Chairman Bernie Sanders said during the debate that the adoption of the package moves the country toward assisting those suffering from an "economic collapse."

"Tonight we can say to them we understand the pain that they are experiencing and we are going to do something about it."

Republicans won several victories through the vote-a-rama, including forcing the cancellation of a Democratic plan to increase the federal minimum wage to \$15 hour, which they believe would further damage small businesses during the pandemic crisis:

Tonight I got the entire Senate –Democrats and Republicans – to agree not to hike the federal minimum wage to \$15 per hour during a global pandemic, which would kill jobs and destroy small businesses.

– Joni Ernst (@SenJoniErnst) February 5, 2021

The last thing #OKsmallbiz need during the COVID pandemic is more uncertainty.

Moments ago the Senate unanimously agreed to my amendment with @marcorubio and @SenatorTimScott to prevent tax hikes small businesses during #COVID19.

– Sen. James Lankford (@SenatorLankford) February 4, 2021

The Senate also approved an amendment to keep the U.S. Embassy in Jerusalem. The 97-3 vote was put forward by Sen. Jim Inhofe, R-Okla., and Sen. Bill Hagerty, R-Tenn. The only three opposing votes came from Sen. Bernie Sanders, D-Vt., Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass. and Tom Caper, D-Del., according to the Jerusalem Post.

Another key amendment vote, one which gained overwhelming bipartisan support for not defunding police departments, came from Sen. John Cornyn, R-Tex.

My amendment to #BackTheBlue and defend, not defund, the police passed the Senate overwhelmingly tonight by vote of 100-0

– Senator John Cornyn (@JohnCornyn) February 5, 2021

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