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Victor Nava

Deal linking US immigration law changes to Ukraine aid unlikely to be struck this week: GOP senator

Угода, яка пов'язує зміни імміграційного законодавства США за допомогою України, навряд чи буде укладена цього тижня, - заявив сенатор Республіканської партії

Журналіст «New York Post» Віктор Нава коментує, чому голосування за виділення допомоги Україні пов'язують із посиленням мексикансько-американського кордону. Сенатор Джеймс Ланкфорд, республіканець від штату Оклахома, який очолює сенаторів Республіканської партії у переговорах, спрямованих на те, щоб пов'язати 61,4 млрд дол., виділених президентом Джо Байденом на фінансування України під час війни, із змінами у системі надання притулку у США, сумнівається, що обидві сторони зможуть дійти єдиної думки щодо угоди до кінця тижня. Він заявив, що не впевнений, що навіть додатковий тиждень засідань призведе до прийняття угоди. Сенатор США від штату Південна Дакота, член республіканської партії Джон Т'юн очікує, що Білий дім більш активно братиме участь у переговорах, звинувативши адміністрацію Д. Байдена в тому, що вона несерйозно ставиться до вирішення цієї проблеми.

<https://nypost.com/2023/12/11/news/deal-linking-us-immigration-law-changes-to-ukraine-aid-unlikely-to-be-struck-this-week-gop-senator/>

Senators are not close to striking a deal that would tighten US immigration laws and approve billions of dollars aid for Ukraine, lawmakers said Monday.

Time is of the essence to make a deal, with both the House and Senate scheduled to recess for the holidays on Thursday.

However, Sen. James Lankford (R-Okla.), who is leading GOP senators in negotiations that seek to tie President Biden's \$61.4 billion in wartime funding for Ukraine with changes to the US asylum system, was doubtful that both parties could come together on an agreement by the end of the week.

"We're not gonna be able to get [a deal] by Thursday or Friday this week. We're still working through text... and there are large areas that are unresolved," Lankford told reporters Monday, calling it a "frustrating weekend" and accusing the White House of not looping him in on discussions Biden administration officials were having with Democratic lawmakers.

The Oklahoma Republican further told NBC News that he is uncertain that even an extra week in session would lead to agreement being hammered out.

"There's no way to get it done this week," Lankford said. "The question is are we staying in next week or does this actually move into early January to be able to resolve? That's a big unknown at this point, and that depends on how the negotiation actually goes and how we're actually working through to be able to actually get text that actually works."

With the clock ticking, Senate Minority Whip John Thune (R-SD) said Monday that he expects the White House to get more engaged in talks, similarly accusing the Biden administration of not being "serious about addressing this in a real, meaningful, serious way."

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky is scheduled to meet with Biden and House Speaker Mike Johnson on Tuesday in a last-ditch bid to secure additional funding for his country before members of Congress skip town for the year-end holidays.

“We have a responsibility to the [US],” Lankford said of whether Zelensky could say anything to Republican lawmakers that would get them to back off their immigration reform and border security demands.

“That would mean me going back to my state and saying I care about people in other countries, but I don’t care about what’s happening in my own country. It’s important that we actually do two things at once here,” he added.

Thune said his message to Zelensky will be “we wanna help but we need Dems to get serious” on border security.

Sen. Chris Murphy, D-Conn., the leading Democratic Senate negotiator, left the door open to the possibility of a deal being struck by Thursday.

“Obviously, we don’t have the benefit of time right now,” Murphy told NBC News. “I’ve seen stranger things happen in the Senate. But that certainly seems like an uphill climb — but not impossible.”

Biden, 81, requested that Congress approve a \$106 billion supplemental aid package, which includes \$61.4 billion in new assistance for Ukraine, in October.

The package, which also includes roughly \$44.5 billion in support for Israel, Taiwan and the southern US border, was voted down a third time by the Senate last week.

Senate Republicans are demanding an overhaul to America’s “broken asylum process” as a condition for passing the spending request, and hope to attach migrant asylum and parole modifications to the president’s national security supplemental.

GOP senators are demanding that migrants be ineligible for asylum if they have transited through at least one country outside their home country before arriving in the US or have committed felonies or other serious crimes.

The lawmakers also seek to raise the asylum “credible fear of persecution” standard from “significant possibility” to “more likely than not” and revive the Trump-era “Remain in Mexico” policy, which allowed US border authorities to return migrants to Mexico while their asylum claims played out in the court system.

The GOP proposal also seeks changes to the humanitarian parole system, which the Biden administration has used to resettle more than 200,000 refugees from Afghanistan and Ukraine, and hundreds of thousands more from countries that include Venezuela, Cuba and Haiti.

Republicans want parole only for migrants not currently in the country and limited to rare cases.