

House Republicans Continue Infighting, Bring DHS Closer to a Shutdown

Yesterday, House Democrats introduced a clean bill to fund the Department of Homeland Security for the remainder of the fiscal year and prevent a shutdown of DHS – and every single House Republican voted against it. As we approach the February 27 deadline, Republicans are putting our national security at risk over unrelated provisions focused on immigration policy, which should be a separate debate.

Several Republicans in both the House and the Senate disagree with these political games and are urging Republican leaders to pass a clean bill to fund DHS without delay:

Representative and NRCC Chair Greg Walden (R-OR): “‘I don’t think we win that debate [over DHS funding] in the press, we don’t, for a lot of reasons,’ Walden said. ‘Some people think we can. I’m not one of them. Just because **the American people expect us to come here and get our job done and get our work done, and work out our differences — and especially in the area of national security.**’” [Politico, [2/11/15](#)]

Representative Charlie Dent (R-PA): “‘A House GOP lawmaker said Wednesday that a ‘clean’ bill funding the Department of Homeland Security would be better politically than passing a short-term continuing resolution (CR) funding the agency. ‘I think it’s better politically to vote for a clean appropriations bill,’ he added. ‘**That’s better on a policy basis as well as on a political basis.** I’m going to urge that we do the DHS bill and not a CR, but a CR is better than a shutdown’... ‘**We all know how this is going to end: it’s going to end in a CR or a clean or cleaner DHS appropriations bill,**’ he said.” [The Hill, [2/11/15](#)]

Senator Mark Kirk (R-IL): “‘Republican Sen. Mark Kirk said Wednesday that **his party made a mistake by picking a fight over President Barack Obama's immigration actions, and said Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) should bring up a ‘clean’ bill to keep the Department of Homeland Security funded.** ‘I generally agree with the Democratic position here. **I think we should have never fought this battle on DHS funding,**’ the Illinois senator said in the Capitol. ‘**I think it’s the wrong battle for us at the wrong time**’... ‘I always thought the burden of being in the majority is the burden of governing.’” [Talking Points Memo, [2/11/15](#)]

They join a number of Republicans that have warned against playing games with DHS funding:

Senator Susan Collins (R-ME): “‘I would be concerned if the funding restrictions affected the ability of the Department of Homeland Security to carry out its vital functions.’” [The Hill, [1/13/15](#)]

Senator Lindsey Graham (R-SC): “‘To my Republican colleagues, we're playing with fire here. We need a robust homeland security budget now.’” [CNN, [1/12/15](#)]

Senator John Cornyn (R-TX): "...[W]e're not going to take any chances with the homeland." [CNN, [1/11/15](#)]

Representative Jeff Denham (R-CA): "This bill is being done for political messaging and I think the message is all wrong..." [The Hill, [1/15/15](#)]

Former Republican DHS Secretaries Ridge and Chertoff [in a letter with former Democratic DHS Secretary Napolitano]: "We cannot emphasize enough that the DHS's responsibilities are much broader than its responsibility to oversee the federal immigration agencies and to protect our borders,' they write in a copy of the letter obtained by The Washington Post.... **'It is imperative that we ensure that DHS is ready, willing and able to protect the American people,'** they add. **'To that end, we urge you not to risk funding for the operations that protect every American and to pass a clean DHS funding bill.'**" [Washington Post, [1/29/15](#)]

The U.S. Conference of Mayors: "A fully functioning Department of Homeland Security is critical to the security of our nation, our cities, and our citizens... A Department operating on a short-term continuing resolution, despite its best efforts, faces uncertainty and delays and simply cannot be fully functioning." [Huffington Post, [2/4/15](#)]

But instead taking bipartisan action to fund DHS and ensure the agency has the resources needed to keep America safe, the Republican leadership is more focused on pointing fingers at one another:

"The Republican honeymoon is over on Capitol Hill. Just a month into their taking full control of Congress, **Republican leaders in the House and Senate are at odds** over how to avoid shutting down the Department of Homeland Security as part of an immigration fight with the Obama administration. House Speaker John A. Boehner (R-Ohio) and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) were **at an impasse Wednesday** over how to pass legislation to fund DHS before funding runs out on Feb. 27..." [Washington Post, [2/11/15](#)]

"A pair of GOP senators [Cory Gardner and Shelley Moore Capito] implored House Republicans Thursday to soften their stance in the intra-party dispute over funding the Department of Homeland Security... Despite the senators' appeal to their former colleagues, House Republicans said their conference is sticking with the original strategy... **Aides said GOP leaders' message to rank-and-file members was clear: We're staying the course.**" [The Hill, [2/11/15](#)]

"Senate and House Republicans are fighting over who should move first to break the stalemate over funding the Department of Homeland Security... Rank-and-file Republicans echoed the comments from their leaders, suggesting the impasse is likely to

Office of Democratic Whip Steny H. Hoyer, 02/11/15

extend until after next week's congressional recess. Congress would then return to Washington the week of Feb. 23 with only five working days to reach a solution.... **Senate GOP leaders expressed some frustration with their House brethren. 'They'd like to leave the hot potato with us and I think we've made pretty clear that we've tried our best and the math doesn't work,' said Senate Republican Whip John Cornyn (Texas).**" [The Hill, [2/10/15](#)]

"The intra-GOP recriminations have begun over the party's failing strategy to stop President Barack Obama's executive actions on immigration as the clock ticks to a shutdown of the Department of Homeland Security in 17 days... **Republican hardliners are blaming party leaders for not fighting hard enough, while House and Senate GOP leaders point the finger at one another to find a solution to the impasse.** 'We've had a week on it. We've had three cloture votes, all of which have not succeeded. It's clear we can't get on the bill..' Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) told reporters Tuesday. **'I think it's clear we can't go forward in the Senate. And so the next move, obviously, is up to the House.'**" [Talking Points Memo, [2/10/15](#)]

"In control of Congress for the first time in eight years, Republicans began the year with pledges to boost cooperation between the chambers and work in concert to block the White House where they could. But the struggle to find a way out of the impasse over Homeland Security funding highlighted the pressures each chamber's leader faces, often eased by redirecting blame to the other side." [Wall Street Journal, [2/10/15](#)]

With only six legislative days left until the Department of Homeland Security shuts down, it is time for House Republicans to stop their political gamesmanship. There is strong bipartisan agreement on the underlying DHS funding bill, which supports [essential services](#) that ensure the safety and security of American families and communities. Failure to pass such a bill will only show the American people that Republicans are putting politics before governing responsibly. It is time for Republicans to work with Democrats to pass a clean bill without delay.