



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on October 21, 2021

Massive Spending Bills Stalled by Just Two Democrats

Two Democrat senators are standing in the way of passing Biden's "legacy": a vast "infrastructure" bill that has little to do with repairing the nation's physical infrastructure; and another even larger "social infrastructure" bill that in essence is socialist Senator Bernie Sanders' fondest dream.

The two senators — Joe Manchin of West Virginia and Kyrsten Sinema of Arizona — have taken different stands in opposition.

Manchin thinks the \$3.5 trillion "Build Back Better" bill [is too costly](#), and wants to cut it by more than half, to just \$1.5 trillion. He also wants to keep the Hyde Amendment in place — the law Congress passed that prevents U.S. taxpayers from funding abortions. He claims that passage in its present form would turn the United States into an "entitlement mentality" culture increasingly dependent upon the government for everything.

Manchin has threatened to leave the Democrat Party if he doesn't get his way. [His staff leaked his plans to the far-left Mother Jones](#) on Wednesday, which Manchin conveniently denied on Thursday. *Mother Jones* stands by the story: Manchin has given the Democrat leadership a week to agree to his demands or he'll become an "American Independent."

When Senator Bernie Sanders criticized Manchin in an op-ed, Manchin created headlines by touting his "small government" position: "Congress should proceed with caution on any additional spending, and I will not vote for a reckless expansion of government programs. No op-ed from a self-declared Independent socialist is going to change that."

For the record, according to the Freedom Index published by *The New American*, which rates politicians based on their adherence to the Constitution, [Sanders](#) sports a lifetime voting record of 28 out of 100, while [Manchin's](#) lifetime rating is identical: 28 out of 100.

[Sinema](#), whose lifetime Freedom Index rating is even worse — 17 out of 100 — on the other hand has no problem with spending huge amounts of money the government doesn't have. Her problem is she doesn't want to raise taxes to pay for it.

The proposed tax increases would include raising the corporate tax rate from 21 percent to 28 percent, and the top individual income tax rate from 37 percent to nearly 40 percent. It would up the top capital-gains tax rate as well, and impose a "mark to market" strategy under which owners of unrealized wealth would be forced to liquidate part of that wealth to pay the taxes.



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The bills encompass most of the Green New Deal — massive incentives to reward energy projects designed to fulfill the Democrats' objective of making the U.S. economy dependent on wind, sun, and water no later than 2030. There would also be massive penalties for present energy generators — power plants and the like — who don't kowtow to the new green agenda.

They include massive expansions of the present Medicaid and Medicare welfare programs, an increase in the child tax credit to low-income families, increases in paid leave, and free tuition to community colleges.

At present, Sinema (who isn't up for reelection until 2024) is the primary roadblock. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer needs every Democrat senator to vote for these bills — a single defection would doom them. And he's getting plenty of heat for not being able to force either Sinema or Manchin to recant, and to go along. Following a meeting with Schumer on Wednesday, New Jersey Democrat Representative Bill Pascell expressed his anger, not at Sinema or Manchin, but at Schumer: "He's the leader over there. Pelosi has carried the total burden and the other guy [Schumer] has picked up the pieces. That's it."

The clock is working against the Democrats. If the negotiations, which are ongoing, fail to uncork the two-headed bottleneck by the middle of November, for all intents and purposes Biden and the Democrats will have lost. There will be no "legacy" spending bill on which to hang their political futures' hats in the upcoming midterms.

Biden's cratering in the polls isn't helping, either. And if the economy reels under the attacks from the White House, it could seal the doom for the Democrats in November of 2022, as most voters are "pocketbook" voters who care little about the Democrat agenda.

Without this legacy to tout, as Ezra Klein noted in *The New York Times*, the "Democrats are sleepwalking into catastrophe." This was reiterated by Ian Ward, writing in *Politico*: "the party's platform [is] leading Democrats down a path toward political obscurity."

All thanks to the political maneuvering of two liberal Democrats who refuse to go along to get along.



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