



## Senate Passes \$854B Spending Bill Funding Everything But Border Wall

The Senate, by a 93-7 vote, passed an \$854 billion spending bill on September 18, the bulk of the funding going to the departments of Defense, Health and Human Services (HHS), Labor, and Education. Six Republican senators — Jeff Flake (Ariz.), Mike Lee (Utah), Rand Paul (Ky.), David Perdue (Ga.), Ben Sasse (Neb.) and Pat Toomey (Pa.) — joined Senator Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) in voting against the bill.



Toomey said the legislation employed budget gimmicks that pushed spending even beyond the spending caps set earlier this year as part of a bipartisan budget deal signed by the White House. “It’s a completely dishonest gimmick to spend \$7 billion above the cap that was agreed upon, and it’s really irresponsible,” Toomey remarked.

The legislation also includes a short-term stopgap bill to fund the remainder of the federal government through December 7, thus preventing a government shutdown that would otherwise begin on October 1.

In a post on Twitter on September 20, President Trump criticized the spending bill, writing:

I want to know, where is the money for Border Security and the WALL in this ridiculous Spending Bill, and where will it come from after the Midterms? Dems are obstructing Law Enforcement and Border Security. REPUBLICANS MUST FINALLY GET TOUGH!

Reuters reported that the White House has not yet said whether Trump would sign the measure, if it is also approved by the House, which will have to take up the legislation when it returns to session September 25.

A report in *The Hill* on September 19 noted that conservative members of the House Freedom Caucus and the Republican Study Committee (RSC), the largest GOP caucus in the House, which often held up appropriations bills in the past by making demands to cut mandatory spending and to advance other conservative priorities, were losing ground in their attempts to check government spending.

“It’s a little bit frustrating right now,” *The Hill* quoted Representative Mark Walker (R-S.C.), the chairman of the RSC.

One explanation for the conservatives’ loss of influence offered by *The Hill* was that the congressional leadership has cleverly bundled funding for the labor bill, a major Democratic priority, with funding for the Pentagon, a major Republican priority. For conservatives, voting against the package would mean voting against an increase in defense spending and a raise for the troops.

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Written by [Warren Mass](#) on September 20, 2018

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