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Trump supports government shutdown as McCarthy, House GOP face new challenges in spending fight

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WASHINGTON - With nine days left for the House to avoid a government shutdown, lawmakers remain engulfed in spending fights and appear no closer to a resolution.

At issue: a government shutdown that could disrupt the lives of Americans and affect national operations. Adding to the complications: new pressure on the GOP from the party's presidential front-runner, Donald Trump, who says he supports a shutdown.



shutdown, Democrats and other moderate Republicans are putting pressure on the top leader as the Sept. 30 deadline looms.

Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., warned House Republicans on Tuesday that a government shutdown would hurt the Republican Party.

"I think all of you know I'm not a fan of government shutdowns, I've seen a few of them over the years, they never have produced a policy change and they've always been a loser for Republicans, politically," McConnell told reporters.

Here's where the House stands on the spending fight:

Trump adds pressure to Republicans, says he supports government shutdown

Trump warned Republicans in a Truth Social post on Wednesday night of the looming government shutdown and urged them to take action against the Biden administration.

"A very important deadline is approaching at the end of the month. Republicans in Congress can and must defund all aspects of Crooked Joe Biden's weaponized Government that refuses to close the Border, and treats half the Country as Enemies of the State," Trump wrote.

He also wrote: "They failed on the debt limit, but they must not fail now. Use the power of the purse and defend the Country!"

Earlier this week, Trump was asked by Kristen Welker on NBC's "Meet the Press" if he thought Republican hardliners should abandon their threat to shut down the government over spending priorities now that McCarthy had opened an impeachment inquiry into Biden.

"No. I think if they don't get a fair deal – we have to save our country. We have \$35 trillion in debt. We have to save our country," Trump said.

After Welker asked whether he supports a government shutdown, he said, "I'd shut down the government if they can't make an appropriate deal, absolutely."



Earlier this week, two key factions of House Republicans, the conservative House Freedom Caucus and the moderate Main Street Caucus, crafted a short-term, stopgap measure called a continuing resolution that would temporarily fund the government through Oct. 31.

The bill would impose an 8% spending cut on most federal agencies and include border security provisions that have been on conservative wish lists.

But the question remains on whether the resolution will pass the House, as a number of Republicans have opposed the deal, and the Democratic-led Senate, since it doesn't include provisions for Ukraine aid.

McCarthy vowed Wednesday that he would rally his colleagues to pass the temporary measure and argued there was time to win over hardline conservatives, according to the Associated Press. But after a two-hour closed-door meeting yesterday, he had only inched closer to a resolution.

“We’re very close there,” McCarthy said. “I feel like I just got a little more movement to go there.”

Tensions in the House further divide members as the clock ticks

As the deadline for a government shutdown approaches, Democrats also began discussions with other moderate Republicans on a fallback plan if the stopgap bill falls through.

“We’ll see if this doesn’t get resolved,” Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick, R-Pa., told USA TODAY on Tuesday. “I don’t believe in shutdowns, I’ll tell you that.”

The New Democrat Coalition also sent a letter to McCarthy on Tuesday Monday urging him to move spending bills forward on a bipartisan basis and calling for him to “reject the hyperpartisan approach.

If a shutdown does occur, various government operations could be affected. Federal employees considered essential, such as air traffic controllers and border patrol, will continue to work without pay while other employees could be furloughed. Some food safety inspections considered nonessential also could be delayed, and national parks will operate on a limited basis.

