

# Senate celebrates budget deal, but shutdown still possible

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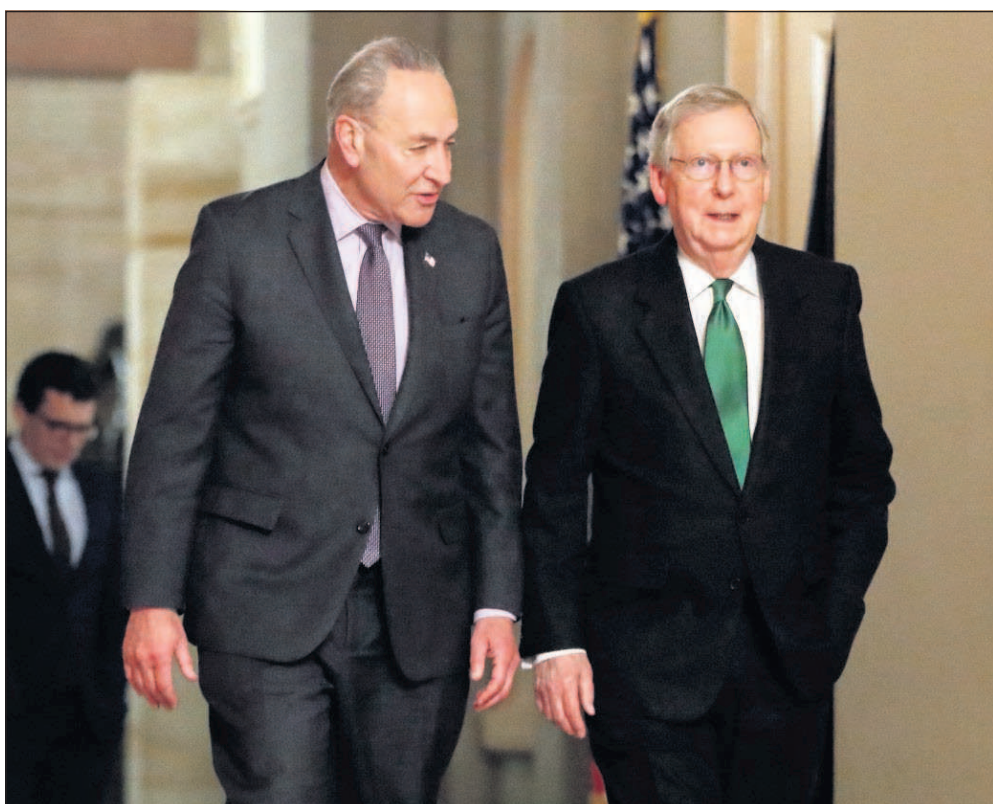
WASHINGTON — Senate leaders brokered a long-sought budget agreement Wednesday that would shower the Pentagon and domestic programs with an extra \$300 billion over the next two years. But both Democratic liberals and GOP tea party forces swung against the plan, raising questions about its chances just a day before the latest government shutdown deadline.

The measure was a win for Republican allies of the Pentagon and for Democrats seeking more for infrastructure projects and combatting opioid abuse. But it represented a bitter defeat for many liberal Democrats who sought to use the party's leverage on the budget to resolve the plight of immigrant "Dreamers" who face deportation after being brought to the U.S. illegally as children. The deal does not address immigration.

Beyond the \$300 billion figure, the agreement adds almost \$90 billion in overdue disaster aid for hurricane-slammed Texas, Florida and Puerto Rico.

Senate leaders hope to approve the measure Thursday and send it to the House for a confirming vote before the government begins to shut down Thursday at midnight. But hurdles remain to avert the second shutdown in a month.

While Senate Democrats celebrated the moment of rare bipartisanship — Minority Leader Chuck Schumer called it a "genuine breakthrough" — progressives and activists blasted them for leaving immigrants in legislative limbo. Top House Democrat Nancy Pelosi of California, herself a key architect of the budget plan, announced her opposition Wednesday morning and mounted a remarkable



Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., left, and Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., right, walk to the chamber Wednesday after collaborating on an agreement in the Senate on a two-year, almost \$400 billion budget deal that would provide Pentagon and domestic programs with huge spending increases, at the Capitol in Washington.

AP Photo/Pablo Martinez Monsivais

daylong speech on the House floor, trying to force GOP leaders in the House to promise a later vote on legislation to protect the younger immigrants.

"Let Congress work its will," Pelosi said, before holding the floor for more than eight hours without a break. "What are you afraid of?"

The White House backed the deal — despite President Donald Trump's outburst a day earlier that he'd welcome a government shutdown if Democrats didn't accept his immigration-limiting proposals.

Trump himself tweeted that the agreement "is so important for our great Military," and he urged both Republicans and Democrats to support it.

But the plan faced criticism from deficit hawks in his own party.

Some tea party Republicans shredded the measure as a budget-buster. Combined with the party's December tax cut bill, the burst in military and other spending would put the GOP-controlled government on track for the first \$1 trillion-plus deficits since President Barack Obama's first term. That's when Congress passed massive stimulus legislation to try to stabilize a down-spiraling economy.

"It's too much," said Rep. Scott Perry, R-Pa., a fiscal hawk.

House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis., however, backed the agreement and was hoping to cobble together a coalition of moderate Democrats and Republicans to push it through.

Despite the 77-year-old Pelosi's public talkathon, she was not pressuring the party's

rank-and-file to oppose the measure, Democrats said. The deal contains far more money demanded by Democrats than had seemed possible only weeks ago, including \$90 billion in disaster aid for Florida and Texas. Some other veteran Democrats — some of whom said holding the budget deal hostage to action on Dreamer immigrants had already proven to be a failed strategy — appeared more likely to support the agreement than junior progressives elected in recent years.

The budget agreement would give both the Pentagon and domestic agencies relief from a budget freeze that lawmakers say threatens military readiness and training as well as domestic priorities such as combating opioid abuse and repairing the troubled health care system for veterans.

## BRIEFLY

### Trump flirts with flashy military parade long eschewed by U.S.

WASHINGTON (AP) — For generations, as America's authoritarian rivals strutted their tanks, troops and jets through main thoroughfares in dramatic displays of strength, the United States watched from afar, but did not emulate.

Widely accepted as the world's mightiest, the U.S. military has no tradition of putting itself on parade like in Russia, North Korea or China. But President Donald Trump does not often stand on tradition. So Trump's directive to the Pentagon to draft options for a massive march reverberated across Washington on Wednesday like the thud of a discharged cannon, as lawmakers and military leaders mused about the cost, the risk and the purpose.

"People will wonder, 'Well, what are they afraid of now? What are they trying to prove?'" Del. Eleanor Holmes Norton, who represents the District of Columbia in Congress, said in an interview. "We don't have to show off to make a point."

It was a critique voiced by both Democrats and Republicans the day after *The Washington Post* revealed Trump wants an elaborate parade this year to rival the Bastille Day celebration in Paris that made a distinct impression on him in July. Democratic Sen. Dick Durbin called it a "fantastic waste of money," while Republican Sen. Lindsey Graham told CNN that the parade risked being "kind of cheesy and a sign of weakness" if it's just about showing off military muscle.

The president did not seem deterred, although his aides rushed to downplay the notion that it was anything beyond an idea Trump had floated "in a brainstorming session" to help Americans express gratitude and pride for the military. White House spokeswoman Sarah Huckabee Sanders said there had been no final decision. And Trump's legislative director said it was too early to even guess about potential costs, though it's assumed it would cost millions.

### FBI: No evidence of attack in Border Patrol agent's death

DALLAS (AP) — FBI officials said Wednesday that the investigation into the November death of a U.S. Border Patrol agent has yielded no evidence that there was a "scuffle, altercation or attack" more than two months after President Donald Trump and others used the suggestion of an attack to promote the building of a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border.

Investigators have conducted more than 650 interviews and involved 37 field offices in their probe, but have not found definitive evidence of an attack, the FBI said in a statement. The investigation will continue and the reward of up to \$50,000 for information that closes the case will remain.

"To date none of the more than 650 interviews completed, locations searched, or evidence collected and analyzed have produced evidence that would support the existence of a scuffle, altercation, or attack on November 18, 2017," said the release from the El Paso office of Emmerson Buie, a special agent in charge.

Rogelio Martinez died from injuries he sustained while he and his partner were responding to reports of unknown activity the night of Nov. 18 near Van Horn, a Texas town near the Mexico border about 110 miles southeast of El Paso.

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