

GOP Moves to Ram Through Bill That Lets Trump “Kill Nonprofits”

Dozens of Democrats still support the bill — giving the Republican-controlled House plenty of breathing room to pass it next week.

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A controversial “nonprofit killer” bill is back on track after it was blocked earlier this week.

A majority of Democrats in the House of Representatives rejected the bill on Tuesday out of fear that it could grant **President-elect Donald Trump** the legal tools with which to target his ideological foes, but Republicans are swiftly pressing ahead.

The Stop Terror-Financing and Tax Penalties on American Hostages Act, which would empower the secretary of the Treasury to designate any nonprofit as a “terrorist supporting organization” and revoke its tax-exempt status, is set to go before the Committee on Rules on Monday for a hearing that could tee up the bill for a new floor vote.

The hearing was announced Thursday evening, just two days after 144 Democrats and one Republican [voted against the bill](#) as part of a fast-track parliamentary procedure that required a two-thirds majority.

The bill, also known as H.R. 9495, has come under [withering criticism](#) from a broad coalition of organizations that say its sponsors are pushing it as a means of cracking down on free speech — particularly speech in support of Palestine. In a joint statement earlier this week, a coalition of Arab American and Muslim organizations pledged to continue to fight the bill.

“This bill was designed to criminalize organizations and activists who oppose the U.S.’s unconditional support of Israel’s genocide of Palestinians and the slaughter of Lebanese civilians,” read the [statement](#), which was signed by the Council on American-Islamic Relations, American Muslims for Palestine, and others. “We will continue to stand firm in protecting all organizations’ freedom to speak and operate without fear of political retribution.”

Officials for the chair and ranking member of the Ways and Means Committee, through which the bill must pass, did not respond to requests for comment.

With pro-Israel groups lobbying for the bill, it gained popularity among House Democrats, in part due to a provision providing tax relief to Americans held hostage abroad.

The reelection of Trump, however, galvanized opponents, including **Rep. Lloyd Doggett**, D-Texas, who led the charge to reject the bill on Tuesday. Doggett doubled down on Thursday after learning of the newly scheduled Rules Committee hearing.

“In this mislabeled bill, House Republicans are hiding behind hostages,” Doggett said in a statement to The Intercept. “Their rush to reconsider this bill is solely to offer Trump more and more power, while Trump’s nominees for key national security posts this week indicate how he will be using it.”

Simple Majority to Pass

Doggett and fellow Democratic opponents of the bill face an uphill battle to halt the legislation for good. They were able to block it on Tuesday only because H.R. 9495 was put to a House vote under suspension of the rules, a maneuver allowing for legislation to be fast-tracked by limiting debate and barring the addition of new amendments in exchange for the requirement of a two-thirds majority to pass.

Ultimately, 144 Democrats voted no, along with **Rep. Thomas Massie**, R-Ky., barely meeting the threshold to block the bill from fast-track passage. Voting in favor were 204 Republicans and 52 Democrats. The narrow loss — with so many Democrats supporting the bill, opponents had no votes to spare — provoked outrage from supporters of the bill like **Rep. Jason Smith**, R-Mo., who had spoken in favor of it prior to the vote.

“This shameful partisan play only sets back efforts to halt the abuse of America’s tax code by terrorist organizations,” Smith said in a [statement](#) published Wednesday by the House Ways and Means Committee. “Going forward, I encourage our Democrat colleagues to put the defense of our nation and the needs of American taxpayers first.”

Civil liberties groups that had long opposed the bill hailed the vote to block it as a victory, albeit a fleeting one.

The bill is slated for a hearing on Monday known as a markup session, in which committee members may briefly discuss the legislation and propose amendments. If a majority of committee members approve of the bill, whether in its original or amended form, it would move on to another vote on the House floor.

This time, it would likely be put to a simple majority vote. With Republicans in control of the chamber and around 52 Democratic lawmakers showing support by voting for it on Tuesday, the bill would almost certainly pass.

Doggett, however, remained determined:

“We Democrats can either post a Yield Right of Way sign or push back to make every effort to protect civil society and our freedoms.”

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