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This update reflects facts as of Monday morning, April 20, 2026. The situation is fluid and may change.

Legislation to fund the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) remains stalled in the House. So, too, does a bill to extend Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) authority. The uncertain course of the military action in Iran has been the occasion of close votes on War Powers Act resolutions, as the stated authority for that action approaches its first deadline. And another special election has further reduced the already historically thin Republican majority in the House, potentially adding to the difficulty of passing partisan legislation.

DHS funding. The House did not, as planned, vote last week on a bipartisan Senate bill to fund most agencies of DHS. Funding for Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and most of Customs and Border Protection (CBP) would be left under the Senate plan to a second partisan reconciliation bill to avoid Democratic demands for immigration policing reforms.

Some House Republicans have objected to passage of a DHS funding bill stripped of new ICE and CBP funding, even with the promise of a second bill. The leadership lacked the votes last week to bring the bill to the floor. It is their hope that progress on the reconciliation bill will be sufficient to address the objectors' concerns.

To that end, Senate Republicans plan to begin the reconciliation process this week. The problems they will face are those common to this kind of essential legislation, principally avoiding the addition of unrelated items by members that might prevent passage. There are many candidates for amendments, such as health care reforms and the voting regulation SAVE Act, as well as tax extenders and other tax changes. Adding any would open the door to others. The objective of the Senate leadership will be to try to pass a budget resolution that is devoid of amendments, a "clean" or "skinny" bill in legislative parlance.

FISA extension. Congress passed a short extension of section 702 of FISA late last week. The new expiration of that authority for warrantless surveillance of foreign persons is April 30. The objections in the House to a clean extension of section 702 in this case are bipartisan, with contingents on both sides concerned about intercepts of communications that might involve American citizens.

House passage, expected last week, has been delayed, providing time to attempt to negotiate a compromise. The issue remains one occupying the time and political will of Congress.

War Powers resolutions. The House narrowly defeated last week another in a series of resolutions under the War Powers Act. These resolutions would bar further military action with respect to Iran without prior Congressional approval. The vote was 213-214. The vote was largely partisan, with one Republican voting yes, one Democrat voting no. One Republican member who voted for a prior resolution changed his vote to no, however, and three other Republicans did not vote, indicating how close the resolution came to passage.

This may not be the last resolution offered, as concern over the duration of the conflict seems to be growing. Iran is likely to be a preoccupation of Congress until there is a resolution as the expiration of the War Powers Act's 60-day authority for unilateral presidential military action approaches at the end of the month.

House majority. Complicating passage of partisan legislation in the House is the further shrinking of the already-thin Republican majority. A new Democratic member was elected last Thursday to a vacant New Jersey seat. When she is sworn in this week, the House Republican majority will be reduced again to four. The majority can afford to lose only a single vote until other special elections are held later in the year to fill three remaining vacant seats.

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