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European Languages

زبانهای اروپایی

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17.03.2025

The Democrats' Enabling Act: Senate votes to fund Trump's dictatorship



Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (Democrat-New York), flanked by Senators Dick Durbin (Democrat-Illinois), Cory Booker (Democrat-New Jersey) and Amy Klobuchar (Democrat-Minnesota) on Capitol Hill. [AP Photo/Mariam Zuhair]

On March 23, 1933, just seven weeks after Hitler became chancellor of Germany, the Reichstag passed what came to be known as the Enabling Act, granting him the power to rule by decree. The vote took place under conditions of terror: The Reichstag was surrounded by armed SA and SS troops, and the Reichstag Fire was used as a pretext to ban the Communist Party (KPD) and imprison its deputies. With the act's passage, the Weimar Constitution was nullified, giving Hitler unchecked power to enact laws without parliamentary approval.

Just over seven weeks after his own election, Trump did not need to employ such measures. Given the opportunity to cut off funding for Trump's government on Friday, the Democrats

instead ensured that it remained fully operational. The vote shatters the myth that the Democratic Party is an opponent of the Trump administration, demonstrating that it is instead its enabler and collaborator.

The Senate, with the support of top Democrats, passed a Republican spending bill funding the government for the next six months, through September. The bill removes all congressional spending directives, giving Trump and Elon Musk a blank check to slash social programs, purge federal employees and lay the groundwork for a police state.

The bill was passed late on Friday, following a vote earlier in the day that blocked a filibuster, which would have led to a government shutdown. Ten Democrats voted with the Republicans against a filibuster. After an empty show of opposition early in the week, Senate Minority Leader Charles Schumer completely reversed himself, and the requisite number of Democrats (plus two additional) were assigned to ensure the bill's passage.

Schumer justified the Democrats' actions by claiming, "I believe allowing Donald Trump to take even much more power via a government shutdown is a far worse option." He stated that there would be no "off-ramp" in the event of a shutdown, which the Trump administration would use to "decimate the federal government."

This is an absurd lie. In reality, the bill itself hands Trump the power to "decimate" social services, with no strings attached. When Schumer speaks of an "off-ramp," his real concern is that a shutdown of the government could become a catalyst for mass opposition to Trump's government, which the Democrats are determined to prevent.

The Senate vote comes amidst a full-scale rampage by the Trump administration against the working class and democratic rights.

This week, the Department of Education laid off 1,300 workers—half its staff—in preparation for its dissolution. Congress's next priority is passing a budget that includes \$4.5 trillion in tax cuts for the rich and \$2 trillion in cuts to social programs, gutting \$880 billion from Medicaid, which provides healthcare for 80 million people. Overseeing these cuts through his Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), Elon Musk has made clear that Social Security and other so-called "entitlement" programs are next.

Trump is systematically violating laws and basic constitutional rights. He is ruling by decree, issuing illegal executive orders to purge government workers, expand federal law enforcement and carry out mass deportations.

The administration is seizing political opponents, including Columbia student Mahmoud Khalil, for opposing the genocide in Gaza—a test case for what is to come. He is preparing to

invoke the Alien Enemies Act, a law used to intern Japanese Americans during World War II, to justify mass political repression and the transfer of tens of thousands to Guantanamo Bay. These are the actions the Democrats have chosen to fund.

The Democrats were given their marching orders by the financial oligarchy. Schumer, the “senator from Wall Street,” embodies the Democratic Party’s role as a party of the financial oligarchy. He intervened to pass the spending bill on the orders of the gigantic banks and hedge funds.

From 2019 to 2024, Schumer’s largest industry backer was “Securities & Investment,” according to Open Secrets, while his single largest contributor was private equity giant Blackstone Group. Blackstone is headed by Stephen A. Schwarzman, worth \$53.3 billion as of November 2024. Schwarzman, a close ally of Trump who served as chairman of the Strategic and Policy Forum during Trump’s first term, recently referred to Trump’s economic policies as “a good thing for the world.”

A significant element of the Democrats’ calculations is that a government shutdown would lead to a further sell-off on the financial markets, following declines over the past week driven by the impact of escalating global conflicts and Trump’s trade war measures. Moreover, Wall Street is demanding a raid on the Treasury to prop up its bets and pay for the massive accumulation of debt produced by endless bailouts of the banks—that is, precisely the policies that Trump is implementing.

It is impossible to explain the actions of the Democratic Party purely in terms of cowardice. The Democrats are not an opposition party. They agree with the essential elements of Trump’s social and domestic policy. The differences that do exist are largely tactical, not fundamental—focused primarily on foreign policy, where the Democrats favor continued escalation of the war in Ukraine.

In the media, the Democrats’ vote is being presented in the context of a supposed bitter internal conflict, pitting, in the words of the *New York Times*, an “old guard” committed to “bipartisanship” with a “younger generation” advocating a more confrontational approach.

This is a fraud. The role of figures like Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, a member of the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA), is to provide a “left” cover for the Democrats. Ocasio-Cortez spent the day on social media urging her followers to call Senate Democrats and beg them not to pass the bill. This was nothing but political theater, as she knew full well that the Democrats would ensure it went through.

Ocasio-Cortez and the DSA are not mobilizing workers and students in mass resistance. They are working to contain growing anger, keeping it trapped within the Democratic Party and

preventing the emergence of an independent movement against war, dictatorship and capitalism.

The Democrats' vote confirms the assessment made by the Socialist Equality Party and the *World Socialist Web Site*. Just one day before the bill's passage, WSWS International Editorial Board Chairman David North wrote:

Far from opposing Trump, [the Democratic Party] is collaborating with him. Whatever its verbal declarations of opposition, the Democratic Party, which is funded by and subservient to the same oligarchs and devoted to the defense of capitalism, shares large portions of Trump's agenda.

On Friday, the Democrats demonstrated the truth of this assessment.

Opposition will not come from the Democratic Party, Congress, the courts or the corporate-controlled media. The working class—the vast majority of the population and the source of all wealth—is the only force capable of stopping Trump's dictatorship.

This must take the form of industrial action. The *World Socialist Web Site* and the Socialist Equality Party call for the building of independent rank-and-file committees in workplaces and neighborhoods across the country. These committees will serve as centers of resistance, uniting workers and youth in opposition to Trump's authoritarian rule, the complicity of the Democratic Party, and the broader attacks on democratic rights and living standards. They will provide the framework for organizing mass actions, including strikes and protests, to mobilize the immense social power of the working class against the corporate and financial oligarchy.

This industrial action must be infused with a socialist political program. The fight against Trump's dictatorship is inseparable from the fight against the system that has produced it—capitalism. The Socialist Equality Party advances a socialist program to expropriate the wealth of the financial oligarchy. The imperialist war machine must be dismantled, ending US-led wars and redirecting military spending toward rebuilding society. A workers' government must be established, placing political and economic power in the hands of the working class, not the capitalist oligarchy.

This is the necessary and only viable response to the Trump administration. We call on those who agree to make the decision to join the Socialist Equality Party.

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