

# Senate passes \$40 billion aid bill for Ukraine, sending military and humanitarian assistance to bolster war effort

[stripes.com/theaters/us/2022-05-19/ukraine-aid-senate-military-humanitarian\\_russia-weapons-6058507.html](https://www.stripes.com/theaters/us/2022-05-19/ukraine-aid-senate-military-humanitarian_russia-weapons-6058507.html)

## U.S.

By  
Svetlana Shkolnikova

Stars and Stripes • May 19, 2022



Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., meets with reporters at the Capitol in Washington on May 18, 2022. The Senate on Thursday, May 19, 2022, overwhelmingly approved a \$40 billion military and humanitarian aid package to Ukraine, overcoming Republican obstruction to reinforce the embattled country in its fierce fight against Russia. (J. Scott Applewhite/AP)

WASHINGTON — The Senate on Thursday overwhelmingly approved a \$40 billion military and humanitarian aid package to Ukraine, overcoming Republican obstruction to reinforce the embattled country in its fierce fight against Russia.

The legislation will be sent to President Joe Biden for his signature just as his ability to transfer weapons from U.S. stockpiles runs out. Pentagon officials warned Congress last week that it urgently needed additional funding to keep arming Ukrainian forces.

House lawmakers passed the spending bill swiftly last week, but an attempt by Sen. Rand Paul, R-Ky., to hinge the aid on the creation of a special inspector general to oversee it stymied efforts to move the bill quickly through the Senate. Senators on Thursday grouched over the delay but celebrated the bill's long-awaited passage.

“This is a large package and will meet the large needs of the Ukrainian people as they fight for their survival,” Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., said on the Senate floor. “As [Ukrainian President Volodymyr] Zelenskyy has said, the Ukrainians are caught up in a fight for democracy. ... It's a fight we should not and cannot turn away from. By passing this emergency aid, the Senate can now say to the Ukrainian people, 'Help is on the way.' Real help. Significant help.”

The Senate approved the measure 86-11, with all “no” votes coming from Republicans. Nearly 60 Republican members of the House voted against the bill last week.

“Aid for Ukraine goes far beyond charity,” Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., said Thursday on the floor. “The future of America's security and core strategic interests will be shaped by the outcome of this fight.”

Congress raised the size of the package from the initial \$33 billion requested by the White House last month to \$40 billion, bringing total aid for Ukraine to more than \$50 billion since Russia launched its full-scale invasion in February. Lawmakers last approved \$13.6 billion in assistance for the war effort in March.

The latest tranche of funds will allow Biden to transfer up to \$11 billion in American weapons and equipment to Ukrainian fighters fending off Russia's assault on the country's eastern Donbas region. A previous \$3.5 billion allowance for drawing from U.S. stockpiles was exhausted Thursday when the State Department authorized a final drawdown of arms valued at \$100 million.

The supplemental assistance bill allocates \$8.7 billion to replenish the inventory of weapons already sent to Ukraine, including Javelin anti-tank missiles and Stinger anti-air missiles. Recent security shipments have pivoted to heavier, more offensive weapons such as howitzers, armored vehicles, single-use “kamikaze” drones and tens of thousands of artillery rounds.

Nearly half the spending package is earmarked for the Pentagon, providing funding for intelligence support, training and other defense assistance to Ukrainian forces in addition to weaponry. U.S. European Command will receive \$3.9 billion to cover operating costs and hardship pay for troops in Europe, where forces ballooned from 80,000 to 100,000 this year.

Non-military aid will largely flow to the State Department, which will add \$13.9 billion to an economic support fund helping prop up Ukraine's government and \$5 billion for addressing global food insecurity exacerbated by the war. Another \$900 million is dedicated to helping Ukrainian refugees with housing, English language classes and other support services.

The White House estimated last month that its aid request will bolster Ukraine for the next five months of its grinding battle with Russia. Intelligence officials told senators last week that Russia's attempt to conquer Donbas has turned into "bit of a stalemate," and the Kremlin appears to be preparing for a prolonged conflict.

Congress continues to demonstrate strong bipartisan backing for Ukraine's resistance, despite objection from some Republicans over its mounting financial cost. Top Democratic and Republican lawmakers traveled to Ukraine's capital of Kyiv in recent weeks to meet with Zelenskyy and pledge their support.

"Anyone concerned about the cost of supporting a Ukrainian victory should consider the much larger cost should Ukraine lose," McConnell said Thursday.

The Senate on Wednesday night unanimously confirmed the appointment of Bridget Brink to serve as U.S. ambassador to Ukraine, ending a three-year vacancy in the post on the same day the U.S. embassy in Kyiv reopened.

Sen. Chris Murphy, D-Conn., praised the spending package on Thursday for funding the return of U.S. diplomats to Ukraine following Russia's retreat in March from the outskirts of the capital.

"Ambassador Brink will soon be on the ground in Ukraine to coordinate this unprecedented amount of assistance," he said.