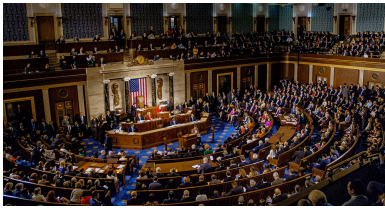


House to Vote on Changes to Small Business Program Next Week

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By: Omar Franco



The House will vote next week on a bipartisan proposal to make the popular small-business Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) more flexible and extend the time limit for using the aid, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said today.

Moving ahead on the proposal with Republican support would allow Congress to get around the current impasse on whether to approve a new round of coronavirus relief. The bill is separate from the \$3 trillion Democratic catch-all package combining state aid with new stimulus checks that the House passed last week over the objections of the GOP.

Senate Republicans have voiced support for changes to PPP this week. Senate Small Business Chairman Marco Rubio said there is a strong consensus that the changes need to be made.

The Senate may be able to get unanimous consent to make the changes this week and send legislation to the House.

The Paycheck Protection Flexibility Act, H.R.6886, introduced by Minnesota Democrat Dean Phillips and Texas Republican Chip Roy, would allow businesses receiving forgivable loans to be able to use the funds on payrolls for more than the eight weeks under the original program and relax a requirement that 75% of the loans be used for payroll expenses. It would also give them more than two years to pay back the loans and allow businesses that receive PPP loans to receive a payroll tax deferment.

Phillips, who represents a swing district, said last week he would vote for the \$3 trillion package after receiving a commitment for a vote on his PPP bill from congressional leaders.

Pelosi said today that she was not worried that passing a Republican priority as a stand-alone bill would give away negotiating leverage on a larger relief bill because pressure was mounting on the GOP to act on wider stimulus.

