




Congressional Negotiators Working to Break Funding Impasse and Avoid Shutdown

The federal government faces another  shutdown on February 15, and 17 House and Senate conference committee members will be meeting on February 11 in an attempt to work out a deal that will satisfy both congressional Democrats and President Trump and thereby avert a shutdown. The point of contention between the parties is Trump's demand for \$5.7 billion to pay for construction of a wall along our southern border, and House Democrats' refusal to accede to that demand.

Fox News cited statements made on February 8 by congressional negotiators who said they expected a deal to be made, although Democrats indicated that the amount they would be willing to appropriate would be much closer to \$1.6 billion.

On *Fox News Sunday* on February 10, host Chris Wallace interviewed two members of the bipartisan panel trying to find a compromise, Senators Richard Shelby (shown, R-Ala.) and Jon Tester (D-Mont.) Wallace began by asking Tester if the conference committee had reached agreement at least on the amount to spend on physical barriers and if reports that the amount Democrats had agreed to appropriate was less than \$2 billion were true.

Tester answered, in part:

I think that when you're talking about border security ... it includes more than just a barrier. It includes technology. It includes what we are going to do with the ports, manpower, aircraft, the works.

We are not to a point where we can announce a deal; negotiations are still going on.

Wallace then asked Shelby to comment on a statement made by Acting White House Chief of Staff Mick Mulvaney that the talks were in jeopardy.

Shelby answered:

I think the talks are stalled right now. I'm hoping we can get off the dime later today or in the morning because time is ticking away. But we got some problems with the Democrats dealing with ICE, that is detaining criminals that come into the U.S. and they want a cap on them, we don't want a cap on that.

Shelby was referring to the number of detention beds that the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) would have access to. Democrats want to place a cap on the number of detention beds, asserting that such a cap would force the Trump administration to focus on arresting and deporting violent criminals, instead of "undocumented immigrants" (the term they use for illegal aliens) who have not broken other laws.



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on February 11, 2019

Wallace then asked Shelby if after his meeting with President Trump on February 7 he got any indication that the president might be willing to go along with an amount less than he wants to avoid another government shutdown.

Shelby replied, in part:

Our talks with the president are confidential, but I came out of the meeting thinking we could make a deal with the Democrats if they are willing to meet us halfway. Secondly, the president basically in the conversation gave us some latitude to talk and that's what we're trying to do.

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