



Tax Vote Expected Today or Tomorrow

Days after President Obama announced an alleged compromise between the White House and Republicans on the Bush era tax cuts, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid told reporters that the Senate is still in the process of working out the final details of the bill, but should be voting on the final package shortly. In fact, Senate floor debates on the tax cut deal may begin as early as today. (House Democrats, in a voice vote in a closed caucus meeting on December 9, rejected President Barack Obama's tax deal with Republicans in its current form, but it was unclear how much the package might need to be changed to secure approval, after which the bill would be sent to the Senate.)



However, there remain some issues to be addressed before that happens, explained Reid. "I'm right where I was yesterday. It's something we need to work on. I've got a lot of input with the caucus, we had some White House representatives here again today, they did some explanation that was helpful to the caucus," he stated, indicating that a final deal is close.

Congressional Quarterly reports, "It remains unclear what changes might be in the works or how much support exists for the compromise struck by President Obama and Republicans."

Senate Finance Chairman Max Baucus has declared that the compromise is "by no means settled," suggesting that the final package will likely look different from the original framework proposed by the President.

Whether Republicans will accept the changes is another story. *Congressional Quarterly* predicts that Republicans would likely not support "a less generous estate tax deal," for example.

According to Reid, "I'm hoping that in the next day or two that we can be on that. In the meantime, we're going to try to work through the other things that we have."

However, there may be a possibility that the final package will require 60 votes to be passed, as Senator Bernard Sanders of Vermont has already stated he would filibuster the bill. Most of the 42 Republicans seem poised to approve the deal, with the exception of George V. Voinovich of Ohio, who objects to the impact the deal will have on the federal deficit. Likewise, Tom Coburn of Oklahoma has stated that he is in the process of considering his vote.

Reid has stated that he will be meeting with Minority Leader Mitch McConnell to "decide how we'll proceed" on the tax package.

Reid's announcements followed a closed-door meeting where Democrats reportedly vented their anger over the deal President Obama struck with the Republicans. Democrats also verbalized frustration with the comments made by the President during his Tuesday afternoon press conference.



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on December 9, 2010

House Democrats have taken a clear stance against the tax cut deal. Today, the House Democratic caucus participated in a [symbolic vote](#) to show their opposition to the compromise. The nearly unanimous vote did not take place on the House floor, but was intended to show their intense opposition to the deal. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi has indicated that she will not bring President Obama's tax cut deal to the floor for a vote in its current form.

Despite Democratic indignation, Vice President Joe Biden and President Obama continue to encourage Democrats to support the proposal, stating that if the administration takes a hard line on the tax cuts, the cuts will ultimately expire, leaving the Democrats to be blamed.

Attempting to make the most of the deal, Democrats urged Reid to add a renewable energy tax credit to the bill; however, Reid has stated his unwillingness to make drastic changes to the legislation. He also remarked that he would not push for a further raise in the debt ceiling until next year, when Republicans are in control of the House.

"Let the Republicans have some buy-in on the debt. They're going to have a majority in the House," Reid said. "I don't think it should be when we have a heavily Democratic Senate, heavily Democratic House and a Democratic president."

Reid's assertions indicate where his priorities lie, as he is anxious to move on to votes on funding for the federal government, the START Treaty, the DREAM Act, and the Defense Reauthorization Bill — wherein a provision repealing "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" can be found.

Photo: In this Nov. 18, 2010 file photo, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid of Nev. speaks at a news conference on Capitol Hill in Washington: AP Images



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