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Pelosi Touts Possible Bipartisan Cooperation on Infrastructure After Election.

The House speaker also said she has no plans to stop pressing for a big coronavirus relief deal. Meanwhile, at least one top Senate Republican also indicated it's possible Democrat and GOP lawmakers could come together on a public works plan.

U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi on Friday pointed to a large infrastructure package as an area where Democrats and Republicans might cooperate with Democrat Joe Biden in the White House, but Republicans maintaining control of the U.S. Senate.

Pelosi also rejected the idea of Democrats downsizing their ambitions for another round of coronavirus relief in order to strike a compromise with Republicans, and specifically emphasized the need for more federal financial assistance to state and local governments.

"No, it doesn't appeal to me at all," Pelosi replied when asked during a press conference about her openness to a scaled-down relief bill.

She noted that, since the pandemic began, there have been hundreds of thousands of jobs cut in the state and local public sector "because of the funds that have been used to address the virus and lost revenue."

Democrats have been pushing in recent weeks for a roughly \$2 trillion package. A bill they pushed through the House in October included upwards of \$400 billion for states and localities.

Biden won the presidency on Saturday, clinching the lead in key battleground states, and was close to winning when Pelosi spoke on Friday.

Exactly which party will control the Senate is still up in the air. Partisan control in the closely divided Senate looks like it likely will hinge on a pair of runoff elections in Georgia in January.

In the House, Democrats are expected to maintain their majority, despite losing seats.

At least one key Republican on Friday also raised the possibility of infrastructure legislation—Sen. Lindsey Graham, of South Carolina, who after his reelection this week noted that he is in line to chair the Senate Budget Committee if the GOP keeps control of the chamber.

With Republicans in charge, Graham warned, "the agenda coming out of the House is dead on arrival in the Senate." But he also said there's "plenty of space to find common ground on infrastructure."

"I think there's a lot of bipartisanship for roads and bridges and ports," Graham told reporters during a video call. "We need to redesign the Highway Trust Fund because there are less cars on the road using gasoline and the Highway Trust Fund is based on gas taxes."

Pelosi characterized House Democrats “Moving America Forward” proposal from earlier this year—a \$1.5 trillion package of bills—as a possible starting point for talks about infrastructure and said it was similar to plans that the Biden campaign has outlined.

“As we go forward with an infrastructure bill, that is usually not partisan,” she said.

During his time in office, President Trump repeatedly expressed an interest in a large infrastructure package and discussed this possibility with Pelosi and other Democrats at times. But a deal has proved elusive, with funding a key sticking point.

Pelosi blamed the president for a lack of leadership on the issue, saying that he talked up the idea of a sweeping public works plan only “until it came time to make the tough decisions about paying for it and the rest and then he stomped out of the room.”

Republican leaders in the Senate have generally been cool toward the idea of passing a massive new public works package during Trump’s tenure and never lined up behind a funding proposal.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce this week highlighted infrastructure and another round of coronavirus stimulus as two of its top post-election priorities. The Chamber has backed the idea of a new federal infrastructure investment program previously.

Graham, who won reelection defeating Democratic challenger Jaime Harrison by about 10 percentage points, drew attention at the end of the week for aligning himself with Trump as the president made unfounded allegations about voter fraud.

But the South Carolina senator said Friday that he will be willing to look for ways to work with Biden on certain issues if the Democrat wins. Graham also said he wants to move ahead with another stimulus bill before January, prior to the next presidential term beginning.

“I’ve been in the camp of going big,” he said of the virus relief legislation. “We need a big package.” But he also acknowledged that some fellow Republicans don’t agree with him on this.

Republicans in recent months have been resistant to the idea of funneling large additional sums of federal aid to state and local governments as part of further coronavirus relief.

ROUTE FIFTY

by BILL LUCIA

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