

GOP ends Obama's ISIS war powers

Bill also authorizes \$600 billion for defense

RICHARD LARDNER
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Republican-led House voted convincingly Wednesday to approve a \$602 billion defense policy bill after rejecting attempts by Democrats to close the detention facility at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and to repeal the war powers President Barack Obama relies on to fight the Islamic State.

The legislation, which authorizes military spending for the fiscal year beginning Oct. 1, seeks to halt a decline in the combat readiness of the U.S. armed forces by purchasing more weapons and prohibiting further cuts in troop levels. But in a 17-page statement on the policy bill, the White House detailed its opposition to numerous provisions and said Obama would veto the legislation if it reached his desk.

The bill, approved 277-147, must be reconciled with a version the Senate is expected to consider by month's end.

Republicans shot down an amendment by Rep. Jerrold Nadler, D-N.Y., to strike parts of the bill that renew a longstanding ban on moving Guantanamo detainees to the United States. The embargo has kept Obama from fulfilling a campaign pledge to shutter the facility. The White House said the restrictions interfere with the executive branch's authority to decide when and where to prosecute prisoners.

The House soundly defeated an amendment authored by Rep. Barbara Lee, D-Calif., to revoke a 2001 authorization that Congress gave President George W. Bush to attack any countries or groups

involved in the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. Obama is relying on that nearly 15-year-old authority to send U.S. troops into combat against the Islamic State.

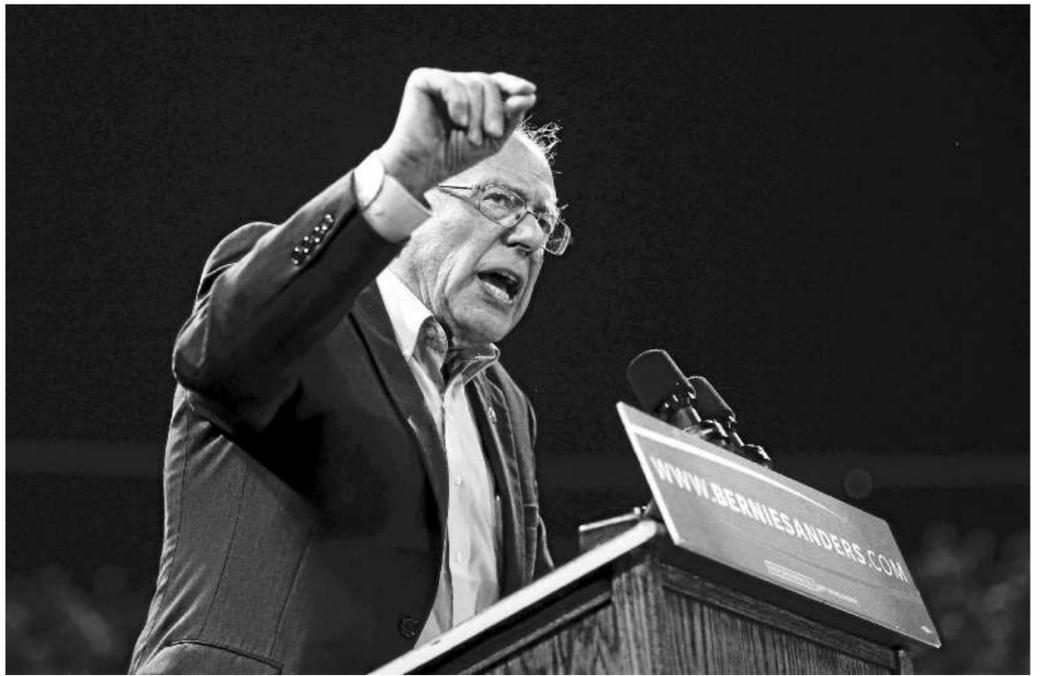
Lee argued it's long past time for Congress to grant new war powers that specifically approve the nearly two-year-old campaign. "I am extremely disappointed that my colleagues left a blank check for endless war on the books," she said.

But opponents of her amendment said no new authorization should be granted until Obama produces a coherent strategy for defeating the extremist group. Rep. Ed Royce, R-Calif., the chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, said Obama has all the authority he needs and Lee's amendment would "unilaterally end the fight" against the Islamic State.

The bill included a provision that Democrats said would overturn an executive order issued by Obama that bars discrimination against LGBT employees by federal contractors.

Rep. Adam Smith of Washington, the top Democrat on the House Armed Services Committee, called the measure "taxpayer-funded discrimination against LGBT individuals" and cited it as one the reasons he refused to support the bill.

But Republicans said the measure is primarily a restatement of part of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. "It's one paragraph. That's it," said Rep. Mac Thornberry, R-Texas, the chairman of the House Armed Services Committee. "I just get this feeling personally that there may be those who are just looking for an excuse to vote against the bill."



Democratic presidential candidate Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., speaks at a rally in Carson.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Democrats, Sanders on the brink as campaign nears end

ERICA WERNER AND KEN THOMAS
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The awkward embrace between Bernie Sanders and the Democratic Party may be nearing a breaking point.

Leading Democrats are growing increasingly vocal in their concerns about the White House hopeful's continued candidacy, and if he and his legions of enthusiastic supporters ultimately will unite behind Hillary Clinton in a general election against Donald Trump.

For his part, Sanders has sharpened his critique of the party. He says it would be "sad and tragic" if Democrats don't stop relying on big money, and he is assailing Clinton for her dependence on wealthy donors. Clinton backers grumble that such comments can only help Republicans, belying Sanders' claims that he'll work tirelessly to ensure Trump doesn't end up the president.

The tone on both sides is worsening after last weekend's fracas at the Nevada Democratic Convention. Furious over rules they claimed favored Clinton, a group of Sanders supporters shouted obscenities, brandished chairs and threatened and harassed the party chairwoman. And after Democratic officials including Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid of Nevada pressed Sanders to denounce the events, Sanders defiantly asserted that his supporters were treated unfairly.

The tenor of the Sanders' statement disturbed Democratic leaders. They're worried that as the primary process nears its end, Sanders may resist the graceful exit that Democrats expect of him and instead heed advisers and supporters pressing him to maintain the fight, perhaps all the way to the Democratic convention in Philadelphia in July.

"Everything our families care about is at stake here," said Democratic Sen. Barbara Boxer of California, who said she feared for her

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safety after being booed and shouted down at the Nevada convention.

Boxer said in an interview that she spoke with Sanders this week, and found her Vermont colleague very upset, insisting "my people wouldn't do this."

"I just told him, 'Bernie, you need to take control of this,'" Boxer said.

Boxer and other influential Democrats cited Clinton's handling of her bitter loss to Barack Obama eight years ago as a model. Then, Clinton washed away a season of bad blood by conceding and throwing her support behind the eventual president.

"The math didn't add up for her then and it doesn't add up for Bernie now," Democratic Sen. Debbie Stabenow of Michigan said.

Vice President Joe Biden gently chastised Sanders, saying he should be more aggressive in speaking out if his supporters behave as badly as they did in Nevada, but expressing confidence the party would unify. "I'm not worried. There's no fundamental split in the Democratic Party," he said in Ohio Wednesday.

Few are demanding publicly that Sanders get out of the race immediately. That may change quickly if he doesn't do so early next month, presuming Clinton wraps up the nomination as expected. But right now the party's leaders want

Sanders and his advisers can claim to have sparked a movement. Clinton has been more workmanlike in piling up delegates, even if her supporters note that she generated enough energy to swamp Sanders in major states like New York.

For months, Democrats welcomed the vigor of Sanders' campaign. Now they want to be sure he'll transfer that energy to Clinton's campaign.

Reid and Sanders have discussed Sanders' Senate future and advancing the 74-year-old, democratic socialist's progressive ideals. They've also spoken about campaigning for Senate Democrats and likeminded candidates like Wisconsin's Russ Feingold, who said Wednesday there is no hurry for Sanders to quit.

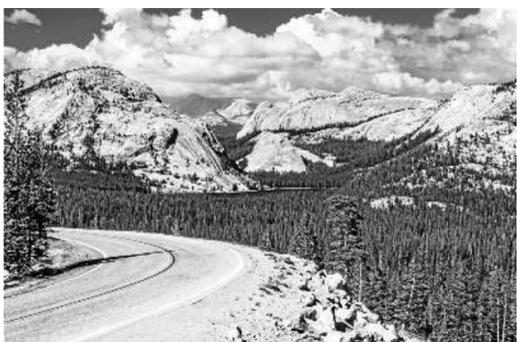
"We'll get it all together in July," Feingold said.

Sanders hasn't made his intentions clear.

On the campaign trail, he routinely criticizes Trump. Yet Sanders' public statements sometimes suggest Clinton wouldn't be a worthy option for his supporters.

In California on Tuesday, Sanders said Democrats must choose between welcoming voters "who are prepared to fight for real economic and social change," or opting to maintain a structure "dependent on big money campaign contributions and be a party with limited participation and limited energy."

But senior adviser Ted Devine brushed aside concerns about Sanders' loyalty to the Democratic cause. "He intends to support the nominee of the party even if it is not him," Devine said.



DREAMSTIME

Tioga Pass is a mountain pass in Sierra Nevada. State Route 120 runs through it, and serves as the eastern entry point for Yosemite National Park.

Yosemite's popular Tioga Road to open for the season

ASSOCIATED PRESS

YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK — A popular east-west passage in Yosemite National Park that takes drivers across the Sierra Nevada is opening for the season.

Yosemite National Park Superintendent Don Neubacher says Tioga Road will open at noon on Wednesday.

He urges motorists to travel with caution due to ongoing roadwork and warns of the possibility of ice in some places, especially in the early morning hours.

Neubacher says there may

also be ice on hiking trails at higher elevations.

He urges visitors to prepare for snowy conditions and possible treacherous stream crossings while hiking the backcountry in the early season.

Yosemite, which encompasses nearly 1,200 square miles of wilderness and is visited by millions of people each year, is one the nation's most venerated national parks.

Yosemite Valley was set aside for protection by President Lincoln in 1864.

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PUBLIC MEETING
MARE ISLAND NAVAL SHIPYARD
RESTORATION ADVISORY BOARD (RAB)
MAY 2016 MEETING

The Department of Navy (DON) invites interested members of the public to attend updates and presentations with members of the Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) made up of representatives from the local community, Navy, Federal and State regulatory agencies. The DON encourages the public to keep informed about the environmental cleanup at Former Mare Island Naval Shipyard (MINS), Vallejo, California.

May 2016 Featured Topics

Former Mare Island Naval Shipyard South Shore Area (SSA) Shoreline Munitions Time-Critical Removal Action (TCRA)

Application for Closure Request Building 144 Oil / Water Separator Site, Installation Restoration Program Site 03, Investigation Area C1 and C3

Date : Thursday, May 26, 2016
Time: 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
Location: Mare Island Conference Center
375 G St., Vallejo, CA

Ask questions and voice your concerns. You Can Make a Difference!
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