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## HOUSE GOP AGAIN SEEKS FUNDS FOR TRUMP'S BORDER WALL

*Republicans' \$1.6 billion proposal faces opposition that blocked earlier effort*

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WASHINGTON – House Republicans will try again to provide money for President Donald Trump's promised border wall with Mexico, but the project faces the same stiff resistance from Democrats as it always has and prospects remain doubtful.

House Republicans are including \$1.6 billion to construct a physical barrier along the southwest border as part of the Homeland Security spending bill for the fiscal year 2018. The proposal, released this week, sets up a new round of battle on this issue after lawmakers [balked at funding the wall's construction](#) in a spending bill that passed Congress in early May.

This spending is popular with many Republicans but faces a high hurdle in the Senate, where Democratic votes will be needed. Democratic Party leaders have been clear they oppose paying for the construction of a physical wall, which as a candidate Mr. Trump promised would be funded by Mexico.

Meantime, anticipating that funding will eventually come through, the Department of Homeland Security said it would soon choose four to eight designs from among proposals submitted earlier this year and would build prototypes in San Diego by September.

Mr. Trump has voiced support for a [design with solar panels](#) on it, but the acting deputy commissioner of the Customs and Border Protection agency, Ronald Vitiello, said the president's view "hasn't impacted the planning."

The proposed \$1.6 billion for next year would pay for a total of about 74 miles of new or replacement barriers, for an average cost of about \$21 million per mile. That includes 32 miles of new border wall and 28 miles of a new levee wall in the Rio Grande Valley in Texas, and 14 miles of replacement secondary fencing in San Diego.

"These miles will help connect existing segments of wall ... and fill critical gaps," Mr. Vitiello told reporters last week.

House Republicans said this week they were ready to push again for the funding.

"One of the principal issues that drove the last four elections was the promise to secure our borders, and the wall is an important part of that promise," Rep. Tom McClintock (R., Calif.) said Wednesday.

The House budget bill also includes increased funding for deportation of people in the U.S. illegally, including money for nearly 4,700 additional detention beds, for 1,000 more Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers and 500 new Border Patrol agents.

Immigrant advocates oppose all of these ideas, but congressional Democrats have been particularly vocal about the border wall. That sets up a shutdown fight this fall when the government's current funding expires on Oct. 1. Support from at least eight Senate Democrats is needed to pass spending bills. That is because 60 votes are required for most legislation to clear procedural hurdles in the Senate and Republicans hold 52 seats.

In late June, Senate Democratic leaders sent a letter to Senate GOP leaders urging them to exclude funding for a "very expensive, ineffective new wall along the southern border with Mexico."

In the House, Republicans can pass spending bills on their own, but they sometimes need Democratic support because of GOP defections. That gives the minority party some leverage in both chambers. This week, House Democrats were clear about their opposition.

"Once again, Republicans are trying to put American taxpayers on the hook for the multibillion-dollar boondoggle President Trump swore Mexico would pay for," House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D., Calif.) said Tuesday.

Some Republicans are also opposed or neutral, with those representing the areas along the border among the skeptics. But conservatives said it was important to try to push the funding through, and a summary of the bill emphasized that it met Mr. Trump's budget request.

"We've got to make sure that eight Democrats don't control what we do on appropriations from here on out," Rep. Mark Meadows (R., N.C.), the chairman of the House Freedom Caucus, a group of roughly three dozen conservative House Republicans, said Wednesday.

Mr. Meadows said Republicans couldn't give in to Democrats, given the GOP's full control of the House, Senate and White House.

Another conservative member of the House is thrusting the issue into the Senate GOP primary in Alabama. Rep. Mo Brooks said in a campaign ad that if elected he will read the King James Bible on the Senate floor to delay consideration of any spending bill that doesn't include wall funding.

"Even some establishment Republicans are blocking the way," he said in the ad. "Elect me to the Senate and I'll fight every spending bill that doesn't fund that wall."

A Republican congressional aide noted that the most conservative House Republicans often wind up voting against spending bills for various reasons, and said their insistence on border wall funding wasn't likely to be consequential in final negotiations.