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HOUSE PASSES \$1.1 TRILLION SPENDING BILL AHEAD OF MIDNIGHT DEADLINE

By Kristina Peterson, Siobhan Hughes and Michael R. Crittenden
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Congress avoided a government shutdown Thursday after House Republican leaders scraped up enough support to overcome opposition from both sides of the aisle and pass a \$1.1 trillion spending bill by the slimmest of margins.

Less than three hours before the government's funding expired, the bill passed on a 219-206 vote, following tense hours of vote wrangling and closed-door meetings.

"With a bipartisan vote, the House has passed a responsible bill to keep the government running and address the American people's priorities," House Speaker John Boehner (R., Ohio) said in a statement after the vote.

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D., Nev.) said his chamber will take up the longer-term spending bill on Friday. The Senate is expected to approve the measure in the next couple of days. Timing of its passage depends on whether lawmakers reach an agreement to shorten debate.

To prevent even a brief shutdown, both chambers passed a two-day stopgap measure late Thursday night.

In a day rocked by internal party warfare, lawmakers locked horns with their leaders and the White House over whether to support the \$1.1 trillion spending bill negotiated by a bipartisan group funding most of the government through September 2015 and the Homeland Security Department through February.

House GOP leaders had predicted the bill would pass, but were forced to delay the vote for hours Thursday, as it became clear that opposition from conservative Republicans and liberal Democrats could spell an embarrassing defeat on the House floor.

The bill passed late Thursday with the support of 162 Republicans and 57 Democrats. It was opposed by 67 Republicans and 139 Democrats.

Meanwhile, in a rare clash with one of its closest allies, the White House backed the bill opposed by House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D., Calif.) but embraced by top Senate Democrats.

The day's mayhem aligned President Barack Obama, Mr. Boehner and Mr. Reid with the same goal – passing a longer-term spending bill – in the face of opposition from critics as varied as liberal Democrat Sen. Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts and conservative GOP Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas.

The White House dispatched Chief of Staff Denis McDonough to a Thursday evening meeting of congressional Democrats, aiming to shore up support for the bill. Mr. McDonough made a pitch for the longer-term bill, saying Democrats would end up with a worse deal in 2015 if

they supported a temporary patch, because Republicans would have more power to shape new, long-term legislation next year, according to lawmakers in the meeting. The GOP will hold a majority in both chambers in 2015.

Perhaps more enticingly, the bill's more than 1,600 pages contained hometown funding many lawmakers couldn't turn down.

"In the end, there were a lot of things in the bill that were really good for the people I represent," said Rep. Ron Barber (D., Ariz.), citing continued support for the A-10 aircraft, which the White House had proposed retiring.

House GOP leaders intent on defusing their recent budget brinkmanship in Congress shaped a plan designed to push into next year the fight over Mr. Obama's plans to shield millions of illegal immigrants from deportation.

But many conservatives rejected the approach as capitulation to the president, forcing GOP leaders to turn to Democrats to help pass the bill. Problems arose there when provisions in the 1,600-page bill negotiated by a bipartisan group of lawmakers and congressional leaders ignited a liberal backlash this week.

Democrats, including Mrs. Pelosi and Ms. Warren, expressed sharp concerns about provisions that would scale back language in the 2010 Dodd-Frank financial-regulation law and change campaign-finance rules.

The provision that drew the most Democratic criticism would loosen a provision in Dodd-Frank requiring banks to "push out" some of their riskiest derivatives-trading activities into affiliates ineligible for federal backstop programs such as deposit insurance. Banks have long sought the change, arguing that the provision actually increases risk by pushing swaps activity into less-regulated entities.

J.P. Morgan Chase & Co. Chief James Dimon called lawmakers Thursday to advocate for the provision, people familiar with the calls said.

GOP leaders' problems securing support for the bill gave Democrats an opening to press their demands to cut provisions they have objected to from the bill. "It is clear from this recess on the floor that the Republicans don't have enough votes," Mrs. Pelosi wrote to House Democrats Thursday afternoon. "This increases our leverage to get two offensive provisions of the bill removed: the bank bailout and big-money-for-campaigns provision."

But Mrs. Pelosi's stance was undercut when the White House backed the bill Thursday, calling it a bipartisan compromise. After that, Mrs. Pelosi, who hadn't explicitly said she would vote against the bill earlier, took to the House floor Thursday to announce her opposition. "I'm enormously disappointed that the White House feels that the only way they can get a bill is to go along with this," she said.

Many Democrats also opposed a provision in the bill that would raise contribution caps for national party committees – allowing individuals to give up to 10 times the current limit.

While Mr. Obama opposes parts of the bill, specifically the changes to Dodd-Frank and political contributions, White House press secretary Josh Earnest said that overall it is a "compromise proposal" that "provides the kind of certainty that's important to our economy."

The distance between Mrs. Pelosi and the White House echoed a recent strain between the administration and Mr. Reid, displaying a new coolness between Democrats in Congress and the White House since the party's defeats in last month's midterm election. Late last month, the White House threatened to veto a deal on temporary tax breaks under negotiation between top Senate Democrats and House Republicans. That issue still hasn't been resolved.

On the spending bill, the White House didn't win over another traditional ally, Hispanic Democrats, some of whom opposed the bill because it only funds the Homeland Security Department through February.

Republicans "are having a tantrum because the president chose to take targeted actions that help the country by prioritizing the deportation of criminals and leaving American families alone," Rep. Luis Gutierrez (D., Ill.) said in a statement urging colleagues to vote no.

Meanwhile, Republicans also faced defections from conservatives who wanted their leaders to use the must-pass spending bill to try to block implementation of Mr. Obama's immigration plan this year, before it takes effect.

"Voters were loud and clear that they wanted Republicans to act boldly against the president's unlawful unilateral actions. This legislation failed to stop this unconstitutional encroachment," said Rep. Jeff Duncan (R., S.C.), who voted against the bill.

In a rare act of defiance against GOP leadership, 16 Republicans voted against the bill on a procedural motion Thursday, nearly bringing down the measure. Rank-and-file lawmakers typically support their leadership in a rule vote even if they oppose the final bill.

House leaders said Thursday the bill put Republicans in a better position to challenge the president's immigration plan early next year.

"Tonight we set the stage for a battle with the president on his illegal actions on immigration when we have a Republican Senate in just four weeks. That battle is going to be very viciously fought, not only in the House, but in a Republican Senate," House Majority Whip Steve Scalise (R., La.) told reporters after the vote.