

WORLD

Mammoth bill passed after months of delay

US House OKs \$1.2 trillion measure but vote on \$1.85 trillion plan still lies ahead

WASHINGTON — US President Joe Biden has hailed Congress’ passage of his \$1.2 trillion infrastructure measures after a monthslong standoff, though his approval ratings have dropped and voters gave his party the cold shoulder in elections on Tuesday.

“Finally, infrastructure week,” Biden said on Saturday. “I’m so happy to say that: infrastructure week.”

The House passed the measure 228-206 late on Friday, prompting prolonged cheers from the relieved Democratic side of the chamber. Thirteen Republicans, mostly moderates, supported the legislation, and six Democratic members opposed it.

Approval of the bill, which, it is said, will create millions of jobs and improve broadband, water supplies and other public works, means it now goes to Biden to be signed.

On Tuesday the Democrats’ candidate for governor in Virginia was defeated, and its candidate for governor in New Jersey won with a slim margin. The two states are regarded as Democrat leaning. Those setbacks made party leaders, and moderates and liberals alike, impatient to produce legislation that would have an impact and demonstrate they know how to govern. Democrats can ill afford to be seen in disarray a year before midterm elections that could give Republicans congressional control.

The infrastructure measures are mammoth investments by any measure, something Biden compares in its breadth to the building of the interstate highway system last century or the transcontinental railway the century before. He touted it



While policymakers should be commended for their efforts to scale back costs and include real offsets, these bills still fall far short of those goals.”

Maya MacGuineas, president of the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget

as a “blue collar blueprint to rebuilding America”.

Freeing up the infrastructure measure for final congressional approval was like a burst of adrenaline for Democrats. Yet despite the win, they endured a setback when a vote on a second, larger bill — the Build Back Better” plan — was postponed until later this month.

That 10-year, \$1.85 trillion measure bolstering health, family and climate change programs was side-tracked after moderates demanded a cost estimate on the measure from the Congressional Budget Office. The postponement dashed hopes that the day would produce a double-barreled win for Biden with passage of both bills.

But in an evening breakthrough brokered by Biden and House leaders, five moderates agreed to back that bill if the budget office’s estimates are consistent with preliminary numbers that White House

and congressional tax analysts have provided. The agreement, in which lawmakers promised to vote on the social and environment bill by the week of Nov 15, was a significant step toward a House vote that could ultimately ship it to the Senate.

Five moderates said that if the fiscal estimates on the social and environment bill raise problems, “we remain committed to working to resolve any discrepancies” to pass it.

In exchange, liberals agreed to back the infrastructure measure, whose passage, they had insisted for months, must be tied to that of the social and environment bill.

Rare detente

The day marked a rare detente between Democrats’ moderate and liberal wings that party leaders hope will continue. They had spent weeks accusing each other of jeopardizing Biden’s and the party’s success by overplaying their hands. But on Friday night the liberal faction suggested they would work together.

Maya MacGuineas, president of the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, a US watchdog group, said in a statement on Friday that while Biden and members of Congress pledged their agenda would not add to the debt, it is likely that both bills would increase the deficit based on official estimates.

“A fiscally responsible Build Back Better agenda should be fully paid for, gimmick-free, well-targeted based on the country’s needs, and enacted in the context of a broader budget,” MacGuineas said.

“While policymakers should be commended for their efforts to scale back costs and include real offsets, these bills still fall far short of those goals.”

AGENCIES—XINHUA

Solemn tribute



A festival patron leaves flowers outside the canceled Astroworld music festival at NRG Park in Houston, Texas, on Saturday. Eight people died and 17 people were taken to local hospitals after what authorities described as a crowd surge at the event. GETTY IMAGES

Briefly

NIGERIA
Death toll of high-rise collapse rises to 42

The death toll in a high-rise collapse in Lagos, Nigeria, has risen to 42 and the number of survivors increased to 15, state authorities have announced. The cause of last week’s disaster is still unknown. “We have a total of 42 bodies that have been recovered,” Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu said late on Saturday. The 21-story building, under construction in the upscale Ikoyi district, crumbled on Nov 1, trapping dozens of people working on the site. By Friday the authorities had said that nine people had survived. Over the weekend, the number of survivors increased to 15 after six additional people who escaped the collapse were identified. The total number of people on site is unknown.

POLAND
Poles demonstrate against abortion law

Tens of thousands of people demonstrated on Saturday in Warsaw and dozens of other Polish cities to denounce a 9-month-old abortion law blamed for claiming the life of a pregnant mother, organizers said. The 30-year-old woman died of septicemia in a hospital after her 22-week-old fetus died in her womb, the family’s lawyer tweeted. According to the government, the woman’s death had nothing to do with the new law. Two doctors at the hospital in Pszczyna were suspended after the woman’s death, and the town’s prosecutors have launched an inquiry. Poland’s Constitutional Court last year sided with the government to rule that terminations over fetal defects were unconstitutional.

MEXICO
At least 19 killed in road accident

At least 19 people were killed and three injured when seven vehicles crashed on a highway near the municipality of Chalco in central Mexico, authorities said on Saturday. The accident occurred at midday when a cargo truck had a brake malfunction and crashed into six vehicles at a toll booth on the highway, according to Mexico’s Federal Roads and Bridges and Related Services. The truck driver was among the dead, and the injured were taken to nearby medical clinics, officials said. Work to remove the vehicles had begun, but was expected to last several hours as several vehicles caught fire in the crashes.

AGENCIES—XINHUA

CHTF

Welcome to
23rd China Hi-Tech Fair

Advance Quality Development
Build a Novel Development Pattern

December 2021
Shenzhen Convention & Exhibition Center
www.chtf.com
Hotline: +86-755-82849990

Think green, think clean
Think globally, act locally

Public AD: 0072

CHINADAILY 中国日报