

Ron Johnson forces reading of 628-page Senate coronavirus relief bill on floor

Sen. Ron Johnson (R-Wis.) is forcing Senate floor staff to read the entire Democratic coronavirus relief bill, a maneuver that could take up to 10 hours and will delay a final vote on the legislation.

Senate Majority Leader Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.) formally offered the 628-page Senate bill on Thursday after an initial vote to take up House-passed legislation, which is being used as a vehicle for the chamber's debate.

Typically, the Senate waives the full reading of bills or amendments. But Johnson had vowed to force Senate floor staff to read the bill, arguing it would give senators time to craft amendments and for Americans to learn the details of the legislation.

"By the way, I feel bad for the clerks. ... So, so often we rush these massive bills that are hundreds, if not thousands, of pages long. You don't have time. Nobody has time to read them," Johnson said on Thursday.

Senators estimate it will take anywhere between five and 10 hours for the Senate floor staff to read through the legislation. Johnson was sitting on the floor as the Senate staff started their reading on Thursday afternoon and a GOP senator will need to remain on the floor throughout the reading.

After Johnson objected, Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.), the chairman of the Budget Committee, was overheard joking "I want to stay to hear the reading. I may have missed something."

Sanders, who subsequently left the chamber, added, "Good thing we have time during a national emergency to do this."

Democrats are vowing that they will pass the coronavirus bill this week, which still needs to bounce back to the House for a second vote. Even after the Senate staff wraps up reading the bill, the chamber has to go through up to an additional 20 hours of debate and a freewheeling vote-a-rama before senators can take a

final vote.

Schumer trolled Johnson's efforts on the floor on Thursday.

"A few of my Republican colleagues are going to some pretty ridiculous lengths to showcase their opposition," Schumer said.

"Still, we are delighted that the Senator from Wisconsin wants to give the American people another opportunity to hear what's in the American Rescue Plan. We Democrats want America to hear what's in the plan. And if the senator from Wisconsin wants to read it, let everybody listen because it has overwhelming support," he added.

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Note: Read the entire 628-page bill at the source

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