

# Senator Manchin Pulls His Support for Build Back Better

Senator Joe Manchin (D., W. Va.) said Sunday that he “cannot vote to continue with” President Biden’s nearly \$2 trillion social spending plan, dashing Democrats’ hopes that the moderate Democrat could be persuaded to support the bill.

“I cannot vote to continue with this piece of legislation. I just can’t. I’ve tried everything humanly possible. I can’t get there,” Manchin said during an appearance on Fox News Sunday.

“You’re done — this is a no,” host Bret Baier said.

“This is a no, on this legislation,” Manchin responded. “I have tried everything I know to do.”

Manchin later added that Biden “has a lot of logs in the fire,” including Covid, inflation and the \$29 trillion federal debt.

“That’s where our efforts should be at right now,” Manchin said.

“When you have these things coming at you the way they are right now, I’ve always said this, Bret, if I can’t go home to the people of West Virginia, I can’t vote for it,” he said.

Jake Sherman@JakeSherman

Now Manchin has released a statement saying he’s no. Crystal clear no

“My Democratic colleagues in Washington are determined to dramatically reshape our society in a way that leaves our country even more vulnerable to the threats we face. I cannot take that risk”

## MANCHIN STATEMENT ON BUILD BACK BETTER ACT

Washington, DC – Today, U.S. Senator Joe Manchin (D-WV) released the following statement on the *Build Back Better Act*.

"For five and a half months, I have worked as diligently as possible meeting with President Biden, Majority Leader Schumer, Speaker Pelosi and my colleagues on every end of the political spectrum to determine the best path forward despite my serious reservations. I have made my concerns clear through public statements, op-eds and private conversations. My concerns have only increased as the pandemic surges on, inflation rises and geopolitical uncertainty increases around the world.

"I have always said, 'If I can't go back home and explain it, I can't vote for it.' Despite my best efforts, I cannot explain the sweeping *Build Back Better Act* in West Virginia and I cannot vote to move forward on this mammoth piece of legislation.

"My Democratic colleagues in Washington are determined to dramatically reshape our society in a way that leaves our country even more vulnerable to the threats we face. I cannot take that risk with a staggering debt of more than \$29 trillion and inflation taxes that are real and harmful to every hard-working American at the gasoline pumps, grocery stores and utility bills with no end in sight.

"The American people deserve transparency on the true cost of the *Build Back Better Act*. The non-partisan Congressional Budget Office determined the cost is upwards of \$4.5 trillion which is more than double what the bill's ardent supporters have claimed. They continue to camouflage the real cost of the intent behind this bill.

"As the Omicron variant spreads throughout communities across the country, we are seeing COVID-19 cases rise at rates we have not seen since the height of this pandemic. We are also facing increasing geopolitical uncertainty as tensions rise with both Russia and China. Our ability to quickly and effectively respond to these pending threats would be drastically hindered by our rising debt.

"If enacted, the bill will also risk the reliability of our electric grid and increase our dependence on foreign supply chains. The energy transition my colleagues seek is already well underway in the United States of America. In the last two years, as Chairman of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee and with bipartisan support, we have invested billions of dollars into clean energy technologies so we can continue to lead the world in reducing emissions through innovation. But to do so at a rate that is faster than technology or the markets allow will have catastrophic consequences for the American people like we have seen in both Texas and California in the last two years.

"I will never forget the warning from then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Mike Mullen, that he delivered during a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing during my first year in the Senate. He testified that the greatest threat facing our nation was our national debt and since that time our debt has doubled.

"I will continue working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to address the needs of all Americans and do so in a way that does not risk our nation's independence, security and way of life."

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Manchin had held out on supporting the social spending measure, leaving Democrats short of the 50 votes needed to pass the legislation via budget reconciliation. Without Manchin's support, Democrats became increasingly likely to miss their self-imposed deadline to pass the bill by the end of the month. Manchin's latest comments effectively kill the bill.

Sources close to Manchin say that while he will not vote for the "Build Back Better" bill, that he is committed to working on the issues through more focused legislation and regular legislative order, CBS News Ed O'Keefe reported.

"I also think he could find a way to yes on a version of it," one source reportedly told O'Keefe. "I don't see it as dead dead."

CNN's Manu Raju reported last week that talks between Manchin and Biden about the bill were not going well. The child tax credit had been a huge sticking point as Manchin wanted to cut the measure, according to Raju.

Raju asked House Speaker Nancy Pelosi if Democrats miscalculated Manchin on the bill last week and she responded: "I think that this is called the legislative process. And we have our rules than they have their rules. I'm not going to have a post-mortem on something that hasn't died. I think we will have legislation that will pass."

Last week Biden had struck a hopeful tone about his conversations with Manchin, saying the moderate Democrat has "reiterated his support for Build Back Better funding at the level of the framework plan I announced in September."

"I believe that we will bridge our differences and advance the Build Back Better plan, even in the face of fierce Republican opposition," Biden said in a statement

on Thursday. “My team and I are having ongoing discussions with Senator Manchin; that work will continue next week.”

“It takes time to finalize these agreements, prepare the legislative changes, and finish all the parliamentary and procedural steps needed to enable a Senate vote,” he added. “We will advance this work together over the days and weeks ahead; Leader Schumer and I are determined to see the bill successfully on the floor as early as possible.”

Still, Manchin said his opposition would not be a huge surprise to the president.

“He knows that I’ve had concerns and the problems I’ve had,” Manchin said on Sunday. “The thing we should all be directing our attention towards is the variant of COVID we have coming back at us in so many different aspects and different ways. It’s affecting our lives again.”

Manchin expressed concern that rising inflation could “really harm a lot of Americans” and suggested that is where the government’s attention “needs to be directed toward immediately.”

Representative Ayanna Pressley (D., Mass.) blasted Manchin during an appearance on CNN on Sunday: “To be clear my lack and deficit of trust was about Senator Manchin. He has continued to move the goal post. He has never negotiated in good faith and he is obstructing the President’s agenda.”

“All I want for Christmas is a Senator that has compassion for the American people, not contempt,” she added.

Senator Bernie Sanders (I., Vt.) said on CNN’s State of the Union that he wants to hold a vote on the bill and that Manchin should be forced to vote no if he’s opposed.

“Let him vote no in front of the whole world,” Sanders said.

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