



By: TA | AP Brief

Senate passes sweeping Russia sanctions bill



The Senate overwhelmingly approved a punishing **Russian sanctions package** Friday, the result of a yearlong campaign by the late Sen. Lindsey Graham to reinforce U.S. support for Ukraine and try to force President Vladimir Putin's hand as the grinding war drags on.

The bipartisan legislation, which passed 86-11, would penalize countries that continue to buy Russian oil, gas and other exports seeking to deprive Putin of revenues fueling the war.

It comes after Ukrainian President Volodymyr **Zelenskyy visited the Capitol** last week following Graham's funeral, met with senators from both parties and watched from the gallery as the Senate took the **first procedural votes**.

"Today, President Zelenskyy is watching from Ukraine — and Putin is watching from Moscow," said Sen. Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn., who had worked with the late South Carolina senator on the package.

"I would like to think Lindsey Graham is watching, too," he said. "Today we say to the people of Ukraine: You are not alone. And today we say to Vladimir Putin: You will not conquer Ukraine."

The sweeping show of force from the Senate is the most substantial move yet during President Donald Trump's second term to shift the dynamic of the four-year war, which has now churned longer than World War I.

Congress has struggled to ensure the flow of U.S. funding and munitions to Ukraine, but Trump has given a nod to the package, which includes his push for sanctions on Iran, pressuring the House to pass and send it for his signature.

Graham and Blumenthal had announced a deal with the White House on the sanctions legislation on July 10 after more than a year of negotiations with the White House.

Graham, who had just returned from Ukraine, died suddenly the next day, likely from an aortic tear.

Tariffs on the world's top five purchasers of Russian oil

The bipartisan package allows the president to impose tariffs on the world's top five purchasers of Russian oil or natural gas, including China and India.

It provides exceptions for countries that import less than 15% of their natural gas from Russia and are taking steps to reduce those imports.

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It would expand U.S. sanctions to target older, reflagged oil tankers that Russia uses to circumvent existing U.S. sanctions on Russian oil and energy revenues.

The bill also allows the White House to waive sanctions or restrictions if the president certifies to Congress that it's in the national interest.

Democrats and some Republicans have been wary of giving Trump broad authority to slap tariffs on imports that have spiked prices for goods, worried about inflationary costs for Americans.

Those voting against the final package were mostly progressive Democrats.

Sen. Darline Graham, R-S.C., who was appointed by the state's governor to fill her brother's seat, said she was honored to carry on his work. "This legislation hits Putin where it hurts," she said.