

# POLITICO

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## Biden's stumbles spark concerns about ads, surrogates

The campaign says it's not revamping its approach despite stagnant polls and fear-filled Democrats.

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## DeSantis seeks spark

Iowa Gov. Reynolds endorses DeSantis as he trails Trump.

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## Will SCOTUS uphold ban on guns for accused domestic abusers?

Several key conservative justices seemed unlikely to strike down a federal law that disarms people under domestic violence restraining orders.

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## Matt Wuerker

The cartoonist's daily take on the world of politics.

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FRANCIS CHUNG/POLITICO

Sen. Kyrsten Sinema's focus on relationships with the GOP will end up proving critical to corraling 60 votes for a break-glass emergency plan to unravel Sen. Tommy Tuberville's hold on military promotions.

## How Sinema is moving to defuse Tuberville's blockade

She has worked for months to craft an emergency solution that would break the Alabama senator's holds on military nominees

BY BURGESS EVERETT

Kyrsten Sinema has frustrated progressives with her defense of the Senate filibuster, her close GOP relationships and her decision to leave the Democratic Party.

The same qualities that aggravate her liberal critics, though,

are positioning her to play the peacemaker this month in Washington's lengthy battle over blockaded Pentagon promotions.

The Arizona independent is a leading player in the bipartisan effort to finally break the blanket Pentagon holds that Sen. Tommy Tuberville (R-Ala.) imposed

in protest against Biden administration abortion policy. She started back-channeling with Tuberville weeks ago, though he hasn't moved an inch. She's now helping both parties find an off-ramp from the gridlock — even helping clear the floor last week

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## Behind closed doors, senators pitch options to restart military promotions

BY CONNOR O'BRIEN, JOE GOULD, URSULA PERANO AND KATHERINE TULLY-McMANUS

Tommy Tuberville is open to a face-saving solution to get out of his self-made blockade of military nominees — though an unusual

GOP conference meeting on Tuesday made clear he's not there yet. Nor is his party ready to totally roll over him.

"I wish we'd had this six months ago," Tuberville said after emerging from the meeting. "But we didn't. And here we are, and hope-

fully we can work through this and get something done in a short period of time."

At stake are 400-plus military nominations that the Alabama senator has stalled in the Senate for months. He's endlessly said he

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## GOP draws same battle lines as shutdown looms

Speaker Johnson floats different options but the House conference remains sharply divided

BY OLIVIA BEAVERS AND JORDAIN CARNEY

House Republicans entered a closed-door conference meeting Tuesday morning hoping to find some consensus on a spending plan. Instead, they came out more confused — with only 10 days left until a potential shutdown.

Speaker Mike Johnson laid out two possible approaches he'd recently started floating to members: a "clean" continuing resolution, which would keep the government funded through mid-January, or a so-called laddered CR, which would set different deadlines on different tranches of government funding. If Republicans couldn't agree on either of those options, Johnson said, the Democratic-controlled Senate could jam the House GOP with its own mammoth spending bill.

That warning didn't move the needle, as Republicans left the meeting starkly divided on which path to take.

"There's too many ideas right now, which is fine — the speaker wants us to have an open forum to



DREW ANGERER/GETTY IMAGES

Speaker Mike Johnson laid out two options for the House GOP to deal with funding the government. Neither moved the needle.

debate it," said Rep. Richard McCormick (R-Ga.). "But now there's so many ideas, we have to figure out how to whittle it down."

Other lawmakers were more direct. One GOP member, granted

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## Why the U.S. isn't stopping the Israel-Hamas war, and other Middle East realities

BY NAHAL TOOSI, ALEXANDER WARD AND LARA SELIGMAN

The Biden administration faces pressure from progressive Democrats, Arab officials and even some U.S. diplomats to help end the Israel-Hamas war. But the White House doesn't necessarily want to stop the fight — at least not yet. Even if it did, Israel probably wouldn't listen.

Those are some of the hard

truths emerging from the cacophony of this conflict — reflected in conversations with eight diplomats, analysts and administration officials, as well as a review of what American, Israeli, Arab and other leaders have or haven't said in public.

As the body count rises, the calculations could shift dramatically. For now, here's a reality check on the decisions being made from

MIDDLE EAST on Page 14

# LOOKING FOR THE TRUTH ABOUT CREDIT CARD COMPETITION?

**✘ FALSE:** The Credit Card Competition Act will allow retailers to process credit card transactions based solely on what is cheapest for them, disregarding what's best for consumers.

**✔ TRUE:** Under the CCCA, the Big Banks issuing cards continue to control which networks are enabled on their cards. Merchants may then choose the most efficient and cost-effective network from amongst those enabled by the banks.

**✘ FALSE:** The CCCA's credit card routing mandates would erase valuable credit card rewards programs, impacting 71% of Americans who rely on these benefits for savings.

**✔ TRUE:** The CCCA does nothing to rewards programs whatsoever. Only the Big Banks can decide themselves to take away rewards programs they fund through interchange fees, high interest rates and myriad other fees.

In 2023, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) found that the vast majority of reward redemptions occurred for cardholders with credit scores above 720. The Federal Reserve has said that lower-income families are collectively transferring over \$15 billion each year to wealthier families that have credit cards with rewards programs.

**✘ FALSE:** The CCCA could expose credit cards to data security risks because it allows the government to mandate which networks can be used to route credit cards.

**✔ TRUE:** In addition to Visa and Mastercard, the legislation will instruct banks to select and enable one other competitive network. Every network will compete on security, reliability and efficiency in order to earn the banks' approval to be the second network enabled on their credit cards. And, the Federal Reserve will create a prohibited list of networks that pose a security threat or are owned by a foreign state, such as China UnionPay, a network not currently prohibited in the U.S. today.

**81% OF CONSUMERS SUPPORT FEDERAL LEGISLATION** that will allow for greater competition that results in lower credit card fees for small businesses.

**71% OF CONSUMERS TRUST SMALL BUSINESSES OVER BIG BANKS** when it comes to advocating for policies that benefit consumers.

**THE TRUTH MATTERS.**

GET THE FACTS [NRF.COM/TRUTHMATTERS](https://www.nrf.com/truthmatters)

**NRF** National Retail Federation

