

House Democrats give \$4.6 billion for Trump's concentration camps

Ocasio-Cortez plays critical role in ensuring passage

By Eric London
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House Democrats voted overwhelmingly to provide the American immigration Gestapo with \$4.6 billion to round up and jail thousands of immigrant children in concentration camps yesterday.

The vote is a political endorsement of Trump's fascist policy. It exposes the Democrats as a thoroughly anti-immigrant party that is hostile to the democratic rights of the entire working class.

By a margin of 305 to 102 (129 to 95 among Democrats), the Democratic-controlled House passed a Senate version of the appropriations bill that provides carte blanche to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and Border Protection (CBP) to systematically brutalize working class children without any additional regulation or oversight.

A House version would have provided almost the same amount to ICE and CBP with token regulatory "guardrails" that the Trump administration ignores anyway. For example, while the House version would also have rubber-stamped the mass incarceration of immigrant children, it would have required the government notify Congress within 24 hours when an immigrant child dies.

The Senate version, which passed by an 84–8 margin earlier this week, did not even include these meaningless oversight provisions. Donald Trump praised the Senate version as "tough," and 34 of 47 Senate Democrats voted for it. Seven Democrats—including Bernie Sanders, Elizabeth Warren, Kamala Harris and Cory Booker—were too busy campaigning for president to vote on this monumental attack on immigrants.

Announcing the agreement to support the Senate version, Democratic Speaker of the House Nancy

Pelosi said, "In order to get resources to the children fastest, we will reluctantly pass the Senate bill. As we pass the Senate bill, we will do so with a battle cry as to how we go forward to protect children in a way that truly honors their dignity and worth."

What cynical lies! Democrats did not vote to provide resources to children but to provide guns and drones for border guards and to construct new concentration camps.

The self-professed left-wing of the Democratic Party issued paltry criticisms of House Democrats' passage of the Senate bill. New York Democratic Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, a member of the Democratic Socialists of America, said the Democrats were "abdicating power" to Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell.

Aside from the fact that the overwhelming majority of Democrats in the Senate voted for the plan, Ocasio-Cortez's actions over the past week expose the critical role she has played in passing the Senate bill and facilitating Trump's crackdown on immigrants.

Last weekend, Ocasio-Cortez vocally proclaimed she was opposed to providing any additional funding for ICE and CBP. On June 22, she tweeted that Trump and his allies say the abuse of detained children is "because of a lack of money. You know what saves money? Not putting masses of people in internment in the first place."

But on Monday, Ocasio-Cortez went to Nancy Pelosi's office for a three-hour meeting, after which she changed her tune. *The Hill* wrote that Ocasio-Cortez dulled her categorical opposition and "emerged from Pelosi's office describing the discussions as 'just a really delicate situation...it's a

rock and a hard place.”

The Hill further wrote, “Ocasio-Cortez entered the meeting saying that she opposed the border aid package that had been unveiled by the House Appropriations Committee on Friday. But after leaving the meeting with Democratic leaders, she said it’s possible she could vote for it depending on the changes.”

The next day, after dropping her opposition, Ocasio-Cortez voted to bring the House version to the floor for a full vote. This critical vote passed by the slimmest of margins thanks to the support of Ocasio-Cortez and fellow “progressive” Democrats Ilhan Omar, Ayanna Pressley and Rashida Tlaib. Later that day, the House version passed, handing the initiative to the Senate.

Democratic leadership then allowed Ocasio-Cortez, Omar, Pressley and Tlaib to cover their role by voting “no” for the final bill after passage was already secured.

On Wednesday, Pelosi personally spoke with Trump on the phone. Later that day, the Senate overwhelmingly supported the measure. After the vote, an emboldened Trump tweeted:

“Bipartisan Humanitarian Aid Bill for the Southern Border just passed. A great job done by all! Now we must work to get rid of the Loopholes and fix Asylum. Thank you also to Mexico for the work being done on helping with Illegal Immigration - a very big difference!”

Throughout the week, the Democratic Party press has denounced Democrats who had opposed massive increases in funding for ICE and CBP. In an editorial board statement Monday, the *Washington Post* specifically denounced some House Democrats for “using the hashtags #NotOneDollar and #CloseTheCamps” and for thinking the bill “will help advance the administration’s immigration and detention policies. Such thinking is irresponsible.”

Ocasio-Cortez has played the pivotal role in this corrupt process. The pro-establishment *Politico* noted her subservience to the political establishment with satisfaction: “In Queens, she’s a storm-the-barricades political outsider. But back in Washington, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez is working the system.”

The article published yesterday is titled “Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez learns to play the insider’s game: The freshman firebrand isn’t tormenting party

leaders—she’s working with them.” The article notes the fact that Ocasio-Cortez “declined to mobilize her army of social media followers against it or rile up the progressive base in a bid to tank it.”

Politico wrote:

“In the 48-hour flurry of negotiations leading up to a vote on the spending package, Ocasio-Cortez inserted herself into the Democratic caucus’ efforts to respond to the humanitarian crisis at the border” but that “Ocasio-Cortez held no impromptu news conference on the Capitol lawn. She refrained from a tweetstorm. In fact, she didn’t write a single post about one of the biggest immigration debates so far under the Democratic majority.”

Her silence is a deliberate act of collaboration with Trump and his fascist advisors. Her “no” vote is only a cynical ploy, made well after the Senate version’s passage in the House was already guaranteed.

Those who retain illusions in Ocasio-Cortez, Sanders and other Democratic Party politicians backed by the Democratic Socialists of America must learn from this critical week. Ocasio-Cortez and Sanders have exposed their true role: dulling massive social discontent over the brutalization of immigrant workers with meaningless phrases while working behind the scenes to make sure ICE and CBP can dramatically expand the attack on immigrants.

These Democratic politicians have nothing to do with socialism. Socialism means mobilizing the working class independently of the entire political establishment in a mass, revolutionary struggle for social equality and in defense of democratic rights.

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