



NOV 2025

Clay Higgins explains why he was **the lone 'no' vote** on Epstein files release

Two hundred and sixteen Republicans voted in favor of the legislation on Tuesday, two days after President Donald Trump urged his party to support it on Truth Social.

GREGORY SVIRNOVSKIY
11/18/2025, 4:02PM ET

SHARE:



Rep. Clay Higgins (R-La.), the lone “no” vote on the near-unanimous House

legislation to force a release of the Justice Department's files on the late convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein, said on Tuesday that he opposed it on privacy grounds.

“It abandons 250 years of criminal justice procedure in America,” [Higgins wrote](#) on X. “As written, this bill reveals and injures thousands of innocent people — witnesses, people who provided alibis, family members, etc. If enacted in its current form, this type of broad reveal of criminal investigative files, released to a rabid media, will absolutely result in innocent people being hurt.”

Advertisement

AD

[Four hundred and twenty-seven House lawmakers](#) — including 216 Republicans — voted in favor of the legislation on Tuesday, two days after [President Donald Trump urged his party to support it on Truth Social](#).

The White House had spent months lobbying against the effort.

Higgins, a staunch supporter of the president, nevertheless voted against it. But this isn't his final word on the matter, he said.

“If the Senate amends the bill to properly address privacy of victims and other

Americans, who are named but not criminally implicated, then I will vote for that bill when it comes back to the House,” he said.

The Senate could soon clear the bill. Majority Leader John Thune told reporters that the chamber could potentially pass it by unanimous consent [as soon as later Tuesday](#).

Lead Art: Rep. Clay Higgins (R-La.) speaks with a reporter as he walks to a vote at the U.S. Capitol, on July 21, 2025. | Francis Chung/POLITICO

Continue on to view the day's latest updates



NOV 2025

Thune denies Johnson's demand for Epstein bill changes

Senate GOP lawyers found the bill 'sufficient,' Thune said.

By **MEREDITH LEE HILL** and **JORDAIN CARNEY**
11/18/2025, 9:20PM ET



Speaker Mike Johnson said he voted for the Jeffrey Epstein disclosure bill Tuesday based on his hope that the Senate would make changes he's been demanding. Senate Majority Leader John Thune shot that down.

Thune said Tuesday evening that, while he had talked with the speaker about the bill, he and Senate GOP legal counsel decided the legislation was "sufficient." The Senate effectively [approved the legislation](#) by unanimous consent mere hours after House passage Tuesday afternoon without provisions sought by Johnson, including additional victim and whistleblower name protections.

Advertisement

AD

"I talked with the speaker a bit, and we've been in consultation obviously with the White House on this for some time," Thune told reporters. "The

conclusion was when it came out of the House 427-1 that, you know, it was going to pass in the Senate."

Thune's refusal to amend the bill was just the latest setback Johnson has

faced in the Epstein saga, where the Louisiana Republican saw a rank-and-file member of his own party, Rep. Thomas Massie (R-Ky.), pull off a stunning legislative end-run despite the speaker's months-long opposition campaign.

Johnson said after House passage Tuesday that he would "insist upon" changes.

"I talked to John Thune over the weekend. I just texted him. We're going to get together. We'll talk about this," Johnson told reporters as he left the floor. "There's an easy way to amend the legislation to make sure that we don't do permanent damage to the justice system. And I'm going to insist upon that."

Asked if he would press Trump to veto the bill if the Senate didn't amend it, Johnson said he would "cross that bridge" if necessary. He also raised "national security" concerns about the bill Tuesday.

Thune said Senate Republican lawyers examined the legislation and determined it could go forward without being amended.

"Our lawyers obviously had looked closely at some of the issues and had concluded that the bill I think was, you know, sufficient to accomplish what needed to be done here, and that is to get the information out there as quickly as possible," Thune said.

Earlier this week, Johnson told reporters he had received "some comfort" from the Senate that the chamber would make the changes. But Thune never publicly indicated he expected the Senate to revise the bill [and even warned earlier Tuesday](#) that changes were unlikely.

The only short-lived whiff of resistance that appeared in the Senate Tuesday came from Sen. Markwayne Mullin (R-Okla.), who appeared to raise concerns at the last minute but did not block the effort.

“We were trying to see if we needed to change language to protect the victims,” Mullin said to reporters.

Shortly before Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer sought unanimous consent to greenlight the bill, Mullin said that there had been a “conversation” with the administration about what the Oklahoma Republican characterized as “technical changes,” which ultimately didn’t get made.

Lead Art: Speaker Mike Johnson speaks during a press conference on Capitol Hill on Nov. 18, 2025. | Francis Chung/POLITICO

 Stacey Plaskett speaks during a hearing.

NOV 2025

Plaskett narrowly escapes censure over her Epstein texts

The Democratic delegate will keep her House Intel post after the House voted down a formal reprimand.



NICHOLAS WU
11/18/2025, 9:11PM ET





The House voted 209-214 Tuesday night against formally reprimanding Del. Stacey Plaskett for communicating with the late convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein during a 2019 Oversight Committee hearing.

Three House Republicans — Reps. Don Bacon of Nebraska, Lance Gooden of Texas and Dave Joyce of Ohio — voted with all Democrats against the measure. Three Republicans voted present: Reps. Andrew Garbarino of New York, Dan Meuser of Pennsylvania and Jay Obernolte of California.

Advertisement

AD

Plaskett drew scrutiny after documents released from the Epstein estate revealed her texts with him. She's denied wrongdoing, saying on the House floor Tuesday that Epstein was a constituent, that her contact was limited to information-gathering and that it was not public information at the time that Epstein had been under federal investigation.

"I know how to question individuals. I know how to seek information. I have sought information from confidential informants, from murderers, from other individuals because I want the truth," she said on the House floor.

Republicans contend Plaskett's contact with Epstein was more substantive and shaped her questioning during the hearing, which Plaskett denies.

“Standing against a convicted predator’s influence in our proceedings is not partisan. It’s basic decency,” said Rep. Ralph Norman (R-S.C.), who brought the measure to the House floor through a fast-track process bypassing committees and Hill leadership.

But the measure rejected Tuesday by the House would have also removed Plaskett from the House Intelligence Committee, a step too far for some lawmakers. She would have been the latest House Democrat to be removed from a committee position by Hill Republicans after Republicans voted last Congress to remove Rep. Ilhan Omar (D-Minn.) from the House Foreign Affairs Committee for her past comments on Israel.

The failed vote to reprimand Plaskett comes on the same day the House voted almost unanimously to force the Department of Justice to release more files about its case against Epstein. The controversy has roiled Congress and [split the MAGA base](#) for months.

In retaliation for the move against Plaskett, Democrats introduced a measure to censure Rep. Cory Mills (R-Fla.) and to remove him from the House Armed Services Committee. He’s faced a spate of ethical issues including an since-withdrawn allegation of assault and an ongoing legal dispute over a previous relationship. But that measure is likely to be withdrawn now that the Plaskett effort has failed.

The failure of the Plaskett measure prompted an outcry from conservative Republicans who had pushed for it, with some accusing leaders of cutting deals to avoid a vote on the Mills resolution.

“They’re brokering back end deals to avoid bringing forward justice in both Democrat and Republican chambers,” said Rep. Anna Paulina Luna (R-Fla.). “So it’s literally covering up public corruption.”

Calen Razor contributed to this report.

Lead Art: Del. Stacey Plaskett during a July 2023 hearing. | Francis Chung/POLITICO

 Senate Majority Leader John Thune (R-S.D.) speaks with reporters outside his office at the U.S. Capitol on Nov. 10, 2025.

NOV 2025

Senators rage against phone data payout measure won by Thune

Senate Republicans are expected to debate the issue during their weekly lunch Wednesday.

By **HAILEY FUCHS** and **JORDAIN CARNEY**

11/18/2025, 8:20PM ET

Lead Art: Senate Majority Leader John Thune (R-S.D.) speaks with reporters outside his office at the U.S. Capitol on Nov. 10, 2025. | Francis Chung/POLITICO

NOV 2025

House demands Epstein financial records from JPMorgan Chase, Deutsche Bank and US Virgin Islands

The House oversight committee has already released 65,000 documents related to Epstein.

CHEYANNE M. DANIELS
11/18/2025, 5:40PM ET



Republicans are pushing ahead with an investigation into the activities of Jeffrey Epstein — even as legislation forcing the release of all Department of Justice files on the late sex offender appears to be heading to President Donald Trump for a signature.

The House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform issued a series of subpoenas Tuesday for some of Epstein's financial records.

AD

Rep. James Comer (R-Ky.), chairman of the committee, issued subpoenas to J.P. Morgan Chase and Deutsche Bank and requested additional documents from U.S. Virgin Islands Attorney General Gordon Rhea.

According to the subpoenas, JPMorgan Chase began an internal investigation into accounts previously held by Epstein, flagging some 4,700 transactions as “suspicious” in the process. Epstein also held accounts at and banked with Deutsche Bank from 2013 until potentially late 2018, the subpoenas state.

The letter to Rhea comes after documents released last week reveal that Del. Stacey Plaskett [consulted with Epstein](#) during a 2019 hearing with Trump’s personal lawyer Michael Cohen. Epstein previously owned the islands of Little St. James and Great St. James. The House on Tuesday [will vote to censure Plaskett](#) and remove her from the House Intelligence Committee.

“The records sought by this subpoena will assist in the Committee’s oversight of the federal government’s enforcement of sex trafficking laws generally and specifically its handling of the investigation and prosecution of Mr. Jeffrey Epstein and Ms. Ghislaine Maxwell,” the subpoenas to the banks read.

The subpoenas were announced just after [the House and Senate voted overwhelmingly](#) to force the Justice Department to release more information about the case it built against Epstein.

 Tim Scott stands on an escalator.

NOV 2025

Tim Scott eyes committee vote on crypto bill next month

The GOP Senate Banking chair accused Democrats of “stalling” a major crypto bill.

JASPER GOODMAN

11/18/2025, 5:19PM ET



Senate Banking Chair Tim Scott said Tuesday he hopes to mark up cryptocurrency market structure legislation next month and accused

Democrats of “stalling” the bill.

“Next month, we believe we can mark up in both” the Senate Banking and Agriculture committees, Scott said on Fox Business’ “Mornings with Maria.”

The committees share jurisdiction over the bill because it deals with commodities regulations, overseen by the Ag panel, and securities law that falls in Banking's jurisdiction.

Advertisement

AD

Scott said he hopes to “get this to the floor of the Senate early next year so that President [Donald] Trump will sign the legislation, making America the crypto capital of the world.”

The ambitious timeline comes as Scott is trying to win support from a group of Senate Democrats who have signaled interest in cutting a deal on the crypto legislation. Staffers for lawmakers in that bloc — which includes Sens. Kirsten Gillibrand of New York, Mark Warner of Virginia and Ruben Gallego of Arizona — have been negotiating with Scott's team on the bill in recent weeks.

Scott failed to deliver on [a previous public pledge](#) to advance the market structure bill by the end of September, a delay [he has blamed on Democrats](#). He could advance a bill out of committee if he has unanimous GOP support —

which is not a given, with [some Republicans wavering](#) — but the legislation will need bipartisan backing to pass on the floor.

“The Democrats have been stalling and stalling and stalling because they don't

want President Trump to make America the crypto capital of the world,” Scott told host Maria Bartiromo Tuesday. “They don’t want to give him the win. It’s not just for President Trump — it’s for the American people.”

A spokesperson for Gallego, the top Democrat on a Senate Banking crypto subcommittee, said in a statement that “Democrats and Republicans, alike, have been working tirelessly on this issue.”

“Taking the time necessary to produce a strong, bipartisan product is not the same thing as stalling, and implying that Democrats don’t want to get this done isn’t productive,” said the spokesperson, Jane Garza.

Lead Art: Senate Banking Chair Tim Scott said he hopes to get the bill Scott to the floor of the Senate early next year. | Alex Kent for POLITICO

 Rep. Burgess Owens, R-Utah, speaks during a Senate Judiciary Committee hearing on voting rights on Capitol Hill in Washington, Tuesday, April 20, 2021. (Bill Clark/Pool via AP)

NOV 2025

New Utah congressional map puts Republicans in a bind

If the map holds, many expect Rep. Burgess Owens to retire.



SAMUEL BENSON
11/18/2025, 5:06PM ET



The new Utah congressional map, which creates a safe-blue district, will force the four current Republican members of the delegation to compete for three GOP seats.

The four Republicans have discussed possible configurations, though no final decision has been made, according to two people aware of the conversations who were granted anonymity to discuss the dynamic. The congresspeople have publicly said they will make no decision until the map is finalized, anticipating potential legal appeals.

Advertisement

AD

“We’re still waiting to see if there might be one other change,” said Rep. Burgess Owens (R-Utah). “In the meanwhile, we’re not going to speculate.”

Leaders of the Republican-controlled Utah legislature vowed to appeal after a district judge tossed out the GOP-leaning map the legislature drew and selected a plaintiff’s map on November 10. But over a week has passed without lawmakers filing the appeal. Utah House Speaker Mike Schultz [told a](#)

[local TV station](#) the deadline to appeal the 2026 map “has come and gone.”

“We don’t know what’s going to happen for 2026,” Schultz said. “We’re hoping for some miracle to come in and say, ‘No, this isn’t right.’”

If the map holds, many expect Owens, who has served since 2021, to retire, leaving Rep. Blake Moore (R-Utah) in the northern Utah district and Reps. Celeste Maloy and Mike Kennedy to split the other two.

“The thing we’re good at in politics in Utah that a lot of other states struggle with, is talking to each other and working together and figuring out what’s best for the state,” Maloy said. “We’re still in the process of doing that, but I’m confident we can figure it out.”

Lead Art: Rep. Burgess Owens, R-Utah, speaks during a Senate Judiciary Committee hearing on voting rights on Capitol Hill in Washington, Tuesday, April 20, 2021. (Bill Clark/Pool via AP) | AP

NOV 2025

Del. Stacey Plaskett is defending her conduct ahead of a House vote Tuesday evening to [censure her and remove her](#) from the House Intelligence Committee for secretly communicating with the late convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein during a 2019 Oversight Committee hearing.

In talking points sent to Hill offices and [obtained by POLITICO](#), the nonvoting Democratic delegate representing the U.S. Virgin Islands said she received correspondence from many people during the hearing, including Epstein, who was a constituent. She’s also defending the texts with Epstein as part of the information-gathering process.

“As a former prosecutor handling the worst felonies and innumerable narcotics cases, I have learned to receive information from sources I do not like to obtain information that helps me get at the truth,” she said, adding,

“Due diligence is not grounds for censure, nor does it have any bearing on a member’s committee standing.”

Plaskett made similar points in person during floor debate on the censure resolution introduced Tuesday by Rep. Ralph Norman (R-S.C.).

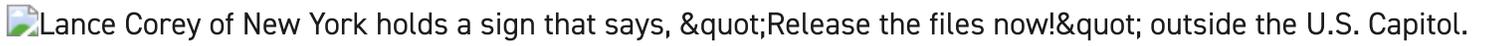


NICHOLAS WU
11/18/2025, 4:43PM ET



Advertisement

AD

 Lance Corey of New York holds a sign that says, "Release the files now!" outside the U.S. Capitol.

NOV 2025

Senate may pass Epstein bill today

Thune said the Senate will move "fairly quickly."



JORDAIN CARNEY
11/18/2025, 3:44PM ET



For the latest, read [Senate approves Epstein files bill, sending it to Trump's desk.](#)

Senate Majority Leader John Thune said he expects the Senate will pass the bill to release DOJ files on the late sex offender Jeffrey Epstein as soon as Tuesday, a move that would send it to President Donald Trump for his signature.

Advertisement

Thune told reporters the Senate could possibly pass it by unanimous consent, a maneuver that requires agreement from all 100 senators. The House [passed it](#) 427-1 with only Rep. Clay Higgins (R-La.) voting in opposition.

“My assumption is the president sounds like he’s prepared to sign it,” Thune said. “So I’d assume it would move fairly quickly over here.”

Senate leadership on Tuesday afternoon began checking the temperature of its members to see if anyone would object.

The possibility of quick action in the Senate is a shift from just last week when it was expected that the chamber would bury the Epstein bill. But Trump’s insistence that Republicans should pass it, and that he would be willing to sign it, has changed the dynamic within the Senate GOP conference.

Speaker Mike Johnson has called on the Senate to add more privacy protections for victims and whistleblowers. But Thune, pointing to the overwhelming vote total in the House, predicted that was “not likely” to happen.

Democrats have signaled they would oppose any efforts to change the bill.

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer added that once the House bill gets to the Senate he will try to set up a vote on the bill, which would force Republicans to go on the record instead of letting it pass without a formal vote.

“We have an opportunity to get this bill done today and have it on the president’s desk to be signed into law tonight. We should seize that opportunity,” Schumer said.

Lead Art: Lance Corey of New York holds a sign that says, "Release the files now!" in reference to Jeffrey Epstein outside the U.S. Capitol in Washington, on Nov. 18, 2025. | Francis Chung/POLITICO

 Stacey Plaskett speaks during a hearing.

NOV 2025

House set to vote on **Plaskett** **censure** measure

Republicans want to formally reprimand Democratic Del. Stacey Plaskett for her contact with Jeffrey Epstein.



NICHOLAS WU

11/18/2025, 3:37PM ET

UPDATED: 11/18/2025, 4:07PM ET



The House is set to vote Tuesday evening on a measure censuring Democratic

THE HOUSE IS SET TO VOTE TUESDAY EVENING ON A MEASURE CENSURING DEMOCRATIC Del. Stacey Plaskett for being in contact with the late convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein. Lawmakers sank a Democratic-led effort to send the measure to the House Ethics Committee by a nearly party-line 214-213 vote. Two Republican lawmakers, Reps. Lance Gooden of Texas and Dave Joyce of Ohio, voted with all Democrats to have the Ethics panel take up the resolution instead.

Republican Rep. Ralph Norman of South Carolina brought up the measure through a fast-track process bypassing Hill leadership and committees. It would deliver a formal rebuke of Plaskett and remove her from the House Intelligence Committee.

Advertisement

AD

If the measure is adopted tonight, Plaskett would be the latest House Democrat to be removed from her committee role. Republicans voted last Congress to [remove Rep. Ilhan Omar](#) (D-Minn.) from the House Foreign Affairs Committee for her past comments about Israel.

Documents released from Epstein's estate showed the nonvoting delegate from the U.S. Virgin Islands [texting with Epstein](#) during a congressional hearing in 2019.

Tuesday's votes come on the same day the House **voted nearly unanimously** to force the Justice Department to release more information about its case against Epstein.

Lead Art: Democratic Del. Stacey Plaskett speaks during a hearing in July 2023. | Francis Chung/POLITICO

 Rep. Marie Gluesenkamp Perez speaks during a Puget Sound Day event.

NOV 2025

House votes to rebuke García for election maneuvers

Democratic leaders urged “no” votes but 23 members of the minority party broke ranks.



NICHOLAS WU
11/18/2025, 3:22PM ET



The House voted to rebuke Rep. Chuy García of Illinois for announcing his retirement after the filing deadline — a maneuver that has positioned his chief of staff to be elected his successor in a reliably blue district in the 2026 midterms.

The 236-183 vote on the symbolic resolution of disapproval divided Democrats, with 23 members of the minority party ultimately voting with all Republicans to reprimand one of their own.

Advertisement

AD

Four lawmakers voted “present:” Democratic Reps. Chrissy Houlahan of Pennsylvania, Marcy Kaptur of Ohio and Suhas Subramanyam of Virginia, alongside Republican Rep. Warren Davidson of Ohio.

Democrats have been hand-wringing over the matter since last week, when Rep. Marie Gluesenkamp Perez introduced the nonbinding resolution against García through a fast-track process that allowed her to bypass leadership — and catch her colleagues off guard.

Gluesenkamp Perez of Washington is a purple-district moderate who frequently bucks the rest of her party, but her antagonism of García was seen as going a bridge too far by many Democrats who have been trying to project unity coming out of the longest-ever government shutdown.

Democratic leaders whipped against the resolution and urged members to vote against it in their closed-door caucus meeting Tuesday morning. Gluesenkamp Perez attended the meeting but didn’t speak up when leaders spoke against her effort, according to four people granted anonymity to

describe the sensitive situation.

“We disagree with the resolution that’s being offered and we should be talking about issues that affect the American people,” said Rep. Pete Aguilar of California, the third-ranking House Democrat.

Some Democrats defended García, who has denied accusations of wrongdoing and said his decision to retire [earlier this month](#) was based on his personal health and the needs of his family.

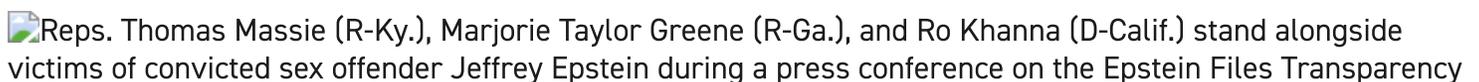
But many others said they had a hard time explaining away the fact that García’s chief of staff, Patty Garcia, filed her papers with Illinois election officials days before her boss announced his decision to retire — timing that appeared designed to clear the primary field.

Democrats who voted for the disapproval resolution, though, underscored it wasn’t personal. Gluesenkamp Perez also said Monday night she had nothing against García, but “you cannot win the right to represent people through subversion.”

Democratic leaders unsuccessfully tried Monday evening to kill the measure altogether, but Gluesenkamp Perez and Rep. Jared Golden (D-Maine) sided with all Republicans against doing so, forcing a final vote on the matter Tuesday afternoon.

CORRECTION: An earlier version of this report included an incorrect vote tally.

Lead Art: Rep. Marie Gluesenkamp Perez (D-Wash.) speaks during a Puget Sound Day event on Capitol Hill May 15, 2024. The annual event brings 50 to 60 leaders from the Pacific Northwest to Capitol Hill to thank the Washington state congressional delegation for their support in protecting and restoring the Puget Sound. | Francis Chung/POLITICO

 Reps. Thomas Massie (R-Ky.), Marjorie Taylor Greene (R-Ga.), and Ro Khanna (D-Calif.) stand alongside victims of convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein during a press conference on the Epstein Files Transparency

NOV 2025

Senate approves Epstein files bill, sending it to Trump's desk

The legislation cleared the Senate by unanimous consent, with no debate.

By **JORDAIN CARNEY, HAILEY FUCHS** and **MEREDITH LEE HILL**

11/18/2025, 2:44PM ET

UPDATED: 11/18/2025, 5:35PM ET

Lead Art: Reps. Thomas Massie (R-Ky.), Marjorie Taylor Greene (R-Ga.), and Ro Khanna (D-Calif.) stand alongside Epstein victims during a news conference Tuesday. | Francis Chung/POLITICO

NOV 2025

CBO chief says 'no further evidence' of cyber intrusion of agency systems

Phillip Swagel testified about the incident before the House Budget Committee.



KATHERINE TULLY-MCMANUS
11/18/2025, 2:24PM ET



Phillip Swagel, the director of the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, told lawmakers at an oversight hearing Tuesday morning before the House Budget Committee that the “sophisticated cyberattack” against his agency two weeks ago has been contained and there is currently no “further evidence of unauthorized access to CBO email.”

It's the first time he has spoken out publicly about the breach.

AD

Swagel said the investigation is “extensive and ongoing” as the agency receives assistance from both federal security partners and private sector security specialists.

He stressed that as more information becomes available about the nature of the attack — including “the threat actor’s activities” and what can be done to strengthen CBO’s systems — he will provide lawmakers updates “in a closed-door setting.”

He warned that sharing some things during a public hearing “might hinder remediation or investigation” but insisted that CBO is now “operating as normal ... without interruption.”

In advance of the hearing, House Budget Chair Jodey Arrington praised the CBO’s handling of the incident.

“They notified everybody, and all hands were on deck to address it, remediate it, and make sure that no further information was breached,” the Texas Republican said in an interview Monday night. “I thought they handled that

responsibly and there was a great sense of urgency and concern, which is what I would expect.”

 Chuy Garcia is seen.

NOV 2025

Chuy García was the **first signer of top aide's ballot petitions**, document shows

The Illinois Democrat has sought to distance himself from an apparent scheme to install his chief of staff as his successor.

By **SHIA KAPO**s and **NICHOLAS WU**
11/18/2025, 2:04PM ET
UPDATED: 11/18/2025, 3:25PM ET



Rep. Chuy García has denied purposely clearing a path for his chief of staff to take his seat without facing a primary, but a [document filed with Illinois](#)

[elections officials](#) shows he was the first to sign her nominating petitions, days before he announced his retirement.

García said Tuesday in a note to Democratic colleagues obtained by

POLITICO that he “did not circulate petitions for any Congressional campaign except my own.” But that obscures his apparent knowledge of the effort by his top aide, Patty Garcia, to get on the ballot.

Advertisement

AD

A [petition signature page](#) submitted by Patty Garcia to the Illinois Board of Elections shows the representative and his closest allies, whom Chuy García has also helped get elected over the years, signed their names. They include Cook County Commissioner Alma Anaya, Illinois state Sen. Celina Villanueva, state Reps. Aaron Ortiz and Norma Hernandez, and Chicago City Council members Jeylú Gutiérrez and Michael Rodriguez.

The form is dated Nov. 1, two days before the filing deadline and three days before Chuy García formally announced his retirement. Patty Garcia ultimately filed nearly 3,000 signatures to qualify for the Democratic primary ballot. The two are not related.

Fabiola Rodriguez-Ciampoli, a spokesperson for Chuy Garcia, said signing a petition is not the same as circulating them. “He did not circulate petitions” for his chief of staff’s campaign, she said.

The House is set to vote Tuesday afternoon on a measure brought by Rep. Marie Gluesenkamp Perez (D-Wash.) [rebuking Chuy García’s move](#), which

essentially ensured that Patty Garcia will succeed him as Democratic nominee and likely winner of the 2026 election.

Democratic leaders have signaled they are backing the veteran Chicago lawmaker and are whipping against the measure.

“We disagree with the resolution that’s being offered, and we should be talking about issues that affect the American people,” said Rep. Pete Aguilar (D-Calif.), the third-ranking House Democrat.

CORRECTION: An earlier version of this story misreported how many petition signatures are necessary to qualify for the ballot in the primary.

Lead Art: Illinois Rep. Jesús “Chuy” García participates in a House Transportation Committee hearing in 2024. | Bill Clark/CQ Roll Call via AP

 Mike Johnson speaks alongside other House Republicans during a press conference, displaying a sign with talking points about the alleged dangers of a discharge petition to force the release of the Epstein files.

NOV 2025

House GOP leaders pitch members on addressing ‘Unaffordable Care Act’

One Republican stood up to share frustrations about the party’s health

One Republican stood up to share frustrations about the party's health care approach in a closed-door meeting.

By **MEREDITH LEE HILL** and **BENJAMIN GUGGENHEIM**

11/18/2025, 11:22AM ET

UPDATED: 11/18/2025, 11:51AM ET

Lead Art: Rather than extend ACA subsidies, Scalise and Johnson want to construct an entirely new health care framework.
| Francis Chung/POLITICO

Advertisement

AD

 Marjorie Taylor Greene comforts Haley Robson as they stand among crowd during a press conference.

NOV 2025

Epstein battle **'has ripped MAGA apart,'** Marjorie Taylor Greene says

Even GOP leaders who worked to kill the vote are expected to support transparency legislation Tuesday.

By **HAILEY FUCHS** and **MEREDITH LEE HILL**
11/18/2025, 11:13AM ET



Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene, the once steadfast ally of Donald Trump who has since fallen out with the president, said the saga around convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein has “ripped MAGA apart.”

Greene made her comments while flanked by some of Epstein’s victims outside the Capitol on Tuesday, just hours before the House is set to vote on a bill that would force the Justice Department to release Epstein case files.

Advertisement

The White House led an aggressive campaign to pare back Republican support for the effort, but Trump ultimately gave a nod of approval for the measure after Greene and three other Republicans joined Democrats to force it to the House floor.

Trump, however, has angrily withdrawn his support for Greene — an early supporter of Trump and his Make America Great Again movement — and called her Marjorie “Traitor” Greene.

“This has been one of the most destructive things to MAGA — is watching the man that we supported early on, three elections,” oppose the bill, she told reporters. “Watching this actually turn into a fight has ripped MAGA apart.”

The back-and-forth battle over releasing the files has certainly driven some Republicans into contortions — not least of whom is Speaker Mike Johnson.

He told reporters Tuesday that he plans to vote for the bill authored by Reps. Thomas Massie (R-Ky.) and Ro Khanna (D-Calif.) even as he stood by his longtime claim that it’s “recklessly flawed” because it does not sufficiently protect victims and whistleblowers in his view. He told GOP members in a private conference meeting earlier that morning to vote their “conscience,”

according to four people in the room granted anonymity to describe the private meeting.

“I think it could be a near-unanimous vote,” Johnson said.

Tuesday's vote on the Epstein Files Transparency Act is the culmination of a monthslong bipartisan effort. Speaking at the news conference, Massie accused Trump of "trying to protect friends and donors" by opposing the legislation for so long. The victims, meanwhile, shared none of Johnson's concerns that its passage would threaten their well-being.

Other members of GOP leadership are also signaling they will vote for the bill. House Majority Leader Steve Scalise confirmed his vote in a brief interview Tuesday morning, and Rep. Lisa McClain (R-Mich.), the GOP conference chair, issued a statement saying she would also support it.

Both Johnson and Scalise have suggested the Senate might revise the bill later, but there is likely to be little appetite in the other chamber for prolonged consideration of a measure that most Republicans want to put quickly behind them.

Senate Majority Leader John Thune isn't expected to announce what the Senate will do until after the House passes the bill, but there's growing support among Senate Republicans to pass the resolution in the wake of Trump's shift — potentially by unanimous consent this week.

Johnson and Massie [continued to snipe at each other](#), meanwhile, with the speaker saying Tuesday he got the "middle finger" from the bill sponsors when GOP leaders asked to make revisions, while Massie said in an interview Monday that Johnson's "concerns were never warranted."

"If he actually wanted the Epstein files released, he could have offered his suggestions four months ago and brought it to the floor," Massie said.

"Instead he ... spread lies about our legislation he now supports because the president told him to."

Jordain Carney contributed to this report.

NOV 2025

House Democratic leaders are working to keep their caucus together ahead of a tough vote, prompted by a Democrat, to [rebuke one of their own members](#).

Party leaders are whipping a “no” vote and urged lawmakers to vote against the disapproval resolution brought by Rep. Marie Gluesenkamp Perez of Washington targeting Rep. Chuy Garcia of Illinois for his controversial decision to retire after the filing deadline, essentially guaranteeing his chief of staff would be his successor.

With a vote expected Tuesday afternoon, Gluesenkamp Perez attended the morning caucus meeting but didn’t speak up as party leaders spoke out against her resolution, according to four people granted anonymity to describe the private meeting.



NICHOLAS WU

11/18/2025, 10:22AM ET



NOV 2025

White House plans to release health bill and backs reconciliation

Deputy chief of staff James Blair pointed to the fast-track process for health and tariff legislation.

By **SOPHIA CAI, GREGORY SVIRNOVSKIY** and **JORDAIN CARNEY**
11/18/2025, 10:15AM ET



A senior White House official said the Trump administration intends to put forward a health bill and left open the possibility of using the fast-track legislative process of reconciliation for passage of health or tariff legislation.

“We’re going to have the health care conversation. We’re going to put some legislation forward,” White House deputy chief of staff James Blair said Tuesday at a Bloomberg Government policy breakfast.

Advertisement

He expressed interest in a bipartisan health plan but said that “if that path is foreclosed, there is the partisan path of reconciliation as well.”

Such a move would allow Republicans to advance a health plan with a simple majority, a path they unsuccessfully attempted in Trump’s first term to repeal Obamacare but successfully used earlier this year on [the megabill](#).

“The president probably would like to go bigger than the Hill has the appetite for, so we’ll have to see how that, you know, works out,” Blair added, hinting at potential friction between the White House and congressional Republicans.

Several GOP lawmakers have said privately that they expect the White House to put forward a framework that revisits long-standing Republican goals — including reducing insurance costs, expanding health savings accounts and unwinding parts of the Affordable Care Act — though it remains unclear how sweeping Trump hopes to go.

If a reconciliation bill moves soon, Blair indicated that the administration would also want to include “probably the Trump tariff dividends and ... interest in locking in tariffs.”

Senate Republicans have been privately discussing a second reconciliation package. Budget Committee Republicans are tentatively looking at early next year for finalizing a budget resolution that would tee up the party-line package, according to senators on the committee.

Senate Budget Chair Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) previously told POLITICO that the party could use a second bill to tackle health care, spending and tax policy.

But there's plenty of skepticism, including within top members of the House and Senate GOP conferences, about doing another party-line bill, which would require near unity from their thin majorities. GOP senators, in a recent closed-door lunch, noted that many of their health care ideas left out of the "big, beautiful bill" wouldn't comply with the Senate's strict rules for what can be included under reconciliation, according to one attendee granted anonymity to disclose private discussions.

Lead Art: White House deputy chief of staff James Blair attends a roundtable with President Donald Trump and business leaders at the White House, June 9, 2025, in Washington. | Evan Vucci/AP

 Mike Johnson speaks to reporters outside his office.

NOV 2025

Capitol agenda: GOP tries to rip off the **Epstein Band-Aid**

The House is expected to pass the Epstein files resolution Tuesday. What we're really watching is the Senate.



MIA MCCARTHY
11/18/2025, 8:00AM ET



Two big votes are hitting the House floor Tuesday afternoon, with each party caught between unity and accountability.

ON THE GOP SIDE — The House is expected to easily pass a resolution calling on the DOJ to release files related to Jeffrey Epstein after a monthslong battle by President Donald Trump and GOP leaders to block the vote.

Advertisement

AD

Trump said Monday he would sign the bill if it lands on his desk, giving political cover for Republicans to vote for the measure. The House will vote under suspension of the rules Tuesday, limiting debate and requiring a two-thirds majority.

What we're really watching is the Senate. Last night, Republicans advanced rule language that effectively forces Speaker Mike Johnson to send the bill across the Rotunda. If he doesn't, the original discharge petition remains in force, triggering another House vote.

Senate GOP leaders haven't committed to putting a vote on the floor, but Trump's new endorsement has [changed the dynamic](#).

Johnson said he wants the Senate to amend the measure to include more protections for victims and whistleblowers. But that would require another House vote, further extending a saga most Hill Republicans want to move past as quickly as possible.

ON THE DEM SIDE — The House is also expected to vote at Tuesday's 2 p.m. series on a resolution condemning Rep. Chuy García (D-Ill.) for a move in which he retired and [functionally guaranteed](#) his chief of staff would succeed him.

The resolution, triggered by Rep. Marie Gluesenkamp Perez (D-Wash.), forces Democrats to choose between sticking by a longtime colleague and condemning a hardball move many find difficult to stomach.

García [defended himself on the floor](#) Monday night, saying he chose to put family first by retiring and suggesting that what goes around might come around: "One day you might be the one making that choice, and you shouldn't have to debate it on the House floor."

But one House Democrat, granted anonymity to speak candidly, estimated to POLITICO that "a not insignificant number of Democrats" will support the disapproval measure after only Gluesenkamp Perez and Rep. Jared Golden (D-Maine) opposed a motion to table Monday. Keep an eye on more moderate Democrats like Nevada Rep. Susie Lee, who told POLITICO "it was questionable, the timing," while many others in the caucus hold their nose.

"It's an unpleasant one," said Rep. Jared Huffman (D-Calif.), who said he will vote against it Tuesday. "Chuy García is a friend and a great guy. But I don't like the optics of this."

What else we're watching:

— **ACA latest:** House GOP leaders will [lead a high-level discussion](#) in their conference meeting Tuesday morning on how to address rising health care costs. It comes as Senate Republicans are quickly developing their own legislative proposals and some House Republicans fret they could get jammed by the upper chamber.

— **CBO hearing:** Congressional Budget Office Director Phillip Swagel is set to testify Tuesday morning before the House Budget Committee. The oversight hearing will be the first chance GOP lawmakers have to air their grievances over the agency's analysis of their party's megabill since the legislation was enacted in July.

— **NDAAs crunch time:** House and Senate lawmakers have a critical week ahead to reach a compromise on major defense policy legislation if they want to have a deal ready to hit the floor after the Thanksgiving break for an early December vote.

Meredith Lee Hill, Jordain Carney, Nicholas Wu, Shia Kapos, Calen Razor, Benjamin Guggenheim, Katherine Tully-McManus and Connor O'Brien contributed to this report.

Lead Art: Speaker Mike Johnson wants the Senate to amend a measure calling on DOJ to release the Epstein files to include more protections for victims and whistleblowers. | Anna Rose Layden for POLITICO

The U.S. Capitol is seen in front of a black sky.

NOV 2025

House Republicans race the Senate for a plan to lower health care costs

There are only a few short weeks left until Obamacare subsidies expire and enrollees start paying much higher premiums.



BENJAMIN GUGGENHEIM

11/18/2025, 4:45AM ET

Lead Art: The U.S. Capitol is seen in Washington, on Nov. 12, 2025. | Anna Rose Layden for POLITICO

Advertisement

AD

[About Us](#)
[Advertising](#)
[Breaking News Alerts](#)
[Careers](#)
[Credit Card Payments](#)
[FAQ](#)
[Feedback](#)
[Headlines](#)
[Photos](#)
[Press](#)
[Request A Correction](#)
[Write For Us](#)
[RSS](#)
[Site Map](#)

[Terms of Service](#)
[Privacy Policy](#)