

TIME TO WIN THE SHUTDOWN

On Friday, there were two votes to pass a Continuing Resolution.

A vote to pass the House-passed clean funding (which added security for members of Congress) failed 44-47. John Fetterman voted with Republicans, Lisa Murkowski and Rand Paul voted with Dems, and eight Republicans – including some rabid Trump loyalists – did not vote. A vote to pass a Democratic alternative, which restored funding for healthcare cut in the Big Ugly bill, added measures to prohibit illegal rescissions, and added more funding than the House bill for security also failed, 45-47, on a strictly party line vote, with the same eight Republicans not voting.

As a result, in nine days, there's a good chance that the government will shut down, the thing many lefty voices say they wanted because, they claimed, it will be a good way to fight Trump's fascism.

It's time everyone on the left starts working to win a shutdown.

To be sure, there are still multiple routes via which a shutdown might not happen. It's definitely possible Schumer will disappoint us and cave. It's possible that enough Democrats will join Fetterman in supporting the GOP clean resolution, against Schumer's whipping, to allow Republicans to fund government. There's some talk of using concessions on health spending in a follow-up to convince Schumer to cave.

Betting markets are putting a 71% chance on a shutdown.

Even if you distrust Schumer, messaging now about the import of a shutdown to rein in Trump's authoritarianism can only serve to buck up Democrats, making a shutdown more likely, making the likelihood a shutdown will make a

difference more likely.

Thus far, many lefty voices who've been insisting a shutdown will fight fascism are doing little to prepare the groundwork for one. Indeed, there was some griping that Hakeem Jeffries and Chuck Schumer made a show of asking Trump for a meeting to avoid the shutdown.

Top congressional Democrats are asking President Trump for a meeting before an impending government shutdown.

"We write to demand a meeting in connection with your decision to shut down the federal government," Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer and House Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries, both of New York, wrote in a Saturday morning letter.

The pair say that GOP leaders have "repeatedly and publicly refused to engage in bipartisan negotiations to keep the government open."

This was a fairly obvious ploy, an attempt to blame Trump for the shutdown, possibly even to provoke Trump into saying something really inflammatory that would make it easier to do so. Even Thune has made clear he can't move on anything until Trump agrees.

Republican sources familiar with the Senate's internal dynamics say that Thune doesn't want to begin negotiating with Schumer until he's clear what Trump is willing to accept, and Trump himself has yet to give the GOP leader clear guidance about what he would sign into law.

Thune says the White House needs to weigh in before any deal is reached and explained that while his staff has been in contact with White House staff, he has yet to speak directly to Trump on the matter.

[snip]

Thune may be trying to avoid a repeat of what happened in late July and early August, when he tried to negotiate a deal with Schumer to speed up the confirmation of more than 140 stalled executive branch nominees that Democrats had slow-walked through the Senate.

After days of negotiations, Trump blew up the emerging deal when it was presented to him, according to a person familiar with the negotiations.

One Republican senator who requested anonymity to comment on Thune's relationship with Trump said the GOP leader wants to be careful of not getting too far in front of the president in any negotiation with Schumer.

The lawmaker said the impasse between Thune and Schumer over the looming expiration of the Affordable Care Act premium subsidies is "solvable" but not without Trump giving GOP leaders on Capitol Hill the green light.

Chuck Schumer and Hakeem Jeffries' job and audience is different from yours. Their audience includes caucus members, the DC press, even Republicans. Thus the posturing. Their audience also includes the rest of the country, who will lose services under the shutdown and decide who to blame, who'll figure that out largely based on what friends and family tell them, but will be influenced by what they see on TV and hear on their favorite podcast.

With the exception of holding the caucus in line, making sure your Democratic Senator doesn't cave, *your* audience is just the latter group and, especially if you're from anyplace outside of New York Metro area, there are multiple ways you can influence that latter group more effectively than Jeffries and Schumer

can.

Yet the same people who've claimed a shutdown would be an effective tool continue to focus on Schumer and Jeffries, even as the Democratic leaders attempt to do things to make it easier to blame Republicans for the shutdown. Even as the right has already started accusing Dems of only trying to fund undocumented people (repeating their excuse for cutting healthcare), lefty pundits remain focused on Democrats.

Right	Mainstream	Left
Fox News pushed by NewsMax	Political (both sides)	MSNBC
Right wing mobs	Capitol Hill (process)	Lefty pundits

Much of the griping about Jeffries and Schumer focuses on their choice to ask for healthcare funding, and not something focusing on ICE. Some of the shutdown coverage makes the political logic of that ask clear. It's something Dems in both houses could agree on; they wouldn't have on ICE. The ObamaCare subsidies are something even some Republicans would like to fund. The Big Ugly bill that cut healthcare is something that individual Republicans, as distinct from Trump, bear personal responsibility for, and so can be politically pressured for. Healthcare will affect – already is affecting, in areas where rural hospitals are shutting down – people who otherwise pay no attention to politics.

Disagree with that all you want. It doesn't stop you from using Democrats' alternative CR to message about Republican responsibility for the shutdown, to tie that to Trump's authoritarianism. As noted, Schumer and Jeffries also included efforts to reverse Trump's usurpation of the power of the purse. That part of the bill is being conveniently ignored by sloppy both-sides political journalists, who want this to be as partisan and frivolous as they can bother. But that part of the bill can be used to tie Trump to specifics – like taking steps that will lead to millions of deaths and shutting down rural broadcast stations. It can also be used to hold right wing members of Congress responsible for abdicating their job

under the Constitution.

If you were sure the shutdown was necessary to break Trump's momentum, now is the time to work relentlessly, to speak relentlessly, on tying funding government to all the things that threaten democracy and threaten the health, safety, and livelihood of your neighbors. Now is the time to explain how the right wing capitulation to Trump has started destroying the lives of all Americans not on the take.