

US Senate declines to fast-track TikTok bill

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A bill that would force the sale of TikTok from its Chinese owners or see it banned in the United States will move cautiously in the US Senate, key lawmakers said, after it sailed through the House.

The bill's whirlwind House passage on Wednesday, and its backing from

US President Joe Biden, had raised alarm bells that the app, used by 170 million in the United States, could be shut down within months.

But hopes from TikTok's foes that the Senate could also move quickly were dashed, with key senators saying they would put the proposed law through the usual legislative process, which can take months.

"These fields are evolving and changing so rapidly that you can do a lot of damage by moving too quickly or without the facts," Senator Ron Wyden, a Democrat who chairs the Senate Finance Committee, told the Washington Post on Friday.

Passing major legislation is especially difficult in an election year, and backers of the bill have bitterly predicted that the House's proposed law would die in the Senate.

"What we're likely to see happen in the Senate is people will nickel-and-dime it, a death by a thousand cuts," Republican Senator Josh Hawley told Axios.

"Nothing that Big Tech doesn't want moves across the Senate floor," he said.

Senate leaders who would be in charge of shepherding the proposed law through a complicated amendment process and bringing it to a vote have been noncommittal on the bill.

After the House vote, Senator Maria Cantwell, a Democrat who chairs the Commerce Committee, said that she would "try to find a path forward that is constitutional and protects civil liberties."

Republicans also expressed caution, and on Thursday former president Donald Trump reiterated his opposition to any ban of TikTok, asking his

supporters to focus their anger on Facebook-owner Meta instead.

Trump's position, which was surprisingly ignored by Republicans in Wednesday's vote, is a reversal from his efforts as president to force TikTok away from ByteDance, its Chinese owner, efforts which were ultimately blocked by the courts.

Some Western governments have voiced concern about TikTok's soaring popularity, alleging that the app's ownership makes it subservient to Beijing—and could be used as a conduit to spread propaganda—claims TikTok and Beijing deny.

The White House has said Biden will sign the [bill](#) if it reaches his desk.

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