Whether Democrats agree to the $748 billion propos
Posted by alisawhite123 - 2020/12/15 14:08
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Bipartisan lawmakers split their initial $908 billion stimulus framework into two parts &#65533; one with provisions that Republicans and Democrats agree on and one that marries their two sticking points &#65533; in a final effort to get a deal done before the end of the year.

&#65533;We've had a Christmas miracle occur in Washington, &#65533; said Sen. Susan Collins (R-ME), who supports both bills. &#65533;I want to thank my Democratic and Republican colleagues in the Senate for working so hard to bring us to this day. &#65533;

A $748 billion stimulus bill includes provisions both parties support, including the extension of two expiring unemployment programs, an additional $300 a week in jobless benefits, a second round of the Paycheck Protection Program, rental assistance, student loan forbearance, and funding for testing, tracing and vaccine distribution, among others.

The second bill includes just two provisions: Liability protections for businesses that some Democrats characterize as a &#65533;poison pill&#65533; and $160 billion for state and local government aid, which Republicans &#65533; including Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) &#65533; have called a &#65533;blue state bailout. &#65533;&#65533;The split could help Leader McConnell with the process, &#65533; Mark Harkins, a former congressional staffer and senior fellow at Georgetown&#65533;s Government Affairs Institute, told Yahoo Money. &#65533;But it is unclear what happens if the Senate passes the smaller bill and the House adds back in the state and local aid. &#65533;

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