

Whether Democrats agree to the \$748 billion propos
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Bipartisan lawmakers split their initial \$908 billion stimulus framework into two parts ♦ one with provisions that Republicans and Democrats agree on and one that marries their two sticking points ♦ in a final effort to get a deal done before the end of the year.

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

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 ♦poison pill♦ and \$160 billion for state and local government aid, which Republicans ♦ including Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) ♦ have called a ♦blue state bailout. ♦♦The split could help Leader McConnell with the process, ♦ Mark Harkins, a former congressional staffer and senior fellow at Georgetown♦s Government Affairs Institute, told Yahoo Money. ♦But it is unclear what happens if the Senate passes the smaller bill and the House adds back in the state and local aid. ♦

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