

Inadvertently or not, Biden contributed to the danger of defeat when he announced he'd reached an agreement with a bipartisan group of 10 Senators - 5 Democrats and 5 Republicans - on a \$1.2 trillion infrastructure program, only to go off script and imply he'd veto the legislation if it was not accompanied by a far larger bill supported by the Democratic majority.

To no one's surprise, the Republicans went into orbit, cringing about standing with him in the White House driveway to announce the agreement only to be blindsided by the president conditioning his approval on linking the two bills.

Their threats to scuttle the entire deal reached a crescendo and, within 48 hours, Biden issued a retraction/explanation, saying he didn't intend to raise the possibility of a veto and went on to urge support for the larger Democratic approved bill.

That didn't sit well with the progressives who, lined up behind Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders, vowed: "No reconciliation bill, no deal."

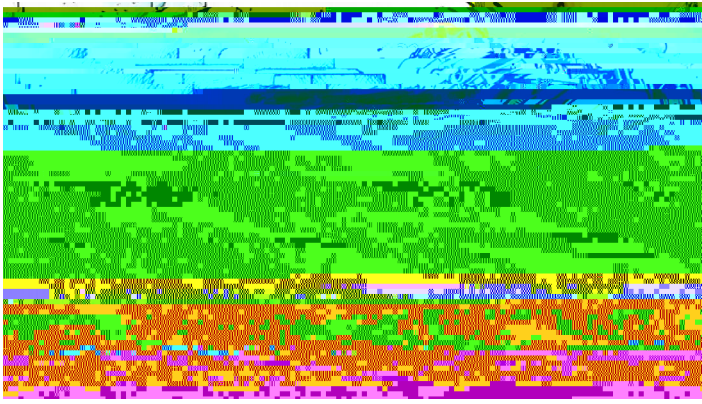
Sanders has called for a program of up to \$6 trillion - a figure dismissed by most as unrealistic - to provide, among other things, tax increases, a massive expansion of Medicare coverage, universal childcare, a permanent child tax credit, elements of the "Green New Deal," and addressing climate change.

Senate Majority Leader Charles Schumer and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi both expressed their support for tying together the two proposals, despite all indications that the Democratic larger proposal would fail in the Senate.

Pelosi went so far as to pledge that should the bipartisan plan win Senate approval, she would refuse to schedule a House vote unless the Democratic plan was approved, a stance which places her in direct conflict with the president.

Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell has called on Schumer and Pelosi to follow the president's lead and keep the two proposals separate.

Nor all a shrewd judge of the political environment, Pelosi, by taking such an unyielding stand, has painted herself into a corner.



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