

U.S. Foreign Policy in Context of Midterm Elections: Implications for Ukraine

Maksym Chebotarov



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Current Balance of Power in Congress

The United States is entering the 2026 midterm election cycle with Republican control of both chambers of Congress, yet this control is uneven in its durability and procedural consequences. In the Senate, Republicans hold a relatively stable majority: 53 seats against 45 Democrats and 2 independents who caucus with the Democrats. In the House of Representatives, the majority is much narrower: 218 Republicans, 212 Democrats, one independent member who caucuses with the Republicans, and 4 vacant seats.

This difference has direct implications for U.S. foreign policy, including the Ukraine track. In the Senate, Republicans have a real cushion for votes that require a simple majority. At the same time, a Senate majority does not equal full control of the legislative process. Ending debate on most legislative matters usually requires three-fifths of all senators, that is, 60 votes of the full membership. Consequently, for major legislative packages in foreign policy, sanctions, or aid to allies, Republicans need the votes of some Democrats or procedural agreements.

The situation in the House of Representatives is different. With an actual membership of 431 sitting members, 216 votes are enough to pass an ordinary decision if everyone participates. Yet the political threshold of 218 votes remains critical for control of the House, the election of the Speaker, the organization of committees, and the use of certain procedural tools. In particular, a discharge petition requires 218 signatures. This mechanism is effectively the only way to bring a bill to the floor without the cooperation of the relevant committee, the majority leadership, or the Rules Committee, but the procedure itself is complicated and lengthy.¹

For Ukraine, this means that in the House it is important to count not only the votes for a final bill but also the votes for access to consideration. Under the regular procedure, most important bills pass through the House Rules Committee, which determines whether a bill will reach the floor, how much time will be allotted for debate, whether amendments will be allowed, and in what form the text will reach the final vote. Special House rules give the majority the ability to manage the agenda and shape the decisions that are brought before the full House.² Consequently, even the existence of a situational majority in support of Ukraine does not guarantee a result if there is no procedural route to a vote.

In practical terms, this creates two different logics of working with the chambers. In the House of Representatives, the primary question is access to the agenda: whether the majority leadership will allow consideration of an initiative, whether it will pass through the Rules Committee, whether it will receive an acceptable procedural regime, and whether it will be blocked before a vote on the merits. In the Senate, the key question is that of a broader coalition: whether enough votes can be gathered to end debate, whether the Senate leadership is prepared to bring the matter up for consideration, and whether the bill will be blocked through procedural delay or amendments.

Thus, the current balance of power does not close off opportunities for Ukrainian initiatives, but it makes them dependent on procedural strategy. For Ukraine, it is important not only to have supporters but also to understand at which stage a particular initiative can be stopped: in committee, at the level of the House leadership, in the Rules Committee, during Senate consideration, in the House–Senate conference process, or at the level of a presidential veto.

Why Midterm Elections Matter for Ukraine

The midterm elections should be viewed through the prism of changes in the party arithmetic in Congress and their impact on the foreign policy of the second administration of Donald Trump. For Ukraine, the question is not only which party will control the House of Representatives or the Senate, but whether political support can be converted into concrete legislative decisions.

After 2022, support for Ukraine moved through various legislative and budgetary formats: supplemental funding packages, major budget laws, continuing resolutions, defense legislation, sanctions initiatives, and specific oversight requirements. In fiscal years 2022–2024, Congress appropriated about \$174.2 billion in supplemental funding related to the U.S. response to Russia's war against Ukraine.³

This means that the Ukrainian issue is not only a foreign policy matter but also a budgetary, defense-industrial, and procedural issue of U.S. domestic politics. It touches not only strategic debates about Russia, NATO, or the future of European security, but also questions of American spending, industrial production, replenishment of stockpiles, oversight, jobs, the role of the executive branch, and the powers of Congress.

Implementation of adopted laws will remain a separate constraint. Even after passage through Congress, the real effect of decisions depends on the pace of disbursement of funds, transfers of weapons, application of sanctions, use of waivers, administrative procedures, and the priorities of executive agencies, among other factors. This is especially important under the second Trump administration, since Congress may formally adopt a decision, but its practical implementation will depend on the Pentagon, the State Department, the Treasury Department, the White House, interagency coordination, and so on.

Ukraine therefore needs to work not only with the final text of a bill but with the entire route of a decision: inclusion in the agenda, passage through committees, the rules of consideration, wording for the Senate, the risk of a veto, the conference process, reporting requirements, and implementation mechanisms. In this sense, Ukraine's legislative strategy in the United States must be not only political but also procedural.

Main Political Groups on Aid to Ukraine

Positions in the United States on aid to Ukraine should be considered not only by formal party affiliation but through several political groups that influence voting, the agenda, and procedural decisions in Congress in different ways. The boundaries between these groups are not formal: individual lawmakers may change their position depending on the type of initiative – military aid, sanctions, Russian assets, oversight, humanitarian issues, or defense production in the United States.

The Democratic internationalist camp. This is the main and most stable base of support for Ukraine. For most Democrats, aid to Ukraine is part of a broader policy of deterring Russia, supporting allies, defending the international order, and preserving the role of the United States as a global leader. This position is confirmed by voting records: in April 2024, all Democrats who took part in the vote on the Ukraine Security Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2024, supported the aid package for Ukraine – 210 votes in favor, 0 against.⁴ According to the Pew Research Center, in 2026, 50% of Democrats believed the United States was not providing Ukraine with enough support, compared with 11% of Republicans.⁵

For Ukraine, this group is a political mainstay, but its support is insufficient for a stable legislative result without some Republicans. Democrats can initiate strong legislative texts, hold hearings, demand accountability from the administration, and sustain sanctions pressure on Russia. But if Republicans control at least one chamber, or if there is a risk of a presidential veto, Democratic support must be supplemented with Republican votes.

The Democratic progressive wing. This is a smaller but increasingly influential part of the Democratic Party, which generally supports Ukraine's right to self-defense but more often emphasizes spending controls, the humanitarian component, diplomacy, escalation risks, and the accountability of military aid. This group does not define the Democrats' overall position on Ukraine, but it can influence the wording: demanding greater transparency, the inclusion of humanitarian components, end-use monitoring of weapons, and a clear explanation of the political purpose of the aid.

For Ukraine, it is important to work with this group through the topics of protecting civilians, returning abducted children, documenting war crimes, recovery, demining, and democratic accountability. It should not be perceived as anti-Ukrainian; rather, it is a group for which conditions, balance, and a humanitarian-political rationale for support matter.

The Republican national security wing. These are Republicans who view support for Ukraine as an element of the American national interest: deterring Russia, strengthening the U.S. defense industry, replenishing American stockpiles, jobs in states and districts, sanctions pressure on Moscow, and a signal to China and other authoritarian states.

Despite the importance of this group for bipartisan support, its influence within the Republican Party is noticeably narrowing amid the strengthening of the Trumpist, aid-skeptic wing oriented toward the "America First" agenda. This is visible in the voting dynamics: in April 2024, the large aid package for Ukraine was supported by 101 Republicans, while 112 voted against; in June 2026, only 18 Republicans supported a bill on aid to Ukraine and new sanctions against Russia despite the opposition of the party leadership and the administration of President Trump.⁶⁷

At the same time, this group remains critically important for a real bipartisan majority. Without its participation, it is difficult for Ukraine to get through the Senate, the House Rules Committee, and the

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conference process, or to overcome the risk of a presidential veto. It is precisely this group that can convert Democratic support into a real legislative result. For Ukraine, therefore, the task is not only to rely on this group but also to compensate for its shrinkage with more precise arguments: American production, jobs, replenishment of stockpiles, sanctions, competition with China, and spending controls.

The Republican Trumpist-skeptic wing. This is the main source of political and procedural blocking. This group opposes new (large) aid packages or demands their sharp limitation. Its key arguments: the priority of U.S. domestic problems, a larger European contribution, spending controls, the absence of a “blank check,” and the Trump administration’s freedom in negotiations with Russia. Electorally, this position has a foundation: according to Pew, only 11% of Republicans in 2026 believed the United States was not providing Ukraine with enough support.⁸ The Chicago Council on Global Affairs also recorded a decline in Republican support for military aid to Ukraine to 43% in 2026.⁹

For this group, narrow formulas work best: production in the United States, jobs, replenishment of American stockpiles, spending controls, sanctions pressure on Russia without major new funding, a larger European contribution, and competition with China. It is difficult to persuade with arguments about international solidarity or the moral duty of the United States. It may, however, be less inclined to block initiatives that look like a concrete benefit for the United States or a mechanism for reducing long-term costs.

Consequently, Ukrainian work in Congress should be defined not only by argumentation but also by the prioritization of target groups. Democrats remain the base of support, but work with them is mostly aimed at preserving the coalition, launching legislative initiatives, and overseeing the administration. The highest priority is work with the Republican national security wing, since it is this wing that can convert Democratic support into a bipartisan majority and a real legislative result. A separate priority is newly elected lawmakers in both parties, for whom Ukraine is not part of the political agenda and who may be insufficiently informed about why supporting Ukraine serves U.S. interests, what funds were previously allocated for, and what results this support has already produced. Progressive Democrats should be specifically retained among the supporters of continued assistance to Ukraine, but this group is unlikely to become the main source of expanding support in Congress or of attracting new votes in Ukraine’s favor.

The Trumpist-skeptic wing should be viewed above all as a group of political and procedural risk. Its members can not only vote against but also press the House and Senate leadership, the rules committees, and the relevant committees to keep Ukrainian initiatives off the floor or make them politically toxic for the rest of the Republicans. The task with respect to this group, therefore, is not so much to fully persuade it as to reduce its capacity to block decisions.

Shifts in Republican Camp in Summer 2026

At the outset, it is important to state the main point: in their attitude toward Ukraine, Trumpist-skeptic voters differ little from the broader Republican electorate. They should therefore not be treated as a separate group of “Trump voters” with a fundamentally different position on Ukraine. According to a YouGov poll of August 19–21, 2026, sympathy for Ukraine clearly prevailed both among Americans in general and among Republicans and the Trumpist wing.¹⁰ At the same time, this sympathy is not identical to a readiness to support new large aid packages.

A similar picture emerges with regard to military aid: a majority of Americans and a slim majority of the Trumpist-skeptic electorate support at least maintaining the current level. However, only 12% of Republican voters favor an actual increase in aid. A comparison of the April and August polls suggests stabilization after an earlier softening rather than a new summer turning point.^{11,12} The political space, then, is wider for maintaining the current level and for narrow targeted decisions than for a new large-scale package.

The most notable shift is taking place on the sanctions track rather than the budgetary one – and precisely therein lies its limitation. On August 7, the Senate passed the Lindsey O. Graham Russia and Iran Sanctions Act of 2026 by a vote of 86 to 11.¹³ It does not provide for a new package of military aid but grants the president broad powers regarding tariffs against buyers of Russian energy and the expansion of sanctions against the Russian leadership, banks, and the “shadow fleet.” At the White House’s demand, an extension of sanctions authorities regarding Iran was also included in the text.¹⁴ Democratic reservations therefore concern not so much the pressure on Russia itself as the further expansion of President Trump’s discretionary tariff powers. Broad public support for sanctions – 62% for strengthening or maintaining them – creates a favorable political backdrop but guarantees neither new funding nor consistent application of the law: the practical effect will depend on whether the president applies, delays, weakens, or selectively uses the powers granted.¹⁵

The July visit to Ukraine by Laura Loomer, an influential blogger from President Trump’s inner circle, is important above all as a change in the “America First” information space.¹⁶ After the trip, she acknowledged the influence of Russian propaganda on her earlier views and began to speak of Ukraine as a U.S. ally.^{17,18} The Ukrainian side made good use of her direct access to the president and of the internal debate within the Trumpist-skeptic electorate. At the same time, one influencer does not change the party arithmetic, and a comparison of the April and August polls provides no grounds to assert a causal effect unambiguously. Rather, it shows that broad sympathy for Ukraine and support for sanctions exist in the Republican camp, while actual readiness to increase direct funding remains limited.

The thesis that the approach of the midterm elections is forcing Republicans to “win back lost electoral support” through Ukraine is only partly valid. The Republican electorate is not uniformly isolationist: 63% of Republican voters believe the United States should take an active part in world affairs, 55% support maintaining the commitment to defend NATO allies, and 45% support U.S. membership in the Alliance.¹⁹ At the same time, 62% want to cut overall spending on foreign aid. This contrast defines the politically effective framing: Ukraine should be presented not as an abstract recipient of foreign aid but as a partner in deterring Russia, strengthening the U.S. defense industry, replenishing American stockpiles, developing joint technologies, and intensifying sanctions pressure.

The electoral significance of these attitudes should not be overstated. Foreign policy is traditionally not the top priority in either midterm or presidential elections in the United States; voters mostly cast their ballots with an eye to the economy, the cost of living, and domestic issues. The debate around

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Israel and Palestine may become the first notable exception, especially among politically mobilized young people, but this is not yet a general rule.

Thus, the core of the Trumpist-skeptic electorate does not demand an increase in aid to Ukraine. If the approach of the elections does create an additional incentive for Republicans, it lies rather in the need to demonstrate results on the Russia track, to distance themselves from the narrative of a “failed quick peace,” and not to look weak on Moscow, China, or Iran. The summer shift should therefore be interpreted as a tactical and instrumentally selective correction in sanctions policy, security argumentation, and communication with the skeptical camp, not as a return to the bipartisan consensus of 2022–2024.

Prospects for Legislative Initiatives in Favor of Ukraine

The prospects for legislative initiatives in favor of Ukraine in the 119th Congress remain mixed: space for decisions exists, but it is much narrower, more procedurally complex, and more politically conditional than in the first years after the full-scale invasion by Russia.

As of 2026, Congress had not adopted significant new funding for the Ukrainian track since April 2024. At the same time, the 119th Congress authorized \$400 million per year for security assistance to Ukraine in fiscal years 2026 and 2027, and separately provided \$400 million in fiscal year 2026 for strengthening European capabilities, including Ukraine.²⁰

The least passable are standalone packages of direct aid to Ukraine, especially if they look like a continuation of the large-scale funding model of 2022–2024. Promising, by contrast, are narrow legislative tracks that can be explained through American interest, spending controls, or the use of the aggressor's resources.

- › **Sanctions initiatives.** They make it possible to support Ukraine without a large direct budget package. The most notable step of the 119th Congress on this track was the Senate's passage of the Lindsey O. Graham Russia and Iran Sanctions Act of 2026 on August 7, 2026; its content, limits, and further path through the House of Representatives are discussed above. For Ukraine, this direction remains promising precisely as an alternative to major new funding, not as its replacement.²¹
- › **Use of Russian sovereign assets.** The REPO for Ukrainians Act, adopted in 2024, created a legal framework for working with frozen Russian assets.²² The U.S. Treasury Department has already introduced reporting requirements for financial institutions holding such assets. The 119th Congress saw the introduction of the REPO Implementation Act of 2025, which proposes a regular mechanism for transferring frozen Russian sovereign assets to Ukraine.²³ This direction is politically promising because it makes it possible to frame aid to Ukraine as the use of the aggressor's resources rather than a new burden on the American taxpayer.
- › **Drones, joint production, and defense technologies.** Instead of emphasizing the replenishment of American stockpiles, which the Trump administration may use as criticism of the previous administration's policy, it is more promising to advance Ukraine as a U.S. partner in unmanned systems and rapid defense innovation. It is especially important to tie this proposal to the Drone Dominance framework already announced by the Pentagon: Ukraine does not need to invent a separate agenda; it can offer precisely the added value the United States already needs to achieve its own "drone dominance."²⁴ Ukraine has unique combat experience in the mass employment of drones, electronic warfare, and the adaptation of cheap technological solutions on the battlefield. A potential "drone deal" between Ukraine and the United States can be presented not as aid to Ukraine but as a mutually beneficial investment in U.S. technological superiority. In this sense, instances of purchases of Ukrainian drones can be used as evidence that such cooperation is already beginning to work in practice and can be scaled up. Within the broader framework of American "drone dominance," Ukraine can offer the United States what the traditional defense system lacks: rapid testing of solutions in real combat

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conditions, acceleration of the innovation cycle, scaling of cheaper systems, and practical experience in countering Russian electronic warfare. This approach makes it possible to tie the Ukrainian component to U.S. interests: strengthening the defense industry, preparing for competition with China, closing technological gaps in modern warfare, and giving practical substance to the already declared American course toward drone dominance.

- › **Oversight, reporting, and control.** For Republican skeptics, the question of control over the use of funds is not secondary but decisive. Legislative initiatives that combine support for Ukraine with audits, monitoring, end-use controls, and regular reporting will therefore have higher chances of passage. The most recent aid packages for Ukraine already included additional requirements for control, monitoring, auditing, and reporting.²⁵
- › **Humanitarian-legal and regulatory initiatives.** The return of abducted children, the documentation of war crimes, the protection of religious communities in the occupied territories, and support for affected communities can command a broad political base, especially if they do not look like a large new financial package. Such topics can engage not only Ukraine's traditional supporters but also religious, humanitarian, human rights, and local networks in the United States.

Humanitarian Dimension: Return of Ukrainian Children

The return of abducted Ukrainian children and the reunification of families is an important instrument of Ukrainian soft power in working with the American audience. The track is sensitive both organizationally and diplomatically, and it faces several barriers. At present, the problem lies rather in the scale and framing of such returns. The channel of First Lady Melania Trump and the accompanying work of the State Department exist and produce isolated but real results: after her letter to Putin in August 2025, the White House reported several waves of reunification, and as of mid-August 2026 – 34 children.²⁶²⁷²⁸ Ukraine overall has returned more than two thousand deported children, while the official Ukrainian estimate of those unlawfully removed reaches about 20 thousand.²⁹³⁰ The UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine has verified more than 1,200 cases and qualified the deportation as a crime against humanity.³¹

The White House presents this track as a bilateral “family reunification” of Ukrainian and Russian children rather than as Russia’s responsibility for a war crime.³² This opens political and diplomatic access to the Trump administration and his family, but it blurs the legal qualification of the crime Russia is committing and slows the overall pace of returns. For Moscow, such a framing is convenient: it gains an additional channel of communication with the White House and space to use Ukrainian children as a bargaining chip for broader bilateral proposals. A separate risk for Ukrainian diplomacy is publicly attributing all returns to Melania Trump alone. Some of the channels run through Qatar and other intermediaries, and excessive spotlighting of one person’s role has already created diplomatic friction.

For Ukraine, the prospect lies in converting the existing channels of communication into political and legal obligations for Russia. In practice, this means several things. Not overloading the first lady’s channel with public expectations that it by its nature cannot meet. Preserving the Qatari track and expanding other intermediary tracks without setting them against the American one. Embedding the return of children in any “peace” framework as a precondition, not as a goodwill gesture. Using congressional resolutions, State Department reporting requirements, and committee hearings so that the issue does not remain confined to the first lady’s office. Working with religious communities, human rights organizations, and networks engaged in child protection and family support, for whom the topics of abducted children and freedom of religion are more comprehensible than weapons packages, while preserving the humanitarian framing for progressive Democrats.

General Trends After Elections

- › **The position of the administration and the Republican Party leadership can be both an accelerator and a blocker of the Ukrainian legislative track.** If the White House supports a decision on Ukraine, its passage through Congress becomes much easier. If it opposes it, the risk of a veto, procedural blocking, or narrowed implementation grows. If the administration's position is unclear, Congress may have more room, especially within must-pass legislation.
- › **Support for Ukraine depends not only on the number of supporters but also on which bill the Ukrainian component is embedded in.** The best chances belong to provisions included in must-pass or politically necessary legislation: budget packages, continuing resolutions, supplemental security appropriations, annual defense legislation, sanctions packages, or programs to replenish American defense stockpiles. **Bipartisanship on Ukraine must be recreated each time, not taken for granted.** Each decision requires a separate map of support: guaranteed allies, situational partners, skeptics, and potential blockers in committees and chamber leaderships. It is important to know not only who supports Ukraine in general but who is prepared to vote for a specific text, a specific procedure, and a specific legislative route.
- › **The renewal of the membership of Congress will increase the need to explain to a new generation of lawmakers why the United States should support Ukraine.** After the elections, new, younger politicians may enter Congress who are not tied to the traditional foreign policy consensus of the older Republican and Democratic "hawks." For some of them, Ukraine will not be a self-evident priority. Ukrainian arguments will therefore have to be translated each time into the language of their political interests, seeking common ground with the needs of their congressional districts, and so on.
- › **The Ukrainian component should be narrow, technical, and tied to American interest.** Concrete decisions have better chances: funding for ammunition production, replenishment of American stockpiles, control over sanctions evasion, support for a specific program, or strengthening of the defense-industrial base. The more clearly the Ukrainian component is integrated into the logic of the main bill, the harder it is to attack it as a politically toxic amendment.
- › **Control, reporting, and transparency are conditions for preserving support.** Initiatives concerning Ukraine must be accompanied by audits, oversight, effectiveness evaluation, and clear mechanisms of control over the use of funds and assets. For some Republicans, this is not an additional element but a precondition of support.
- › **Ukraine needs to be explained more often through the global competition between the United States and China.** The argumentation should not be limited to NATO's eastern flank or the security of Europe, which some Republicans increasingly perceive through the logic of shifting the burden to European allies. Ukraine should be positioned as a U.S. partner in defense technologies, cybersecurity, sanctions enforcement, critical infrastructure, food security, and countering authoritarian influence.
- › **Work with American business is part of work with Congress.** Arguments about innovation, jobs, the profits of American companies, and the strengthening of the defense-industrial base are often politically more persuasive than abstract foreign policy messages. This is especially important for districts and states where defense contractors or technology companies have a production presence.

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- › **The socio-cultural dimension should be a separate channel of Ukrainian advocacy.**
The topics of deported children, war crimes, the persecution of religious communities, the destruction of cultural heritage, and support for veterans, families, and communities can open additional channels of communication with various segments of American society and Congress.

Scenarios After Midterm Elections

Scenario 1. Republicans retain control of both chambers

This is the most difficult scenario for Ukraine in terms of access to the congressional agenda. The administration of President Trump, the Republican leadership in the House, and the Republican majority in the Senate will have coordinated control over the key stages of the legislative process. At the same time, the Senate will remain a separate procedural filter, since ending debate on most legislation usually requires 60 votes.

Under this scenario, broad standalone packages on Ukraine will be the most vulnerable, since they are easy to present as a “new large aid package.” Better chances will belong to narrow Ukrainian components embedded in broader must-pass legislative packages: budget appropriations, continuing resolutions, defense legislation, sanctions provisions, or programs to replenish American defense stockpiles.

If Republicans win both chambers, the summer softening should not be taken as a stable or automatic long-term trend. Most likely, the strengthening of support will not continue in the form of major new budget decisions. After the elections, the electoral incentive to court moderate and suburban voters weakens at least until 2028, and foreign policy by itself rarely determines voting behavior. Selective softening may persist where it coincides with the administration’s interest – above all in sanctions pressure as a negotiating lever, technological cooperation, and humanitarian initiatives. Yet even the sanctions track will remain dependent on the broad discretion granted to the president.

For Ukraine, the main task will be to minimize the political toxicity of the Ukrainian issue within the Republican Party and to explain initiatives through American interest: security, industry, jobs, spending controls, and competition with China. A complete closure of the Ukrainian issue is unlikely, but large aid packages will remain vulnerable to blocking. In this scenario, Ukraine should work not with maximally ambitious texts but with those that can pass the Republican filter in the House, avoid being blocked in the Senate, and not provoke an inevitable presidential veto.

Scenario 2. Democrats regain control of House of Representatives, Republicans retain control of Senate

This is a partly more favorable but procedurally complex configuration. Ukrainian issues will gain better access to the House agenda: the Democratic leadership will be able to bring bills with a Ukrainian component to the floor more actively, hold hearings, use committees to oversee the administration, and include Ukrainian provisions in broader packages.

At the same time, the final result will depend on the Senate, the conference process, and the position of the White House. A Democratic House may pass politically strong texts, but without the support of at least some Republicans in the Senate, such decisions may remain political signals with no chance

of becoming law. The successful initiative will be not the most ambitious one in the House but the one that can be carried through the Senate, defended in conference, and brought to the president's signature or made politically difficult to block.

In practice, this means that the House can be used as a platform for agenda-setting, oversight, and public pressure, while the Senate will remain the place where texts are technically reconciled, wording is adapted, and the search for bipartisan support.

Scenario 3. Democrats regain control of both chambers

This is the most favorable configuration for Ukraine within Congress. Democrats will gain control over the agenda of both chambers, committee leadership, budget texts, hearings, oversight, and the conference process. This will substantially reduce the risk of Ukrainian initiatives being blocked at the level of Congress.

However, this scenario does not remove the presidential factor. The administration of President Trump may apply vetoes or narrow the implementation of decisions already adopted. Overriding a veto requires two-thirds of the votes in both chambers, that is, significant Republican support. Even in the best scenario for Ukraine, therefore, bipartisanship remains necessary.

This scenario opens the largest window for institutionalizing support for Ukraine: multi-year defense cooperation programs, stable funding of critical capabilities, joint production, sanctions mechanisms, oversight procedures, and programs to restore American stockpiles. But the Ukrainian issue must not come to be seen as part of U.S. partisan struggle. If support for Ukraine is framed as a purely Democratic agenda against the Trump administration, this may complicate its preservation after the next change in the political configuration.

Scenario 4. Divided Congress: Republican House of Representatives and Democratic or closely divided Senate

This is one of the most asymmetric and procedurally complex configurations. The main bottleneck will remain in the House: it is the House leadership, the relevant committees, and the Rules Committee that will determine whether the Ukrainian component reaches the agenda, in what form, and within which legislative package.

A Democratic or closely divided Senate may create more favorable conditions for sanctions initiatives, hearings, oversight, and the drafting of pro-Ukrainian texts. However, without agreement with the Republican House, these initiatives will not become law, since both chambers must pass an identical text.

In this scenario, success will depend not on the strength of the Senate's public position but on the ability of Ukraine and its partners to craft narrow, technically protected provisions that have support in both chambers, can survive the conference process, and do not look politically toxic for Republicans. The Senate can be useful for shaping arguments and pressure, but the real legislative result will require work with the House, especially with the Republicans who control the agenda.

General Conclusion

In all scenarios, the decisive factor will be not only formal party control but the ability of Ukrainian initiatives to pass three key filters: the agenda of the House of Representatives, the procedural barrier of the Senate, and the position of the White House. The most favorable configuration for Ukraine is Democratic control of both chambers, but even it does not remove the risk of a presidential veto and the need for Republican support. The most difficult is the configuration of Republican control of both chambers, yet even it does not mean a complete closure of the Ukrainian track if initiatives are narrow, technical, and tied to American interest.

The summer shifts of 2026, such as the Senate's passage of the Lindsey O. Graham Russia and Iran Sanctions Act of 2026 on August 7, 2026, the visit of Laura Loomer, and the White House's targeted humanitarian gestures, confirm this logic rather than overturn it. Republican space for Ukraine exists, but it opens where an initiative can be presented as pressure on Russia, a benefit for the United States, or a humanitarian initiative. If Republicans keep Congress, this narrow framing will most likely persist as well.

In any configuration, success will depend on bipartisan and bicameral work, control over implementation, transparency in the use of resources, and the ability to explain support for Ukraine as an element of U.S. security, industrial capability, and global strategy. For Ukraine, this means the need to move from general advocacy to precise political and procedural management of coalitions: separately with Democrats, separately with Republican national security supporters, separately with skeptics, and also with business, communities, and religious and humanitarian networks that can influence the positions of lawmakers in states and districts.

¹ <https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/R45920>

² <https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/R48308>

³ <https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/IF12305>

⁴ <https://clerk.house.gov/Votes/2024151>

⁵ <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2026/04/23/americans-have-become-less-confident-in-trumps-decision-making-on-ukraine/>

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⁷ <https://abcnews.com/Politics/republicans-vote-democrats-pass-ukraine-aid-russia-sanctions/story?id=133595620>

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¹⁰ https://d3nkl3psvxxpe9.cloudfront.net/documents/Foreign_Policy_poll_results_wUJ3dT.pdf

¹¹ https://d3nkl3psvxxpe9.cloudfront.net/documents/econTabReport_I24AWdp.pdf#page=49

¹² https://d3nkl3psvxxpe9.cloudfront.net/documents/Foreign_Policy_poll_results_wUJ3dT.pdf

¹³ <https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/house-bill/5334/text>

¹⁴ <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/russia-sanctions-bill-iran-senate-lindsey-graham/>

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The Author

Maksym Chebotarov

U.S.-Ukraine Partnership Program Coordinator, Transatlantic Dialogue Center

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