

## Opioids Compromise Already in the Works in Congress

By Shira Stein

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- Congress hopes to release House-Senate compromise Sept. 21
- House could vote on opioids bill package as early as Sept. 24

Congress is working on a compromise package of bills to fight the opioid crisis and hopes to finish voting on it in the next two weeks.

The Senate and House began working on the compromise before the Senate passed its package Sept. 17, Sen. Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.) said. They aim to have the package ready by Sept. 21, he said.

“We have a sense of bipartisan urgency about finishing our work in the Senate and combining our efforts with the House,” Alexander, the chairman of a key Senate health committee, said. The House passed its version of the package (H.R. 6) in June.

Lawmakers are under pressure to address the crisis as the midterm elections approach. Over 72,000 people died of a drug overdose last year, 40,000 of which were opioid overdoses, according to preliminary data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

There is strong desire from Republicans in both chambers to finish the opioid package quickly, a House Republican aide told Bloomberg Law.

Alexander said the House could vote on the package as early as the week of Sept. 24 with the Senate potentially voting the week of Oct. 1.

Lawmakers also hope to have the cost of the bill from the Congressional Budget Office by Sept. 21, Alexander said.

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