

Bush, GOP lawmakers revamping agencies

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Bush and GOP congressional leaders are preparing another bid in December to overcome conservative Republican opposition and pass an intelligence community overhaul designed as a response to the Sept. 11 attacks.

"When I get home, I look forward to getting it done," Bush told a news conference Sunday after an economic summit in Santiago, Chile. He promised to work with Republican leaders in Congress who are preparing to return Dec. 6 for another try.

Blocked by resistance from two committee chairmen and conservative Republicans in the House, lawmakers turned back a last-minute chance Saturday to pass the stalled legislation to create a new national intelligence director and national counterterrorism center. Based on the Sept. 11 commission recommendations, the overhaul is supposed to help the intelligence community track terrorist threats and was one of the biggest legislative priorities of this year.

Despite Republican control of Congress, Bush hasn't been able to enlist enough support from House Republicans.

"For us to do the bill in early December, it will take significant involvement by the president and the vice president," Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist, R-Tenn., said on CBS' "Face the Nation" Sunday. "It will take real focus on their part."

"The president is going to have to stand up to both his own Defense Department and to the hard right," Sen. Charles Schumer, D-N.Y., said on CNN's "Late Edition."

Bush did not directly respond to a question about whether his own defense secretary, Donald H. Rumsfeld, contributed to the deadlock.

Some Democrats and Republicans in Congress said Rumsfeld opposed relinquishing control of Pentagon intelligence spending to a new national intelligence director.

"I was disappointed the bill didn't pass," Bush said. "I thought it was going to pass up to the last minute."

He added that both he and Vice President Dick Cheney talked with key members of the House and "it was clear I wanted the bill passed."

Without passage in December, lawmakers would have to restart the legislative process when the new Congress convenes in January.

Two GOP committee chairmen led the effort to keep the bill from the House floor Saturday. Armed Services Chairman Duncan Hunter, R-Calif., echoed Pentagon concerns that the realignment of intelligence authority could interfere with the military chain of command and endanger troops in the field. Wisconsin Rep. James Sensenbrenner of the House Judiciary Committee demanded that the bill also deal with illegal immigration. Rumsfeld and other Pentagon

officials have resisted provisions that would reduce their control over 80 percent of the estimated \$40 billion annual intelligence budget.

"It's well-known that the secretary of defense wasn't enthusiastic about this loss of budget authority," Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., said on NBC's "Meet the Press."

McCain said Pentagon obstruction of legislation backed by the president was "one of the more Byzantine kind of scenarios that I have observed in the years that I have been in Congress."

Congress did fulfill its last major obligation of the two-year session on Saturday, passing a \$388 billion spending bill for most domestic

programs during the budget year that began Oct. 1.

But the House must briefly reconvene this week to join the Senate in passing a resolution nullifying a line in the 3,000-page spending bill that gives two committee chairmen and their aides access to personal income tax returns without regard to privacy protections.

Uproar over the provision delayed Senate passage of the bill Saturday. Republicans insisted it was a mistake and would never become law; Democrats said it was symptomatic of throwing together huge spending packages at year-end that lawmakers have no time to examine.

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