

The thinking right now is still to use as much of the 30 hours post-cloture on the motion to proceed for debate on thematically-group amendments. The goal is for a theme (e.g. climate bill = higher gas prices) each day, and the focus is much more on making political points than in amending the bill, changing the baseline text for any future debate or affecting policy.

After the 30 hours is consumed, GOP expects Reid to either fill the tree or set up a procedure that allows him to control the flow of amendments. GOP anticipates a struggle over which amendments are debated and eventually finger-pointing over blame for demise of the bill. In the GOP view, this will take at least the rest of the week, and hopefully run into next week.

At some point, Reid will have to move from the bill, and GOP plans to oppose UC and potentially force debate on debatable motions, and vote against cloture on any such motion. While Reid will eventually be able to circumvent by moving to a privileged vehicle (e.g., budget resolution conference report) or using some other parliamentary maneuver, the bottom line is that the GOP very much wants to have this fight, engage in it for a prolonged period, and then make it as difficult as possible to move off the bill.