Shutdown looming: Weekend showdown at the Capitol

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WASHINGTON — Time running short, the Democratic-controlled Senate passed urgent legislation Friday to avert a government shutdown early next week, and President Barack Obama lectured House Republicans to stop "appeasing the tea party" and quickly follow suit.

Despite the presidential plea — and the urgings of their own leaders — House GOP rebels showed no sign of retreat in their drive to use the threat of a shutdown to uproot the nation's three-year-old health care law.

"We now move on to the next stage of this battle," said Sen. Ted Cruz, the Texas Republican who is a face of the "Defund Obamacare" campaign in the Senate and is in close contact with allies in the House.

First effects of a shutdown could show up as early as Tuesday if Congress fails to approve money to keep the government going by the Monday-midnight start of the new fiscal year.

"Think about who you are hurting" if government services are interrupted, the president said at the White House, as House Speaker John Boehner pondered his next move in a fast-unfolding showdown — not only between Republicans and Democrats but between GOP leaders and conservative insurgents.

Despite Obama's appeal, the Senate-passed measure faces a swift demise in the House at the hands of tea party conservatives who are adamantly opposed to funding that the measure includes for the three-year-old health care law.

The Senate's 54-44 vote was strictly along party lines in favor of the bill, which would keep the government operating routinely through Nov. 15.

The immediate impacts of a shutdown would be felt unevenly. Soldiers, air traffic controllers and many other federal workers would remain on the job. Social Security payments would still go out. But national parks would close to visitors. There would be problems for homebuyers seeking government-backed mortgages and for people applying for some other programs. Delays and closings would spread if a shutdown last for long.

Friday's Senate vote masked a ferocious struggle for control of the Republican Party pitting Boehner and Senate Leader Mitch McConnell against rebels led by relatively junior lawmakers, Cruz and Mike Lee of Utah and a few dozen allies in the House among them.