

IMMIGRATION REFORM BILL 2013

By

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Now that the Senate has passed the bipartisan bill in the Senate, we await to see what happens in the House. Will the House take up the Senate Bill and pass it or produce its own bill that includes a core piece of senate Legislation, a path to the citizenship for 11 million unauthorized immigrants in the country.

It appears that the House will look at a narrower bill that does not provide path to citizenship and choose to legislate series of standalone bills that deal with strong border security, an agricultural, guest worker plan, fortified employment eligibly verification system and to expand immigration for science, technology, engineering and mathematic experts. “The House is not going to be log rolled by the Senate” a key law maker said, “We have a minority of the minority in the Senate voting for this bill,” said Representative Tom Cole, Republican of Oklahoma, referring to the Republican Senators who back the Senate measure. “That’s not going to put a lot of pressure on the majority of the majority in the House.”

Two senior House Republican leadership aides were more blunt when speaking privately: Speaker John A. Boehner has no intention of angering conservative voters and jeopardizing the House Republican majority in 2014, in the interest of courting Hispanic voters on behalf of a 2016 Republican presidential nominee, who does not yet exist.

If anything, the politics of a gerrymandered House, where Republican lawmakers have much more to fear politically from the right than from the left, could push many Republicans to oppose a conservative alternative to the Senate’s plan.

Even advocates of a comprehensive immigration bill that includes a pathway to legalization for unauthorized immigrants now in the country, say that Senate passage would not change House sentiment quickly.

“Can we pass a House bill? It’s a very open question,” said Representative Charlie Dent of Pennsylvania, a leading voice among a shrinking group of moderate Republicans. For Republicans, the stakes are high and the crosscurrents are strong. Advocates of the Senate bill say the future of the national Republican Party could rest on how this issue plays out. Senator John McCain, Republican of Arizona, who helped write the measure, said that “the passion level” among Hispanic voters on the immigration issue “is as high as on any issue I’ve observed.”

“If we can’t grow our numbers, particularly among Hispanics, it’s pretty hard to win the White House in 2016,” said Senator Lindsey Graham, Republican of South Carolina, another of the bill’s authors. “Don’t get me wrong. Conservatism sells, and after eight years of Obama, people will be looking around for someone new. But it’s hard to sell your economic agenda, if they think you’re going to deport their grandmother.”

On the other hand, a vote for legislation like the Senate bill could hold real peril for House Republicans, whose solidly Republican districts reward politicians, who take the most

conservative positions on issues. A new poll by National Journal found that nearly half of Republican voters, 49 percent, said a lawmaker who backs legislation offering a pathway to citizenship, would lose their support. Thirty percent said it would make no difference. Only 15 percent said such a vote would make them more likely to back their incumbent.

“I think most members look at this with a great deal of trepidation,” Mr. Cole said.

What the House’s methodical approach yields, may determine the ultimate fate of immigration legislation in the 113th Congress? If the House can pass its own immigration bill, lawmakers will have a counteroffer to bring to the voters next year — even if the House and Senate bills cannot be reconciled into a final package for President Obama to sign.

The historic event recently was the Senate’s approval of their immigration reform bill S. 744. In a vote of 68-32, the Senate demonstrated remarkable bipartisan commitment to remedy our dysfunctional immigration system in a spirit of compromise and cooperation.

The passing of the Senate bill was what we fervently hoped is the beginning of the end of “stigma” for the millions of aspiring Americans who live in the shadows, who fear separation of families, who struggle to be accepted by the communities of which they are already an integral part.

The bill now goes to the House of Representatives, and House Speaker John Boehner (R-OH) has said that for “any legislation, including a conference report, to pass the House, it’s going to have to be a bill that has the support of a majority of our members.” His statement however, ignores the fact that the majority of Americans support the principles of the Senate bill including a roadmap to citizenship.

We understand the desire of the House to follow “regular order” which would mean that the House Judiciary Committee would first take up any immigration legislation. So if that’s the sticking point, we need to call on the members of the House to get in gear and show how our political system can embrace what makes America great. They can move forward to end more than 20 years of a dysfunctional immigration system that stifles our ability to bring talent, separates families and does not protect our borders.

We understand what the birth date of our nation means, and think about all the then aspiring Americans who celebrated that fateful day of July 4, 1776 and the many more who have since had a profound impact on our country and its success. So many of them are immigrants. Their story is our story. So many of us, the American people, are immigrants, and that is our strength.

Let us remember the principles upon which America was founded in the values of family, liberty, respect and dignity and let’s hope our leaders in the House of Representatives will stand up for those values and pass immigration reform.

For more information, please feel free to contact the Immigration and Nationality Lawyers at the NPZ Law Group at 201-670-0006 or by e-mailing us at info@visaserve.com.