



Conservatives Wary of Dueling Border Bills

The House Republicans' border bill has come under fire — from Republicans.

“That the House leaders' border package includes no language on executive actions is surrender to a lawless President,” Sen. Jeff Sessions (R-Ala.) declared in a statement issued Tuesday. “And it is a submission to the subordination of congressional power.”

The House is scheduled to vote Thursday on a bill, backed by the Republican leadership, to spend \$659 million to address the crisis on the Texas border, where more than 50,000 illegal immigrant children have been detained over the past several months. The bill, while well short of both the \$3.7 billion President Obama has requested and the \$2.7 billion the Senate is expected to authorize, includes funding for increased Border Patrol and Immigration and Customs enforcement, temporary housing, and \$40 million in foreign aid to Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador, the countries of origin for most of the migrant minors. There is also \$22 million for more judges to speed up the hearings the law requires before the immigrants can be returned home.

Democrats and some Republicans say the stopgap measure for the next two months is simply not enough.

“We're probably going to have to deal with this again,” Rep. Adam Kinzinger (R-Ill.) told *Time* magazine. “It's obvious we're trying to get this thing through.”

“Certainly it won't have enough money to get the job done, but a lot depends on the substantive language,” said Dick Durbin (D-Ill.), the Senate's second-ranking Democrat. Durbin said he would not support a provision in the bill that would change the due process guarantees a 2008 law provides for immigrant children from noncontiguous countries, meaning anywhere besides Canada and Mexico.

That is one of the sticking points in the bill. While the Obama administration has expressed support for the change, many Democrats in Congress are opposed and have criticized the Republican bill for too little funding for lawyers to assist the immigrant children at deportation hearings.

“It's not just about having a heart; it's about having a soul,” House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi said after several of the children testified at a Congressional Progressive Caucus hearing in Washington. “And the soul of our country is about respecting the dignity and worth of every person. The soul of our





Written by [Jack Kenny](#) on July 31, 2014

country is about giving every person access to rights who is in our country.”

“During August recess, I hope there will be lawyers that go to the border, not just members of Congress,” said Rep. Eleanor Holmes Norton, a Democrat from the District of Columbia.

Some Republicans, meanwhile, oppose the House bill because they fear its passage, along with the Senate’s passage of its border bill, will give Democrats in a conference committee the opportunity to bring back provisions of the immigration reform bill the Senate passed last year and the House has refused to consider. The bill would grant legal status, work permits, and a path to citizenship to millions of aliens who are here illegally. As Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) has said, passage of the House bill will provide “an opening for us to have a conference on our comprehensive immigration reform.”

In a statement issued Tuesday afternoon, House Speaker John Boehner said he will not advance the Senate immigration bill “in any fashion.”

“Nor will we accept any attempt to add any other comprehensive immigration reform bill or anything like it, including the DREAM Act” to the House legislation, he said, referring to a decades-long effort to grant amnesty to illegal aliens who were brought here as children, similar to the deferred action ordered by President Obama’s “policy directive” in 2012. Boehner pledged to stand by “the House’s targeted legislation, which is meant to fix the actual problems causing the border crisis,” he said.

The House bill is opposed, nonetheless by many Republican conservatives, including Senators Sessions, Ted Cruz of Texas, and Rand Paul of Kentucky, and a number of House Republicans, including Alabama’s Mo Brooks.

“Until this administration demonstrates a sincere effort to uphold existing law and to stop issuing administrative amnesties, Congress should withhold any further money or legislation,” said a letter sent to Boehner on Saturday by the leaders of more than 25 groups including NumbersUSA.





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