



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on March 28, 2013

Obama Predicts Immigration Bill Passage by Summer

In interviews with two Spanish-language television networks on March 27, President Obama expressed optimism that immigration reform legislation being drafted by the bipartisan “Gang of Eight” group of senators will be passed this summer.

[Fox News](#) cited the president’s statement that he is still prepared to step in with his own bill if talks among the senators break down, but he doesn’t expect that intervention to be necessary.



“If we have a bill introduced at the beginning of next month as these senators indicate it will be, then I’m confident that we can get it done certainly before the end of the summer,” Obama told Hialeah, Florida-based Telemundo (the second-largest Spanish-language network in the United States).

Observers attribute Obama’s hand-off to Congress to draft an immigration reform package as being part of the White House political strategy. Fox notes that Obama “and his advisers have calculated that a bill crafted by Capitol Hill stands a better chance of winning Republican support than one overtly influenced by the president.”

[ABC News](#) quoted from Obama’s interview with Doral, Florida-based Univision (which has the largest audience of Spanish-language television viewers in the world according to Nielsen): “I’m actually optimistic that when they get back they will introduce a bill,” said Obama. “My sense is that they have come close and my expectation is that we’ll actually see a bill on the floor of the Senate next month.”

Obama was unwilling to commit to taking action of his own if members of Congress fail to introduce an immigration bill in April, replying, “I’m not going to presuppose that they don’t [reach an agreement].”

During the interview, Obama touched on what he and some Republicans call a “path to citizenship,” which effectively grants amnesty to some illegal immigrants. He stated that many of the 11 million “undocumented” immigrants living in the United States “have invested their lives here, many of them with American-born children.” It’s essential, he added, that “they have an opportunity to earn their way — a difficult path but a certain path — toward citizenship.”

During a [swearing-in ceremony](#) for 28 new citizens (including 13 members of the military) in the East Room of the White House on March 25, the president noted:

Immigration makes us stronger — it keeps us vibrant, it keeps us hungry, it keeps us prosperous. We need to do a better job welcoming them.

We’ve known for years that our immigration system is broken.... After avoiding the problem for years, the time has come to fix it once and for all.

“Everyone pretty much knows what’s broken. Everyone knows how to fix it. We’ve just got, at this point, to work up the political courage to do what’s required to be done.

Obama did not make a distinction between legal and illegal immigrants during the ceremony, or state whether he believed that granting a “path to citizenship” to the latter also “makes us stronger.”



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In an interview with the [Dallas Morning News](#) on March 24, Senator Ted Cruz (R-Texas) responded to a question asking his views on immigration and the path to citizenship. Cruz replied, in part:

The reason I'm pessimistic [about the prospects of an immigration bill passing Congress is that President Obama's] behavior concerning immigration leads me to believe that what he wants is a political issue rather than actually to pass a bill. What he wants is for the bill to crater, so that he can use the issue as a political wedge in 2014 and 2016. That is why I believe the president is insisting on a path to citizenship for those who are here illegally. Because by insisting on that, he ensures that any immigration reform bill will be voted down in the House.

When asked by *News* reporter Todd Gillman, "Would you vote against anything that has path to citizenship?" Cruz replied:

I have deep, deep concerns about a path to citizenship for those who are here illegally. I think creating a path to citizenship is No. 1 inconsistent with the rule of law. But No. 2 it is profoundly unfair to the millions of legal immigrants who have waited years and sometimes decades in line to come here legally. And as a practical matter, if you want to see common sense immigration reform pass, insisting on a path to citizenship is the surest way to kill the bill. Today I think the greatest obstacle to passing common sense immigration reform is President Barack Obama.

In response to the charges by Cruz, White House spokesman Josh Earnest asserted on Monday, "There's no evidence to support those claims."

A [Washington Post](#) report noted that Organizing for America, described as an offshoot of Obama's former campaign apparatus, has joined with the AFL-CIO, in announcing immigration events to be held across the country.

The AFL-CIO has been engaged in open debate with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce in a classic "labor-management" rivalry to determine which aspects of immigration reform legislation they both can support.

An AP report in the [Huffington Post](#) noted that, following a stalemate, talks between the two groups have resumed and negotiators are "back on the right track," according to Ana Avendano, identified as a lead AFL-CIO negotiator.

Avendano said that the Chamber of Commerce had backed off on its demands for what she described as "poverty-level wages" for the immigrant engaged in a temporary-worker program.

"We're very hopeful that we're moving [along]," Avendano told reporters.

The *Post*, in a March 25 report, also quoted President Obama's statements during the White House swearing-in ceremony, "We are making progress, but we've got to finish the job." "We've all proposed solutions," he added. "We've got a lot of white papers and studies. We've just got, at this point, to work up the political courage to do what's required to be done."

A study of the [Immigration portal of the White House website](#) provides a good summary of what President Obama is aiming at when he says we must "finish the job."

The summary states that "President Obama has doubled the number of Border Patrol agents and today border security is stronger than it has ever been."

One part of the administration's agenda to enhance border security is sure to rub constitutional conservatives and libertarians sensitive to violations of the Bill of Rights: "For the first time, DHS



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unmanned aerial capabilities now cover the entire Southwest border, from California to Texas, providing critical aerial surveillance assistance to personnel on the ground.” The popular name for “unmanned aerial capabilities” is drones.

One statement that neither conservatives, liberals, nor libertarians should take issue with is “Our immigration system should reward anyone who is willing to work hard and play by the rules. For the sake of our economy and our security, legal immigration should be simple and efficient.”

Though the above rhetoric *sounds* good, the reality is something else. When those who do not “play by the rules” (which is another way of saying “obey the law,” since the problem of illegal immigration is hardly a game) can enjoy a “path to citizenship,” receive amnesty for their crime, and also receive the rewards that come with citizenship, the incentive to “play by the rules” is largely removed.

Under a heading labeled “Earned Citizenship,” a quote from President Obama advocates a program of amnesty for those who have violated our immigration laws:

We have to deal with the 11 million individuals who are here illegally. We all agree that these men and women should have to earn their way to citizenship. But for comprehensive immigration reform to work, it must be clear from the outset that there is a pathway to citizenship. We’ve got to lay out a path — a process that includes passing a background check, paying taxes, paying a penalty, learning English, and then going to the back of the line, behind all the folks who are trying to come here legally. That’s only fair.

One wonders if those who have been waiting patiently for years in Manila, Mexico City, or Dublin for their turn to emigrate would agree if Obama’s “path to citizenship” is fair.

Photo of President Barack Obama: AP Images



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