



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on February 18, 2013

Obama Proposes “Lawful Prospective Immigrant” Visa

Citing a draft report that was leaked to *USA Today* on February 16, [Fox News](#) reported today that President Obama has proposed the creation of a new “Lawful Prospective Immigrant” visa specifically for illegal immigrants. The new visa would allow those who are here illegally to remain in the country while they await permanent legal status.



One of the first comments on the proposal was from Sen. John [McCain, who told NBC](#): “Leaks don’t happen in Washington by accident. This raises the question that many of us continue to wonder about: Does the president really want a result or does he want another cudgel to beat up on Republicans so he that can get political advantage in the next election?”

Among other Republicans making public statements about the Obama plan was Sen. Rand Paul (R-Ky.), who told [Fox News Sunday](#) that the president had created a politically unviable proposal. “The president is torpedoing his own plan,” said Paul. “It shows me he is really not serious.... The bill won’t pass.”

Paul’s sentiments were shared by Sen. Marco Rubio (R-Fla.), who called the White House plan “half-baked and seriously flawed,” noting: “If actually proposed, the president’s bill would be dead on arrival in Congress, leaving us with unsecured borders and a broken legal immigration system for years to come.”

Rep. Paul Ryan, last year’s GOP vice presidential candidate who is chairman of the House Budget Committee, said on ABC’s *This Week* program:

Putting these details out without a guest worker program, without addressing future flow, by giving advantage to those who cut in front of line for immigrants who came here legally, not dealing with border security adequately, that tells us that he’s looking for a partisan advantage and not a bipartisan solution.

An AP report published in the *Boston Globe* and elsewhere today quoted statements from White House chief of staff Denis McDonough asserting that the president’s plan was intended only as a backup, in the event that the bipartisan group of eight senators — who [announced](#) on January 28 that they had developed a plan for comprehensive immigration reform — fails to finalize a plan of their own.

“We will be prepared with our own plan if these ongoing talks between Republicans and Democrats up on Capitol Hill break down,” said McDonough, while expressing guarded optimism that a breakdown would not occur.

McDonough added: “Well, let’s make sure that it doesn’t have to be proposed.”



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In an interview from Chicago with MSNBC today, David Axelrod, who was a senior advisor to Obama's reelection campaign, expressed his opinion that the public release of the president's immigration plan was inadvertent.

Axelrod said that "the mistake here was to disseminate it so widely within the administration" — an action that would have contributed to the leak. He said he believes that White House officials would "take it back" if they could.

[A release posted on the White House website](#) on January 29 provides a fair look at the administration's immigration policies. The release lists several "key principles" that President Obama "believes should be included in commonsense immigration reform." These fall under headings that include:

- Continuing to Strengthen Border Security
- Cracking Down on Employers Hiring Undocumented Workers
- Earned Citizenship, and
- Streamlining Legal Immigration

Of particular interest here, considering the latest plan for a "Lawful Prospective Immigrant" visa, are the details found under "Earned Citizenship":

It is just not practical to deport 11 million undocumented immigrants living within our borders. The President's proposal provides undocumented [i.e., illegal] immigrants a legal way to earn citizenship that will encourage them to come out of the shadows so they can pay their taxes and play by the same rules as everyone else. Immigrants living here illegally must be held responsible for their actions by passing national security and criminal background checks, paying taxes and a penalty, going to the back of the line, and learning English before they can earn their citizenship. There will be no uncertainty about their ability to become U.S. citizens if they meet these eligibility criteria.

Considering his strong statement objecting to the administration proposals, it would be logical to assume that Sen. Rubio would favor a plan that is diametric to it. In an article published in the January 27 [Las Vegas Review-Journal](#), "Ex-Las Vegas Rubio outlines a GOP vision for immigration reform," Rubio wrote:

We can't round up millions of people and deport them. But we also can't fix our broken immigration system if we provide incentives for people to come here illegally — precisely the signal a blanket amnesty would send.

Instead, the first step should be to require those who have not committed any felonies and are assimilated into America, to have the opportunity to apply for *temporary non-immigrant status*. To receive this status, they will have to come forward, admit wrongdoing, undergo a background check and pay back taxes and a meaningful fine for violating our laws. [Emphasis added.]

Rubio's distinction between "blanket amnesty" and "apply[ing] for temporary non-immigrant status" (or the Obama administration's "Lawful Prospective Immigrant" visa) may escape those who maintain that legalizing the status of those who are here illegally is counterproductive because it will only encourage more illegal immigration.

Photo of President Obama: AP Images

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