



Senate Rejects Four Immigration Bills, Including Bill Favored by Trump

On February 15, we reported that the Senate was considering at least four immigration bills, but that President Trump only supported one of them — a measure proposed by Senator Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa). In a series of votes, the Senate rejected all four proposals, including two proposals that would have offered some of the 1.8 million “Dreamers” — people who were brought to the U.S. as children illegally — a pathway to citizenship in exchange for appropriating the \$25 billion for border security that Trump demanded.



The *New York Times* reported on February 15 that Grassley’s measure was patterned after one that the White House proposed, but the 39-60 vote was 21 votes short of the 60 votes required for the Senate to consider it. Trump had threatened to veto the other measures under consideration. Among those voting against the measure were 14 Republicans.

The *Times* report said that Democrats rejected the bill’s tough approach to legal immigration, while many conservative Republicans opposed its pathway to citizenship for the “Dreamers.”

Grassley’s bill included four of the pillars laid out by the president’s immigration reform framework. Trump named those four pillars in his State of the Union address on January 20. They are: 1) Granting a path to citizenship for the 1.8 million illegal immigrants who were brought here by their parents at a young age; 2) Securing the border; 3) Ending the visa lottery program, and 4) Ending chain migration.

Newsweek reported that another bill that was almost unanimously backed by Democrats (known as the “Common Sense” proposal) also failed by a 54 to 45 vote. Trump labeled that bipartisan bill a “total catastrophe” just hours before senators voted. A third proposal introduced by John McCain (R-Ariz.) and Chris Coons (D-Del.) that sought to provide a path to citizenship for Dreamers, while making no offer of funds for Trump’s border wall, failed 52 to 47.

The remaining proposal, reported *Newsweek*, an amendment from Pat Toomey (R-Pa.), addressed neither citizenship or protection from deportation for DACA enrollees nor border security. However, the proposal sought to penalize sanctuary cities refusing to cooperate with federal immigration agents by withholding funds. It failed 54 to 45, with many Republicans supporting the plan, while most Democrats voted against it.

After all four proposals failed, Democrats accused Trump of “torpedoing” efforts to pass a bill that would protect DACA enrollees, the so-called Dreamers.

“This vote is proof that President Trump’s plan will never become law. If he would stop torpedoing bipartisan efforts, a good bill would pass,” complained Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer (N.Y.)
Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) was still optimistic that an immigration deal could be



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on February 16, 2018

accomplished before March 5.

“This does not have to be the end of our efforts to resolve these matters,” said McConnell after the voting. “I would encourage members to put away the talking points to get serious about finding a solution that can actually become law.”

The major point of contention between the White House and Trump’s Republican allies in the Senate and the Democrats is how to handle the 1.8 million young adults who were brought to the United States illegally as children and have been protected from deportation by the Obama administration under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA, program.

The DACA program’s protections will start expiring on March 5, but federal judges have blocked the administration’s plans to end DACA while litigation over the matter continues.

Attorney General Jeff Sessions announced on September 5 that the DACA program would end in six months, giving Congress time to find a legislative solution for people enrolled in the program.

While campaigning for the presidency, candidate Trump promised that he would “immediately terminate” DACA after being elected. However, in recent months, he has increasingly demonstrated a willingness to compromise with Democrats by supporting legislation that would offer the same protection from deportation and extended work authorization that the Obama administration granted.

In return for offering protection from deportation — and even eventual citizenship — for the so-call Dreamers, Trump wants a \$25 billion fund to strengthen border security and possibly even construct part of a border wall with Mexico, which was a major campaign plank in his 2016 presidential campaign.

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