



Boehner Mocks Republicans Who Don't Follow Party Line on Immigration

Speaking before the Middletown Rotary Club in his home district in Ohio on April 24, House Speaker John Boehner (shown) mocked his GOP House colleagues who have failed to pass "immigration reform" legislation.

Boehner, speaking in a falsetto voice, theatrically portrayed his version of a House representative opposed to passing one of his GOP-approved immigration bills: "Here's the attitude. 'Ohhhh. Don't make me do this. Ohhhh. This is too hard.' "



During his address to the Rotary Club, Boehner berated his Republican House colleagues for avoiding, in his view, the job to which they were elected.

"We get elected to make choices," said Boehner. "We get elected to solve problems and it's remarkable to me how many of my colleagues just don't want to.... They'll take the path of least resistance."

Boehner told the group he has been working for more than a year to try to push immigration legislation through the House.

"I've had every brick and bat and arrow shot at me over this issue just because I wanted to deal with it. I didn't say it was going to be easy," he said.

But, as a writer for *The Hill* noted, despite the blame he cast on his fellow Republicans, Boehner singled out a more likely culprit at Capitol Hill press conferences this year, saying that the reason he has not pursued immigration reform is because President Obama cannot be trusted to enforce the law properly.

The Senate passed the so-called "Gang of Eight" immigration bill last June, but, despite the fact that it was crafted by a bipartisan Senate group, a significant number of House Republicans consider that legislation to be seriously flawed.

The office of House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) was quick to jump on Boehner's comments with a statement of its own, telling the speaker to "put your money where your mouth is" and allow a vote on a bipartisan immigration reform bill authored by House lawmakers.

"We are confident it will pass," Pelosi's office stated.

The House immigration bill that has progressed the farthest (with 199 cosponsors) is H.R. 15, the "Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act." Though described by



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some as a “bipartisan” bill, when Republican Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen of Florida became the bill’s 187th cosponsor last October, she was only the second Republican cosponsor. (California Republican Rep. David Valadao became the third GOP co-sponsor on November 1.)

An article on H.R. 15 posted on VOXXI (a Latino news website) on April 15 revealed the shaky “bipartisan” support for the bill, noting that a total of 191 House members out of a total of 218 signatures needed had signed the discharge petition to force the bill out of committee for a vote. All 191 are Democrats. The writer noted: “No House Republican has announced plans to sign the discharge petition. Not even the three Republican co-sponsors of HR 15 — Reps. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen of Florida and David Valadao and Jeff Denham of California — have said they will sign it.”

With such a dearth of Republican support, it is apparent that much more than Boehner’s explanation — an unwillingness to make a difficult decision — is responsible. A more likely explanation is that the bill is severely flawed. (As is a bill that Rep. Mario Diaz-Balart [R-Fla.] is drafting that “would give qualifying undocumented immigrants legal status and the chance to apply for citizenship through existing channels,” the *Wall Street Journal* reported.)

The Federation for American Immigration Reform notes of H.R. 15:

Democrats describe the legislation as the Senate Gang of Eight’s bill with alternative “border security” provisions. As put by Pelosi herself, H.R. 15 contains the “best of the Senate bill,” without the Corker-Hoeven “border surge” amendment, and with the McCaul-Jackson Lee border bill (H.R. 1417) in its place. Which “border security” provisions the bill contains, however, is completely irrelevant given that: (1) neither actually takes any real steps to secure our nation’s borders, and (2) the bill still contains S. 744’s core amnesty-first, enforcement-later (probably never) approach.

On January 30, *The Hill* reported that Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas) blasted his Republican colleagues in the House for crafting an immigration plan that he denounced as “amnesty.”

“I think it would be a mistake if House Republicans were to support amnesty for those here illegally,” he said when asked about a proposal to be included in the House Republicans’ immigration principles statement.

“In my view we need to secure the borders, we need to stop illegal immigration,” Cruz said during a Bloomberg News breakfast. “And we need to improve and streamline legal immigration.”

Another vocal critic of his GOP counterparts in the House was Sen. Jeff Sessions (R-Ala.), who on April 18 issued a statement expressing his apprehension about a possible House immigration vote. After noting that President Obama and congressional Democrats have “put their collective weight behind an immigration bill that delivers a sweeping amnesty for open borders groups and a huge guest worker surge for corporations,” Sessions observed that — according to the *Wall Street Journal* report — “House GOP leaders are considering a plan to move an apparently similar immigration plan this summer.”

In his news release, Sessions invited the voters to compare the White House-favored bill already passed by the Senate with H.R. 15, and included a link to remarks the senator made on January 30 as an aid in making this comparison ([Click here](#)).

As we noted in a recent article, when Boehner spoke to a group of donors at a Republican Party fundraiser last month, he pledged that the House would pass several immigration bills this summer. Several attendees at the fundraiser told the *Wall Street Journal*’s Laura Meckler that Boehner said he was “hellbent on getting this done this year.”



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Some political analysts have seized on the April 16 phone conversation between House Majority Leader Eric Cantor and President Obama, in which they discussed immigration legislation, as an indication that the House and the president are far apart on immigration and unlikely to cooperate.

In a statement released following his conversation with Obama, Cantor criticized the president's "partisan statement which attacked me and my fellow House Republicans and which indicated no sincere desire to work together." Cantor continued, "I told the President the same thing I told him the last time we spoke. House Republicans do not support Senate Democrats' immigration bill and amnesty efforts, and it will not be considered in the House."

While Cantor described Obama's criticism of House Republicans for their failure to advance immigration reform legislation as a "partisan statement," promoted by their failure to support the "Senate Democrats' immigration bill" the GOP majority leader has conveniently overlooked an important fact. The Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act of 2013 (S. 744) was a *bipartisan* creation formed by the Gang of Eight committee that included four Republicans, including John McCain, the GOP's 2008 presidential standard bearer.

In view of John Boehner's recent ridiculing of his colleagues who are hesitant to advance unacceptable legislation that has been severely criticized by more than one Republican senator, we wonder what Cantor thinks of Boehner's comments, which are certainly anything but partisan.

In his April 18 remarks, Senator Sessions said that instead of helping the Obama administration pass legislation that would be detrimental to Americans, "Republicans must expose the harm the Administration has done — not join it in delivering a hammer blow to the middle class."

In his memo circulated among House Republicans last January, Sessions strongly hinted that the House Republican leadership was secretly engaged in back-room deals with the White House, to the detriment of America:

[The Republican House leadership] are reportedly drafting an immigration plan that is uncomfortably similar to a "piecemeal" repackaging of the disastrous Senate plan — and even privately negotiating a final package with Democrat activists before consulting with their own members.

Americans who would like the problem of illegal immigration solved without extending amnesty to illegal immigrants may wonder where the House equivalents of Senators Sessions and Cruz are.

Photo of Speaker of the House John Boehner: AP Images

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