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## The GOP Fends Off the GOP from Using Boston to Block the Immigration Deal

By: Elspeth Reeve – April 22, 2013

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Conservative supporters of immigration reform are reportedly coordinating their talking points to marginalize Republicans who say the Boston bombings are reason to rethink proposals for more lax immigration laws. According to emails obtained by Breitbart News' Matthew Boyle, advisers to Sen. Marco Rubio, Grover Norquist, and the Cato Institute are working to smother the Boston talking point in the crib. "The Boston thing could derail this big time so I'm spending most of today on that," Cato's immigration analyst, Alex Nowrasteh, wrote on Friday to Peggy Ellis, a consultant asked to help prepare Norquist's immigration testimony before today's Senate Judiciary Committee hearing on immigration. (It's the second of two major hearings on immigration legislation, after the massacre at the marathon "wrecked plans for a quick Friday hearing," in the words of *The Daily Caller*.) Other emails show the pro-immigration groups working on rebuttals to anti-immigration conservatives like Jim DeMint, who heads the Heritage Foundation. All this has RedState editor Erick Erickson in a state of distress. Of the leaked emails, Erickson writes, "I have seen shameful things."

After the Boston bombing last week, Iowa Rep. Steve King, Texas Rep. Louie Gohmert, and Iowa Sen. Chuck Grassley (pictured above at center) floated the idea that the attack might make passing immigration reform more difficult. "We know Al Qaeda has camps over with the drug cartels on the other side of the Mexican border," Gohmert said on C-SPAN Wednesday. "We know that people that are now being trained to come in and act like Hispanic when they are radical Islamist." Grassley said in an immigration hearing, "How do we ensure that people who wish to do us harm are not eligible for benefits under the immigration laws, including this new bill before us?"

Rubio's aides have moved quickly to stop this. "Americans will reject any attempt to tie the losers responsible for the attacks in Boston with the millions of law-abiding immigrants currently living in the U.S. and those hoping to immigrate here in the future," Rubio spokesman Alex Conant told *The Washington Post's* Jennifer Rubin. But behind the scenes they seem more nervous. On Friday afternoon, Ellis emailed immigration reporters with this subject line: "Rubio talking points re: Boston terrorists vis a vis immigration reform." Rubio's talking points, Boyle reports, say 1) the terrorists came here under the current immigration law, 2) the terrorists didn't cross the border with Mexico, and 3) because they were legal immigrants, it was easier to find them: "If they were here illegally, living in the shadows, it would have made them much harder to investigate." Other emails focus on how to discredit DeMint's claim that immigration reform will cost the government a ton of money when the immigrants claim Social Security, Medicare, and other federal benefits. (Illegal immigrants actually strengthen Social Security because they pay payroll taxes but rarely collect benefits.)

All of this fighting is too much for Erickson. Pro-immigration Republicans in 2005 and 2006 "called many Republicans bigots and racists who were not, but who stood in the way of their comprehensive approach to immigration," he says. "Without ever trying to heal those wounds, those behind this latest push are tearing open new wounds."