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Obama hopes to pick up Hispanic votes by speech



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Delving into an explosive issue, President Barack Obama stood near the border with Mexico on Tuesday and declared it more secure than ever, trying to build pressure on Republicans to take on a comprehensive immigration overhaul -- and eagerly working to show vital Hispanic voters that he is not the one standing in the way.

Countering Republican calls to focus on border security before moving to a comprehensive overhaul, Obama said their demands have been more than met by his administration but "they'll never be satisfied." Huffington Post

HIGHLIGHTS

On his first trip to the U.S.-Mexico border since becoming president, Obama boasted of increasing border patrol agents, nearing completion of a border fence, and screening more cargo. Suntimes

Obama also tailored his argument to the times, making his case for immigration reform in newly sharpened economic terms. He argued that the middle class would benefit from bringing illegal immigrants out of an underground economy and drawing on the abilities of immigrants educated in American universities. Chron

Republicans disputed Obama's contention that the border has been effectively secured and accused him of playing politics in pursuit of the ever-growing Hispanic electorate ahead of the 2012 election. With Republicans in control of the House there's no longer any appetite on Capitol Hill for the comprehensive legislation Obama wants that would offer a path to citizenship for the 11 million illegal immigrants in the country. Independentmail

Obama's personal pitch was the latest step in a visible campaign to build support and pressure on Republicans to act. He publicly questioned the motives of Republicans and their ability to keep their word. He said it was up to the American people to drive the debate and isolate areas where both parties can agree. Huffington Post

Realistically, the president and his advisers know a bill wouldn't go far. They also know Hispanic voters are critical to the president's re-election. Latinos accounted for more than 7 percent of voters in the 2008 presidential election, according to the Pew Hispanic Center, and their numbers are greater in certain swing states like Nevada, New Mexico, Colorado and Florida. Huffington Post

Obama's decision to abandon the legislative track for the public relations one is a bow to political

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realities. The president wasn't even able to get legislation through Congress last year that would have provided a route to legal status for college students and others who were brought to the country as children. The so-called DREAM Act passed the House, then controlled by Democrats, but was blocked by Senate Republicans. Forbes

The Senate is now even more heavily Republican, and Republicans control the House. That means immigration reform can't happen unless they cooperate. Nonetheless, Senate Democrats plan to reintroduce the DREAM Act on Wednesday, with their counterparts in the House following suit. Given Republican opposition the bills likely won't get far, but Obama will try to make certain voters know who to blame. Presstelegram

The push comes as many Latino voters, believing that the president never made good on his campaign promise to tackle immigration laws in the first year of his presidency, want to see him do more. They want Obama not just to push legislation but to act unilaterally to slow some deportations, something he has refused to do. Huffington Post

FACTS & FIGURES

The Obama administration has deported more illegal immigrants from the U.S. than ever before. NPR

Undocumented workers are willing to work for lower wages and minimal or no benefits, therefore enabling employers to make higher business profits. usliberals.about.com

Employers often threaten undocumented immigrants with deportation, thus these workers cannot effectively assert their rights in the workplace. Alternet.org

According to a study by the Cato Institute, a free market think tank, legalization of low-skilled illegal resident workers in the U.S. would result in a net increase in U.S. GDP of \$180 billion over 10 years. Newsweek

Mass deportation of undocumented immigrants would cost the United States \$285 billion. thinkprogress.org

An estimated 11 million to 12 million undocumented immigrants live and work in the United States, roughly one in every 20 workers. Reuters

More than 80% of U.S. immigrant detainees were held in facilities that were isolated and beyond the reach of legal aid organizations. blog.altoarizona.com

More than half of the detention facilities did not offer detainees information about their rights. blog.altoarizona.com

Undocumented immigrants facing deportation proceedings have no guaranteed right to a lawyer. blog.altoarizona.com

Detainees often find themselves transferred to facilities far from their homes, families and friends. blog.altoarizona.com

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