



Hispanic Caucus: Goodlatte bill is the 'mass deportation act'

Rafael Bernal

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The Congressional Hispanic Caucus (CHC) slammed a House Republican immigration proposal Tuesday as conservatives in the chamber pushed leadership to support the bill.

CHC Chairwoman Rep. Michelle Lujan Grisham (D-N.M.) called the proposal — officially known as the Securing America's Future Act and colloquially as the Goodlatte bill, after sponsor Rep. Bob Goodlatte (R-Va.) — the "Mass Deportation Act."

"The Mass Deportation Act is a farce of a bill," Lujan Grisham said in a statement. "The bill undermines local law enforcement, it hurts farmers, hurts families, guts legal immigration; and aims to rip apart communities through mass deportation, while only providing Dreamers with temporary protections and no pathway to citizenship."

The bill has received support from conservatives in the Republican conference and House Republican leadership, bolstered by its powerful co-authors, Reps. Bob Goodlatte (R-Va.), Michael McCaul (R-Texas), Raúl Labrador (R-Idaho) and Martha McSally (R-Ariz.).

"Instead of supporting the numerous introduced bipartisan bills that reflect our shared values, House Republican Leaders and this Administration are more interested in pushing partisan, poison-pill legislation that sabotage efforts toward sensible, meaningful legislative protections for Dreamers," said Lujan Grisham.

"If Speaker [Paul] Ryan [R-Wis.] is serious about getting the 218 votes he needs to pass critical legislation for Dreamers, then he must support truly bipartisan legislation," she added.

The White House has also suggested it will support the bill, which contains many of the administration's published principles on immigration.

"I believe that it addresses the principles that we laid out and is something that we would support," said White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders Tuesday.

But it's alienated moderates in the Republican party and infuriated both parties' original proponents of a Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) fix.

Rep. Scott Taylor (R-Va.) told The Hill earlier this month that the bill was too conservative to have a realistic chance at becoming law.

And Rep. Carlos Curbelo (R-Fla.), the leading Republican proponent of immigration reform, panned the Goodlatte proposal, saying it "reads as if it was drafted by [former presidential advisor] Steve Bannon."

Lujan Grisham pointed out that, unlike other proposals in the House and Senate, the Goodlatte bill does not have any bipartisan support.

"This deeply partisan, anti-immigrant bill was written by a group of Republicans with no bipartisan input or support," she said.

Under Goodlatte's proposal, existing recipients of DACA benefits would be eligible for a three-year, renewable permit to live and work in the United States.

Other so-called Dreamers — immigrants who arrived in the country illegally as minors — would not be eligible for the permit, even if they were otherwise eligible for DACA but had not turned 16 by Sept. 5, 2017, when President Trump canceled the program.

The limited benefits for existing DACA recipients contrast with most other DACA replacement proposals, which provide permanent benefits with a special path to citizenship to a wider range of Dreamers.

The Goodlatte bill allows recipients of its temporary permits to seek existing paths to citizenship, such as employment-based permanent residency — an expensive and time-consuming proposition.

In exchange for temporary protections for DACA recipients, the Goodlatte bill would impose a slew of border protection and interior enforcement measures, as well as cuts to legal immigration.

The Cato Institute called the bill's proposal to cut immigration by 25 percent "by far the worst aspect of the SAF Act."