

## Timing 'not right' for immigration reform, experts say

Catherine Brzycki

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WASHINGTON -- In an effort to keep immigration in the headlines, thousands are expected to march at the National Mall on Tuesday for what's being billed as a day for human dignity and respect. House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi is also pushing to keep the issue in the headlines, introducing a new version of immigration reform legislation.

Immigration reform groups believe Tuesday's rally will be the "exclamation mark" for other marches that have taken place nationwide in recent days.

Immigration reform has stalled in House of Representative after its passage in the Senate earlier this year, overshadowed by Syria, the health care law and, now, the government shutdown and pending fiscal fights.

But some Democrats are pushing to keep immigration reform on the 2013 calendar and say delaying the passage of immigration reform would be a mistake.

"It's a political scheme to try and ramp up pressure on Republicans in the House to act on an amnesty push," said Dan Holler, communications director for Heritage Action for America, a conservative policy organization. "Any immigration plan that includes amnesty is going to be a nonstarter."

Alex Nowrasteh, an Immigration Policy Analyst at the libertarian Cato Institute, said the timing doesn't seem right for reform to resurface because of the more immediate need to deal with the government shutdown, federal budget approval and debt ceiling deadline.

"The immigration delay is mostly a case of bad timing, but a small amount of it is Republicans trying to throw up roadblocks," said Nowrasteh.

But Jill Wilson, a research analyst at the liberal-leaning Brookings Institution, said the issue of immigration reform will not go away.

"This year has been the biggest push and the strongest support we've seen yet," said Wilson. "There are still signs of hope that we will get something done, possibly this year."

House GOP leaders have said they will take a step-by-step approach to reform, unlike the comprehensive Senate bill.

Similar to the bill that passed in the Senate earlier this year, Pelosi's plan would create a pathway to citizenship for millions of undocumented immigrants living in the United States.

Pelosi's legislation replaces the Senate's border security plan with another bipartisan amendment that already passed unanimously through the House Homeland Security Committee.

The Senate bill proposes a \$38 billion border amendment to add more than 700 miles of fencing along the U.S.-Mexico border and double the number of agents patrolling the border. The new legislation asks the Obama administration to create a different border security plan that would decrease 90 percent of attempted illegal crossings within five years. The new amendment does not say how this should be done.

Nowrasteh said the current Senate-passed bill is a step in the right direction, but it's not perfect.

"Enforcement provisions in the Senate bill go way too far and spend too much money on provisions that will be largely ineffective going forward."

At least 84 Republicans in the House are in favor of the current reform legislation and at least another 20 members could be swayed in the direction of reform, according to Nowrasteh. But not everyone is convinced.

"The system really does need to be reformed," said Dan Holler of Heritage Action for America. "I'm pretty certain if you took the amnesty away, you could figure out how to rework the immigration system and have reform."

Despite nationwide grassroots efforts to bring immigration back to the forefront, Holler agrees the timing isn't right.

"I have a hard time seeing how they bring it back up this year. I don't know if there is an appetite for it amongst folks in the House."

The reform rally on the National Mall will feature a concert and a march. Events start at 12:30 p.m. Tuesday.