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Boehner Leaves Open a Vote on ‘Enlist Act’ Immigration Measure

By [Kristina Peterson](#)

House Speaker **John Boehner** (R., Ohio) left the door open Tuesday to a future vote on an immigration proposal to let people brought to the U.S. illegally as children gain legal permanent residence after serving in the military.

On Friday, a spokesman for House Majority Leader [Eric Cantor](#) (R., Va.) said that the bill from Rep. **Jeff Denham** (R., Calif.) [would not be considered as an amendment](#) to the annual defense policy bill, despite the fact that Messrs. Cantor and Boehner support it.

“We have supported it in the past, but trying to do this on the national defense authorization bill seemed to us to be an inappropriate place to do it,” Mr. Boehner told reporters Tuesday morning. When asked if he might permit a vote on Mr. Denham’s bill as a standalone measure, Mr. Boehner said there had been “discussions about that, but no decisions.”

Mr. Denham filed his bill, known as the Enlist Act, as an amendment to the defense bill on Monday, saying it amounted to a change to “military code, not immigration law.” The House Rules Committee is expected to formally announce which amendments will be considered to the defense bill later Tuesday.

“The ENLIST Act provides an avenue for those who want to perform the ultimate act of patriotism – serving their country – to earn legal status,” Mr. Denham said in a statement Monday. “As a veteran, I can think of no better way to demonstrate your commitment to our nation.” The lawmaker tried to get the legislation included in last year’s defense bill, but agreed to withdraw his amendment amid complaints from other Republicans.

Whether the House tries to overhaul immigration laws later this year will depend on the level of trust between Republicans and President [Barack Obama](#), Mr. Boehner said Tuesday.

“Until the president gives us some reason, some confidence that we can trust him to implement an immigration reform bill, we don’t have much to talk about,” Mr. Boehner said.

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