

Boehner unsure on immigration vote

By Russell Berman - 02/04/14 02:26 PM EST

House Republican leaders have not decided whether to bring immigration legislation up for a vote in 2014 following their presentation of draft principles to members, Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio) said Tuesday.

Members seemed to be “supportive” of the principles, which called for offering legal status to immigrants in the U.S. illegally, who met certain requirements and after unspecified “enforcement triggers” were met on border and interior security, Boehner said.

But, he added, “there was a lot of discussion about whether we should proceed, if we proceeded, how we would proceed.”

“It’s also clear from our members that we believe that securing our border has to be the first step in this process,” Boehner said.

Many conservatives have raised concerns about tackling immigration reform in an election year and passing a new law they do not trust the Obama administration to adequately enforce.

Inside a closed-door conference meeting Tuesday morning, Boehner briefly mentioned immigration reform and directed members to a comparison his office published of the House GOP principles to those in the comprehensive bill that passed the Senate in June, which he has ruled out.

He told reporters the discussions about the principles would continue and that “no decisions have been made.”

Rep. Raúl Labrador (R-Idaho), a conservative who negotiated with Democrats on immigration for several months last year, said he doubted anything would get done in 2014, citing the party’s lack of trust in President Obama.

Within the Republican conference, Labrador said, about two-thirds of members did not want to move forward on the issue. About half of them, he posited, were conservatives who opposed immigration reform on principle, and the other half supported the principles but did not believe now was the right time.

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