

DREAMers Have a New Dream

Legal status for young people isn't enough anymore for children of immigrants

By [Lauren Fox](#)

October 22, 2013

Holding hands, the immigrants asked for one thing — a vote on the House floor on a comprehensive immigration reform bill

But scattered throughout the crowd, the DREAMers, the young people who had been brought to the U.S. illegally as children, wanted more than a White House promise that they could have legal status for themselves. They wanted to ensure their parents were part of that promise too.

"They are who they are because of their parents so they want to fight for their parents as well," says Michele Rudy, who came as an ally on the trip and works in an after school program with many teens who came to the country illegally as children. "There has been a big shift in the dream movement."

The movement has progressed wildly in just three years. Flashback to 2010 when DREAMers were handed a major loss after five Senate Democrats voted 'no' and spelled the end for the DREAM Act, which would have granted legal status to those who were brought to the country illegally as children. During the summer of 2012, the White House issued an executive order to give youth who entered the country illegally as children, a chance to stay in the U.S.

Now, they want more.

"Our parents cannot wait," says Reyna Montoya, a DREAMer whose father was put into deportation proceedings last year. "We have been able to get our stories out. It is time for our parents to get their stories out that they are not what some think they are. They are hardworking individuals. We are not asking for something to be handed to us. We are working for it."

Reyna and three dozen activists traveled to meet with Boehner, but said they did not have a scheduled appointment. A spokesman from Boehner's office said the speaker was busy Tuesday, but said she would be happy to bring any messages to the speaker. The group included Kathleen Velazquez, a U.S. citizen, whose husband has been held in deportation for the last year.

"Every minute they are separating families," Velazquez says, her baby Aaron dangling in her arm in the Longworth Building hallway.

Since the Senate passed its comprehensive immigration bill in June, the House of Representatives has moved slowly on a series of piecemeal bills to strengthen the border and

even provide young Latinos with a chance at legalization. But while the Senate passed a bill that includes a path to citizenship for the country's 11 million immigrants who entered the country illegally, the House remains stuck on the question of whether or not to put adult immigrants who entered the country illegally, on a path to citizenship.

For the first time, House Judiciary Committee Chairman Bob Goodlatte, R-Va., and Majority Leader Eric Cantor, R-Va., have said they are open to introducing something like the DREAM Act marking major progress for the Republican party, which had been largely opposed to the bill just three years ago.

Dan Judy, a Republican pollster at North Star Opinion Research, says the Cantor plan strikes the right balance for the GOP, which must walk a fine line with immigration reform. While many want to court Latino voters on the national scale, Republicans in the House of Representatives must be careful not to alienate their constituencies.

"The Dream Act shows very broad support, but when you talk about allowing those children's parents to stay in the country, independents are split and Republicans are strongly opposed," Judy says.

"That is a bridge too far for a lot of lawmakers."

But a DREAM Act is too little too late, according to many young Latinos who have watched their families torn apart.

"It isn't just for us, it has to be for the whole community," says Karen Magana, whose brother was deported back to Mexico 10 years ago. "As long as people can get a green card, just so they can be here and live without fear."

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