

GOP lawmakers plan to pass portion of immigration reform

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Hope surfaces for reforms to get going this year.

By Deepak Chitnis

WASHINGTON, DC: Although all indications over the past few weeks have been that immigration reform is essentially dead for 2014, GOP lawmakers may be trying to get at least a portion of it pushed through Congress in the near future.

Republicans in the House of Representatives, led by Rep. Jeff Denham of California, are reportedly keen to add (some would say “sneak”) text to the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), which would allow DREAMer children to become fully naturalized citizens of the US if they enlist to serve in the Armed Forces.

This a substantial development, as the GOP has been reticent to allow any measure that would provide a path to citizenship for illegal immigrants and their children, which is what the DREAMer movement consists of, but the measure is far from passed.

The NDAA is set to come to a vote in the House next month, with House Judiciary Committee Chairman Bob Goodlatte telling Breitbart.com that members of Congress are working on it. Goodlatte dismissed the same tactic last year, but is apparently more open to it now. Those supporting the comprehensive immigration reform bill, which passed through the Senate last summer before stalling in the House, applaud Denham’s initiative to get the “Enlist Act” passed, but Denham’s fellow Republicans aren’t happy about it.

The GOP at large has likened the measure to basically rewarding illegal immigrants for breaking US laws to enter the country. There is also, many say, the issue of trusting someone who came to this country illegally with the task of defending it honorably on the front lines of battle. Democrats say that, despite their admiration for the initiative, it’s basically a non-factor. At the end of the day, comprehensive reform is about far bigger issues than this one, which Rep. Mario Diaz-Balart told Breitbart is “non-controversial.”

The news of the Republican move to allow DREAMers a path to citizenship comes right on the heels of a Democrat initiative to spur immigration reform by sneaking it into the GOP budget proposal was shot down. Democrats hoped to get funding for immigration reform passed as part of the House Budget Committee’s proposal, but lawmakers voted along party lines and got it dismissed almost immediately.

Paul Ryan (R-WI), who was leading the budget bill, said flat-out that he would not support funding immigration reform because the majority of the House still does not like the Senate

version that passed last year. Democrats – including Rep. Tony Cardenas (D-CA), who introduced the amendment – implored his colleagues to approve it, saying that it would create more than 100,000 jobs and reduce the current debt by \$900 billion.

For now, the NDAA text is still being developed, and no firm language for the proposal has been set yet. Denham, who was one of the first Republicans to voice his support for an immigration reform bill that, at least in most ways, mirrored the one passed by the Senate last year, is reportedly close with GOP Whip Kevin McCarthy, and has attracted several powerful party leaders to support his Enlist Act movement.

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