

House Democrats press for immigration vote

By [SEUNG MIN KIM](#) | 3/24/14 1:54 PM EDT

House Democrats plan to launch a discharge petition on Wednesday in a long-shot effort to force a floor vote on immigration reform – their latest move to pressure Republicans to advance an overhaul this year.

Already this year, Democrats have tried the procedural gambit to compel votes on raising the federal minimum wage and extending unemployment insurance that have so far failed to attract GOP support. And the third time likely won't be the charm for House Democrats – successful petitions are notoriously rare. A member of the majority party signing onto a discharge effort is considered a significant breach of party loyalty.

Still, the strategy brings more attention to comprehensive immigration reform, an issue that House Republicans are letting fade from the spotlight. As the prospects of reform in the House have dimmed, attention from Democratic lawmakers and immigrant advocates has turned to President Barack Obama to do some sort of administrative action that would slow the rate of deportations of undocumented immigrants.

The discharge petition will be filed on a House bill that largely mirrors the legislation written by the Senate Gang of Eight that passed that chamber last June, according to a senior House Democratic aide. Democrats will mark the launch with an event on the steps at the East Front of the Capitol on Wednesday morning.

And Democrats are hoping to spread the pressure outside Washington. The New Democrat Coalition, a group of center-left House Democrats who have taken up immigration reform as a key issue, will be working with FWD.us to host press events in key districts to promote reform and the discharge petition effort. FWD.us is the advocacy group backed by Facebook CEO and founder Mark Zuckerberg.

“We'll be driving home the case that comprehensive reform is good for the economy, lowers the deficit, and helps our most innovative tech companies succeed in the global marketplace,” another House Democratic aide involved in the effort said.

The legislation has three Republican co-sponsors – California Reps. Jeff Denham and David Valadao, and Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen of Florida – but all [three lawmakers have indicated separately](#) that they won't sign a discharge petition on the bill.

Read more: <http://www.politico.com/story/2014/03/immigration-reform-vote-house-democrats-104947.html>