

House group agrees on immigration reform

[CNN Senior Congressional Producer Deirdre Walsh](#)

Washington (CNN) - After months of intense negotiations, a bipartisan U.S. House group has reached an "agreement in principle" on immigration reform, according to Rep. Mario Diaz-Balart of Florida, one of the GOP members of the group.

A Democratic aide familiar with the discussions confirmed that all the members signed on and told CNN both Democrats and Republicans "will now run the whole package past their respective leadership and colleagues" and aim to formally introduce legislation at the beginning of June.

Diaz-Balart declined to get into the details of the deal, but said, "there's going to be a lot of differences in a lot of areas," from a bipartisan measure working its way through the Senate.

"Filing a real bipartisan bill – a serious, enforceable commonsense bill is, I think, a huge step. But it's the first step of the process ... a very important step," Diaz-Balart told reporters outside the House floor Thursday.

The four Republican members of the House group include Diaz-Balart, Rep. Raul Labrador of Idaho, and Rep. John Carter and Rep. Sam Johnson, both of Texas.

The four Democrats are Reps. Xavier Becerra and Zoe Lofgren, both of California, Rep. Luis Gutierrez of Illinois, and Rep. John Yarmuth of Kentucky.

Carter told reporters earlier on Thursday that the last sticking point involved whether the 11 million undocumented immigrants in the United States would get access to government health care benefits. It's unclear how the group resolved that issue.

Carter also said that because Republican and Democratic negotiators were unable to come to an agreement on a program overseeing guest workers, the group decided to leave that issue out of the bill. But both planned to offer their proposals separately, likely as amendments to the main legislation.

Both sides differed on how many worker visas should be allowed for construction companies and other industries relying on low skilled labor workers.

House Speaker John Boehner pledged that any immigration bill would move through the appropriate committees in the House before any vote by the full chamber.

A key test for the bipartisan deal will come when the House Judiciary Committee takes it up, because that panel includes a significant number of conservatives, who have pledged to block any measure that allows a path to citizenship for undocumented workers.

Boehner signaled he wanted the House to have its own version to negotiate a final immigration bill with the Democratic-led Senate.

"I continue to believe that the House needs to deal with this and the House needs to work its will," Boehner said on Thursday.

The Senate plan is now being considered by the Judiciary Committee.

<http://politicalticker.blogs.cnn.com/2013/05/16/breaking-house-reaches-immigration-agreement>