

## **WALL STREET JOURNAL**

### **Immigration Legislation Gains Traction**

**By Laura Meckler**

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The effort to pass comprehensive immigration legislation gained some traction Tuesday, as congressional leaders discussed a path to passing the bill this year and President Barack Obama wooed Republican Sen. Scott Brown to support it.

Conventional wisdom has been that the issue is too volatile for action in an election year, and that other matters would take priority. But immigration advocacy groups have been pressing hard for action.

At a Capitol Hill meeting Tuesday, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid told House Speaker Nancy Pelosi that he was committed to bringing the legislation to the floor this year, according to one Democratic leadership aide. The aide said that Ms. Pelosi committed to bringing the bill to the floor if it passed the Senate.

A second leadership aide familiar with the meeting said Ms. Pelosi spoke about the importance of the legislation and agreed to try to advance the measure.

Sens. Chuck Schumer (D, N.Y.) and Lindsey Graham (R, S.C.) have released a blueprint for legislation that includes a path to citizenship for those here illegally. The blueprint also calls for a guest worker program and for controls aimed at stopping the flow of future illegal immigrants.

But Mr. Graham has said he doesn't want to introduce it without at least one more Republican co-sponsor. At an Oval Office meeting last month, Mr. Obama promised to help find another.

He appeared to be making good on his promise on Tuesday, when he called Sen. Brown from Air Force One Tuesday to pitch the legislation.

Sen. Brown said in an interview Tuesday that the president was giving him a heads up that immigration was coming "down the pike" in about a month, and he should give it some serious thought. That's a quicker timetable than most have expected, but it may have been the president's way to trying to convey momentum for the issue.

"I told him I have an open mind," Mr. Brown said. "I will read anything."

He later added that he wasn't committing to support the measure. "When I said I have an open mind, it means I have an open mind to read the bill," Mr. Brown said. "That

doesn't mean that I will vote for granting amnesty to anyone. But I want to be respectful to the president and to any member who brings me a proposal."

The White House reiterated the president's support for the measure. "We're obviously in consultation with both Republicans and Democrats to find a bipartisan solution to what is a very large problem, and one that we think will be addressed very soon," spokesman Bill Burton said.

Democratic commitment to advancing an immigration bill this year was in doubt, given the number of other issues on the agenda. Those include passing new regulations for the financial services industry and nominating a Supreme Court justice.

Meantime, a one-time backer of an immigration-law overhaul continued to distance himself from it. Sen. John McCain, facing a tough Republican primary in Arizona, cosponsored an immigration measure in 2007. On Tuesday, he suggested that Senate Republicans should block the Schumer-Graham bill until U.S. borders are secure, according to an account in *The Hill*, a publication that covers Capitol Hill.

"I believe that we can convince our Republican colleagues that we have to secure the border first," Mr. McCain said during an appearance on KFYI radio in Arizona, according to *The Hill*. "There's no point of having immigration reform unless you can have the borders secure first."

This week, Mr. McCain and Sen. Jon Kyl (R., Ariz.) proposed a 10-point plan for boosting border security.

McCain spokeswoman Brooke Buchanan noted in an interview that while running for president, Sen. McCain repeatedly said the borders must be secured before other changes are enacted.