

Axelrod: Immigration reform coming 'early' in Obama's agenda

By Lisa Mascaro

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WASHINGTON -- While fiscal battles have dominated discussions of [President Obama](#)'s second term, a top advisor said Monday that the president will push forward with immigration reform early on -- possibly as soon as the State of the Union speech in three weeks.

Speaking shortly after the inauguration ceremony, senior advisor [David Axelrod](#) suggested Obama carries the goodwill of the American public with him as he sets out on his second term.

"I think the country likes this president. I think they support this president. Now he has four years to finish the work he's begun," Axelrod told reporters as he walked through the halls at the Capitol. "We've got a foundation on which to build and he has a chance to build on it."

Axelrod suggested congressional [Republicans](#) should reconsider their opposition to the president's agenda, as polls show Americans have grown tired of the cycle of brinkmanship.

Several top [Republicans panned Obama's inauguration speech](#) on Monday, suggesting Obama did not signal a willingness to reach across the aisle to find common ground on issues. Arizona Sen. [John McCain](#) of Arizona, a former Republican presidential nominee, was among those lobbing a note of criticism.

"Really? I'm surprised because Sen. McCain is usually so receptive to what the president has to say," Axelrod said, in a sarcastic reference to the 2008 combatants' routine disagreement.

The longtime Obama advisor defended the president's approach.

"I think he did reach out in the sense that he made the point that we always have achieved what we achieved as a country by working together and we have to work together now," Axelrod said. "You hear in the speech what you want to, I suppose. But I don't believe that it was a particularly political speech. I think it was a speech about the values and principles that should unite us -- and I hope they do."

Axelrod declined to prioritize the top few issues on the president's agenda, but suggested immigration is gaining in importance as the budget battles consume the early months ahead.

"I expect you're going to see immigration surface early in the year," he said. "We have certain immutable deadlines relative to the fiscal discussion, but I do believe he's going to move quickly on immigration as well -- he's got a State of the Union in three weeks."

So perhaps an immigration message at that time?

"Early means early."

<http://www.latimes.com/news/politics/la-pn-axelrod-immigration-reform-coming-early-in-obamas-agenda-20130121,0,2596253.story>