

Key Democrat: ‘Shame On’ Obama, Dems, GOP for Failing on Immigration

By JORDAN FABIAN - 11/11/2013, 05:39PM / Updated 11/11/2013, 06:44PM

A chief Democratic proponent of immigration reform said Monday that both political parties, and President Obama, share equal blame for not dealing with the issue.

"I think shame on all of us," Rep. Luis Gutiérrez (Ill.) said during an interview with Fusion's Jorge Ramos.

President Obama said he would bring up immigration reform during his first year in office. That never happened. But after a bipartisan bill backed by Obama passed the Democratic Senate this year, the Republican-controlled House deemed it dead on arrival.

"The Democrats had a majority in 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010. We had the presidency and we had the Senate. And the president made a promise," he added. "We didn't do anything. Shame on Republicans for following in that tradition of doing nothing at this particular point."

Gutiérrez has grown impatient with the partisan gridlock holding up immigration reform in Congress. He wants President Obama to take unilateral action to suspend deportations of many undocumented immigrants.

Specifically, he wants Obama's Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program expanded to cover the parents of undocumented immigrants and others who could receive relief under the Senate's bill.

"If you see illness, if you see harm, I think it is the responsibility of the executive branch of government—given the inaction of the legislative branch—to expand DACA to the parents of the DREAMers, to expand DACA to American-citizen children whose parents are in fear of being [deported]," Gutiérrez said.

Obama has said multiple times that he would not take executive action to expand DACA. He enacted the program in 2012 to stop deportations of young undocumented immigrants seeking higher education or employment.

Gutiérrez doesn't buy the White House line.

"There is much more the president can do about deportation," he said. "If the Republican Party is going to continue to persist in refusing to enact comprehensive immigration reform], then I think the president has a moral challenge before him to take this matter into his own hands."

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