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# **Speaker ‘Confident’ of Deal With White House on Immigration**

**By JENNIFER STEINHAUER**

WASHINGTON — Fresh off an election in which Hispanic voters largely sided with Democrats, Speaker John A. Boehner said Thursday that he was “confident” Congress and the White House could come up with a comprehensive immigration solution.

Immigration reform is “an important issue that I think ought to be dealt with,” Mr. Boehner, an Ohio Republican, said in an interview with Diane Sawyer on “ABC World News.”

“This issue has been around far too long,” he said, “and while I believe it’s important for us to secure our borders and to enforce our laws, I think a comprehensive approach is long overdue, and I’m confident that the president, myself, others, can find the common ground to take care of this issue once and for all.”

The words conveyed a new sense of urgency from Mr. Boehner, who said earlier this year that he thought it would be politically impossible to tackle a Republican proposal on the Dream Act, which sought to open a path to citizenship for some students in the United States illegally.

According to exit polls by Edison Research, President Obama won 71 percent of the Hispanic vote compared with Mitt Romney’s 27 percent, a gap greater than Mr. Obama’s 36-point advantage with those voters over John McCain in 2008.

Though Mr. Boehner did not elaborate on his ideas, nor give a time frame, many lawmakers want to tackle immigration legislation in the next session of Congress. The lame-duck session starting next week will be devoted to dealing with pressing tax and deficit issues.

Mr. Boehner’s comments caught the attention of Senate Democrats.

“This is a breakthrough to have the speaker endorse the urgency of comprehensive immigration reform,” said Senator Charles E. Schumer of New York in a statement. “Democrats in the Senate look forward to working with him to come up with a bipartisan solution.”

Just seven months ago, when Senator Marco Rubio, Republican of Florida, first floated his compromise version of the Dream Act, Mr. Boehner called the idea “difficult at best” to take up in the House, saying “the problem with this issue is that we are operating in a very hostile political environment.”

But, after the election, Republicans could be more open to taking their cues from Mr. Rubio, whom many see as their best hope for helping to expand their voter base and guide the way on immigration.

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