



Written by [Jack Kenny](#) on July 30, 2014

Dems, GOP Trade Barbs on Immigration and Impeachment

Whether the impeachment of President Obama is “on the table,” “off the table” or under the table is a matter hotly disputed these days by Democrats and Republicans, as each side jockeys for position on the volatile issue of illegal immigration between now and the fall elections. Ironically, say the Republicans, it is the Democrats who are talking up impeachment.



“You know, this might be the first White House in history that’s trying to start the narrative of impeaching their own president,” House Majority Whip Steve Scalise (R-La.) said on this week’s *Fox News Sunday*. Dan Pfeiffer, Obama’s deputy communications director, linked impeachment to immigration when speaking with the *Christian Science Monitor* last Friday, telling the editorial board the president plans to take “very significant” executive action regarding the immigration laws. Obama has promised to act “on my own, without Congress” to implement immigration reform measures in Senate-passed bill that has been stalled in the House for over a year.

“The president acting on immigration reform will certainly up the likelihood that [Republicans] would contemplate impeachment at some point,” said Pfeiffer, claiming that House Speaker John Boehner has opened the door to an impeachment effort with plans to bring suit against the president over executive orders delaying provisions of ObamaCare.

“This is a fundraising exercise for Democrats,” said Boehner spokesman Michael Steel in an e-mail response to Pfeiffer’s impeachment comments. “It is telling, and sad, that a senior White House official is focused on political games, rather than helping these kids and securing the border,” Steel added, referring to the thousands of unaccompanied children who have crossed the border into Texas. But after the House Rules Committee authorized the lawsuit in a partisan 7-4 vote last Thursday, Michelle Obama uttered the “I-word” in a fundraising speech in Chicago.

“If we lose these midterm elections,” the First Lady warned, “it’s going to be a whole lot harder to finish what we started because we’ll just see more of the same out in Washington — more obstructions, more lawsuits, and talk about impeachment.” The message appears to have been coordinated by the White House, as House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi sent out an e-mail Friday night, telling Democratic supporters: “Yesterday, for the first time in history, Congress voted to sue a sitting president. Today,



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the White House alerted us that they believe ‘Speaker Boehner ... has opened the door to impeachment.’” The Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee joined the chorus with a melodramatic e-mail announcing a “RED ALERT.”

“The White House just announced that they believe John Boehner’s lawsuit could lead to the impeachment of President Barack Obama,” the message said. “We are now on full RED ALERT at Democratic Headquarters. We are scrambling to defend the President in every way we can at this critical moment.” And when Scalise would not say definitively in his Fox News interview that impeachment is “off the table,” DCCC Chairman Steve Israel declared, “Scalise just made it clear that impeachment is absolutely on the table for House Republicans.”

If the Obama presidency is in danger, it is not from the likelihood of impeachment. With Boehner and the party leadership against it, the chances are remote that House Republicans would provide the 218 votes needed to impeach. And while Republicans, who now hold 45 of the Senate’s 100 seats, might win a majority in November, they would still fall well shy of the 2/3 needed to remove an impeached president from office. Republicans were able to muster only 50 votes to remove President Clinton from office in 1999, when they held 55 Senate seats. And many Republicans are still mindful of the fact that the impeachment of Clinton turned out to be unpopular with an American public weary of all the controversy arising from the president’s sex scandals.

Still, former Republican vice presidential candidate Sarah Palin said in a Facebook posting earlier this month that Obama should be impeached if he tries to implement immigration reform without congressional authority. Rep. Steve King (R-Iowa) said the same over the past weekend in an interview on *Breitbart News Saturday*. If the president takes unilateral action, “we need to bring impeachment hearings immediately before the House of Representatives,” King said. “That’s my position and that’s my prediction.”

House Republicans could vote to overturn any executive order not based on the president’s constitutional authority, or forbid the expenditure of public funds to carry it out. Either action would almost certainly be voted down by the Democratic Senate, however, or vetoed by the president if it somehow passed. But just as Obama and the Democrats plan to use the immigration issue to rally support from reform-minded Latino and Hispanic supporters, Republican efforts to thwart Obama’s plans should play well with conservative voters.

“In addition, a targeted move to overturn an executive order on immigration — an order which could, according to some reports, involve the president unilaterally granting legal status to a large portion of the estimated 11 million immigrants in the country illegally — would put some red-state Democrats in a tough position with the November midterms approaching,” chief political correspondent Byron York wrote in Monday’s *Washington Examiner*. “Lawmakers who would find it easy to reject the extreme option of impeaching the president might have a more difficult time defending an executive order that many of their constituents oppose.”



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