



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on May 8, 2012

Rubio Defends His Immigration Bill

Florida's Tea Party Senator Marco Rubio has unveiled his own version of Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid's Dream Act, and has [defended](#) it as a humanitarian bill. According to Rubio, his bill is not a form of amnesty, but would use the current immigration system to address what he has dubbed a "humanitarian issue."



Rubio's bill would permit the children of undocumented immigrants to receive visas if they are attending college or if they are serving in the military. After that, those children would have to apply for permanent residency through the traditional immigration process.

Reid's Dream Act would have created a pathway to permanent residency and even citizenship. The only stipulations of the Act were that the illegal immigrant must have entered the United States prior to his or her sixteenth birthday, and must have been a resident for five years before enactment of the law.

"We don't create any special pathways," the Florida Republican senator said on *Fox News Sunday*.

Still, Rubio's proposal may be a tough sell to his Republican colleagues, or his Tea Party base, who have not entirely embraced his proposal.

"It's an amnesty bill — it rewards lawbreaking," said Bob Dane, spokesman for the Federation for American Immigration Reform. "Rubio is marching off into McCain-land" —referring to Arizona Senator John McCain, who has garnered a pro-amnesty reputation.

"Whatever support he's going to pick up from Hispanics is probably going to be far outweighed by what he loses from his conservative base," he said.

But Rubio has attempted to assuage the concerns of his colleagues by asserting his proposal would work within the existing immigration system, while simultaneously addressing the children of illegal immigrants whom it is meant to help.

"Their parents put them in this predicament," he said.

Despite Rubio's appeal to the humanitarian spirit of his colleagues, not all Hispanic activists are on board with his proposal.

"It makes a very limited offer to a small segment of the population," said Rodolfo de la Garza, a Columbia University political scientist who specializes in Hispanic voters. "I think what most Latinos are going to pick up on is what I have to characterize as either a political ploy or profound disingenuousness to the point of deceit on Rubio's part."

He called the DREAM Act "the one issue on which there is a clear Latino position — they are 75-80 percent in favor of it in numerous polls."

Rubio's spokesman Alex Conant called Garza's assertions "nonsense."



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Rubio has found support in some of his fellow Congressmen, however, including fellow Florida Senator Bill Nelson, who has stated he is “open” to the immigration plan set forth by Rubio.

“If that’s the only thing we can pass, then I’m certainly open to it,” he said. “But that’s not going to solve the problem because once the child — or now-grown student — gets through, what’s going to happen to them? Are they going to sit here in legal limbo? Are they going to have to go back to their country of origin and get in line to then come back? Well, at that point they think of themselves as American.”

House Speaker John Boehner has indicated that it would be rather difficult for Congress to take on Rubio’s immigration bill this year, however. According to Boehner, the current political climate is already a hostile one, and to take on an issue as divisive as immigration would be tough.

“I found it of interest, but the problem with this issue is you’re operating in a very hostile political environment. And to deal with a very difficult issue like this, I think it would be difficult at best,” Boehner, (R-Ohio) [said](#).

Some analysts have agreed.

“It’s a significant risk,” said retired University of South Florida political scientist Darryl Paulson, a Republican. “The primary thing any political candidate wants to do is solidify his base, and this could fracture that base.”

Rubio has been considered a likely choice for the vice presidential candidacy if Mitt Romney secures the GOP nomination. *Washington Post* columnist Al Kamen wrote an article last month wherein he implied that Rubio was the preferred choice of the globalist Bilderberg group, which has reportedly played a significant role in picking vice presidential candidates.

Rubio has hit the campaign trail by Romney’s side rather hard lately. For example, he is the only Senator to have embarked on last weekend’s Summit of the Americas in Cartagena, Colombia, at which Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama were also present.

“Senator Rubio has pushed to promote democracy” in the region, spokesman Alex Conant explained. “This summit is a good opportunity for Senator Rubio to discuss the importance of democracy with leaders from around the region.”

But as noted by the *Washington Post*, there may be more to Rubio’s appearance at the Summit than that. “Reminds us of a foreign jaunt made by another potential vice presidential pick back in 2004,” the *Post* reports. “That would be John Edwards.” In other words, Rubio’s trip may have less to do with his concern for promoting democracy and more to do with his own political aspirations.

Rubio also appeared beside Romney in Pennsylvania in a last minute effort to campaign before the state’s primary.

Commenting on the appearance of the Mitt Romney and Marco Rubio on Romney’s campaign trail, Yahoo News reports, “It had the looks of a running mate audition, with the two men striding together through the Mustang Expediting delivery company’s warehouse, and Romney occasionally stepping back to let Rubio handle some questions.”

While Rubio has done his best to say nothing of his own aspirations for the vice presidential position, a slip of the tongue last month may have been revealing.

“Three, four, five, six, seven years from now, if I do a good job as vice president — I’m sorry, as senator



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— I'll have the chance to do all sorts of things," he said.

But despite the presumably close relationship between Romney and Rubio, even Romney has not fully embraced Rubio's Dream Act-like proposal.

"It has many features to commend it," Romney said, "but it's something that we're studying."

Conant called Romney's reluctance "totally understandable, that he would want to see the plan's details before endorsing the plan."

Similarly, when asked about Romney's reluctance to embrace Rubio's proposal, Rubio responded that it is "impossible" to expect total acceptance from him, since the bill has not even been filed.

"We still don't have a piece of legislation with the details in it," Rubio said.

Some contend that the whole premise behind Rubio's proposal is that it would best serve Mitt Romney in the event that Rubio is chosen as Romney's running mate. Since Romney has garnered somewhat of a reputation for maintaining a tough anti-illegal immigration position during the race for the GOP nomination, Rubio's proposal could help Romney win back Hispanic voters.

According to a recent Pew Research Center survey, Obama has a commanding lead over Romney amongst the Hispanic community, 67 percent to 27 percent.

Rubio has argued, however, that Hispanic voters are not in favor of illegal immigration. According to Rubio, Hispanic voters have been hurt by President Obama's economic policies, and that Hispanic voters are focused on the economy in the next election.

Obama's record, he said, "is not a record of upward mobility."

Photo: Rubio speaking at CPAC in February 2010.



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