



Written by [Jack Kenny](#) on August 1, 2014

With Senate Gone, House Still Battles Over Border Bill

House Democrats attempted to bring back the Senate-passed bipartisan immigration reform bill for consideration Friday after Republicans deadlocked on a bill to address the current border crisis and the Senate had adjourned for its summer recess. The House remained in session after Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio) called representatives back Thursday afternoon.



“The Senate is gone. What we do today will be useless,” House Minority Whip Steny Hoyer (D-Md.) said, protesting the speaker’s decision. Nonetheless a long line of House Democrats took turns at the microphone to request that “HR 115, a bipartisan comprehensive immigration reform bill” be brought up to address the “humanitarian crisis at the border.” Rep. Tom Cole (R-Okla.), who had the floor at the time, refused to yield to the request. President Obama and congressional Democrats have repeatedly called on the Republican-controlled House to act on the bill, passed by the Senate more than a year ago, to permit the granting of legal status and a path to citizenship to millions of immigrants who are in the country illegally. That measure, Cole said, would have no effect on the current crisis on the Texas border, where an estimated 57,000 immigrants have crossed illegally since last October.

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“Frankly what has happened there would be illegal if we passed what the Senate passed,” Cole said earlier in the House debate over a Republican bill to spend \$659 million for both humanitarian aid and increased security measures in response to the border crisis. President Obama has requested \$3.7 billion and the Senate failed to pass its \$2.7-billion bill before going home on Thursday. Along with the huge difference in dollar amounts, Democrats also criticized the Republican bill for its provision for expedited hearings for the immigrants. A federal law to protect children from human traffickers guarantees a due process hearing for immigrants from countries other than Mexico or Canada. House Democrats argue the expedited hearings would strip due process rights from the immigrants, many of whom are children who have fled murderous drug gangs, rapists, and human traffickers in Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador. The Republican bill would “return these children to their death,” Rep. Tony



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Cárdenas (D-Calif.) charged.

“No one is trying to strip rights away from anyone,” said Cole, insisting that the return of illegal immigrants to their countries of origin is not a partisan issue. “The President of the United States [said] the vast majority of these people will go home,” Cole said. U.S. law, he added, allows people seeking asylum to apply for it at U.S. embassies in their own countries. “They don’t have to travel a thousand miles,” he said.

The House bill was also the subject of an internal battle among Republican members, with some conservatives demanding provisions barring further executive actions on immigration by the president, who last year announced a policy of “deferred action” against illegal immigrants who were brought here before their 16th birthday. The bill would permit an increased migration of agricultural and other low-skilled workers into the country and its passage would allow Senate Democrats to reintroduce the provisions of the comprehensive reform bill in a committee of conference, say the conservative opponents. But after Boehner pulled the bill off the table and sent the representatives home, a protest arose among House members who wanted to vote on something before going home to face constituents while the border crisis went unaddressed. Some members were already at the airport when they got word to come back.

“We’re still working. We’re gonna get this done,” House Majority Whip Steve Scalise of Louisiana told *Briart News* when asked about the likelihood of getting the needed 218 votes to pass a bill.

Numbers USA, the Federation for American Immigration Reform, and the Madison Project are among the “GOP-friendly” organizations of conservative activists opposing the bill, the *Daily Caller* reported. At a noon-hour news conference Friday, members of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus bitterly denounced both the Republican response to the border crisis and the year-long inaction by the House on the Senate’s immigration reform bill.

“The loudest, meanest voices are dominating their caucus,” said Rep. Luis Gutierrez (D-Ill.), who accused House Republicans of appealing to “the lowest common denominator of hatefulness.”

“This is an effort, no more and no less, to destroy diversity in America,” Rep. Michelle Lujan Grisham (D-N.M.) said of the bill drafted by the House leadership. Republican “immigration hawks,” unhappy with the same bill for different reasons, have vowed to fight on.

“In my judgment, a majority of the Senators and the House members of both parties are more than happy to betray America and the principles who made us who we are, first and foremost of which is the rule of law,” Rep. Mo Brooks (R-Ala.) told *The Daily Caller*. “Those of us who are fighting for hard-working families, unfortunately, we’re in a minority,” he said.



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