



Written by [Luis Miguel](#) on January 23, 2021

Biden Struggles to Find Support for Amnesty Bill Among Senate Republicans

Joe Biden's immigration agenda appears to have [hit a snag](#) due to resistance from important Senate Republicans, including some who supported similar efforts eight years ago.

While advocates of mass migration praised Biden's proposal, senior Senate aides from both parties were skeptical that it yet has a viable path, at least without major changes, to be able to win the 60 votes necessary to defeat a filibuster. That means getting at least 10 Senate Republicans on board.

Two of the Republicans who are taking issue with Biden's push to extend a path to citizenship for millions of illegal aliens are members of the 2013 Gang of Eight, which likewise would have extended mass amnesty. These are Sen. Marco Rubio (R-Fla.) and Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.).

Rubio called the Biden proposal a nonstarter. "There are many issues I think we can work cooperatively with President-elect Biden, but a blanket amnesty for people who are here unlawfully isn't going to be one of them," he said on Tuesday, a day before Biden was sworn in.

Graham, meanwhile, said he doubts Biden's plan can pass, describing it as "to the left" of the 2013 bill he helped craft, pointing to a lack of adequate provisions for enhancing border security.

The consummate opportunist, Graham leaned to the right during the Trump administration. He now says that's what most likely is a smaller deal focused on codifying the 2012 Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program created by Barack Obama.

"I think probably the space in a 50-50 Senate would be some kind of DACA deal," Graham said Thursday. "Comprehensive immigration is going to be a tough sell given this environment, but doing DACA, I think, is possible."

Biden's immigration plan would provide a path to citizenship for at least 11 million illegal aliens. The legislation would even change the word "alien" to "noncitizen" in the context of immigration law.

Additionally, the Biden immigration bill would boost visa quotas across all categories, including the diversity visa lottery quota; allow approved family visa beneficiaries to come to the United States and reside temporarily until a green card becomes available, extending residency to nearly 3.5 million people currently in the backlog; and end the three- and 10-year bans on reentering the United States legally if an applicant was previously an illegal alien.

Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) criticized Biden's plan on Thursday, panning it as "a



President Joe Biden (WhiteHouse.gov)



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massive proposal for blanket amnesty that would gut enforcement of American laws while creating huge new incentives for people to rush here illegally at the same time.”

Senator Josh Hawley (R-Mo.) said he holds “very serious concerns” about the Biden plan. He has been holding up a Senate vote to confirm Alejandro Mayorkas to be secretary of homeland security, arguing that Mayorkas should first explain how he would enforce immigration laws.

Senators Tim Scott (R-S.C.) and Ben Sasse (R-Neb.), who are considered more moderate and possibly willing to support an amnesty bill, have said they will study the plan more closely before commenting.

Moreover, a senior Democratic staffer said Republicans don’t appear to have the political appetite for a broad immigration overhaul, saying: “I don’t know where you would start to find 10.”

Democrats, meanwhile, widely praised Biden’s immigration proposal.

Representative Pramila Jayapal, (D-Wash.) called the plan “very, very strong,” but she said she wants more provisions related to detention of immigrants.

“It’s so wonderful to have a president who is finally looking at immigrants in a positive light,” she said.

In his first week in office, Biden took a [number of steps](#) to undo President Trump’s gains on immigration.

On the same day he was installed in the White House, Joe Biden halted construction of President Trump’s border wall and issued a 100-day “pause” on the deportation of illegal aliens.

“The pause will allow DHS to ensure that its resources are dedicated to responding to the most pressing challenges that the United States faces, including immediate operational challenges at the southwest border in the midst of the most serious global public health crisis in a century,” DHS said in a [statement](#).

Americans will have to put intense pressure on their senators to keep the Biden plan, or any amnesty scheme, from becoming law. Should such legislation pass, it would deal a crushing blow to conservatives’ chances at the ballot box for decades to come.



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