

# THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

## WHITE HOUSE SENDS CONGRESS PLANS FOR IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT

*Document calls for funding sufficient to 'complete construction' of southern border wall, move to detain asylum applicants*

By Laura Meckler  
October 8, 2017

WASHINGTON – The White House sent Congress an expansive set of principles that would sharply increase immigration enforcement at the border and inside the U.S. and significantly cut the number of new legal arrivals, demanding a high price for legislation under consideration to help “Dreamers.”

The documents arrive as lawmakers begin an emotional and contentious debate over whether to legalize young people brought to the U.S. illegally as children, often called Dreamers. These young migrants will lose work permits and protection from deportation starting in March under a six-month phaseout ordered by President Donald Trump.

The White House documents, sent to congressional leaders in both parties on Sunday, amount to a lengthy wish list of longstanding conservative immigration goals. White House officials told reporters that they want these to be included in any immigration deal, but stopped short of saying the White House will insist on them.

“Without these reforms, illegal immigration and chain migration, which severely and unfairly burden American workers and taxpayers, will continue without end,” Mr. Trump said in a letter to congressional leaders that outlined some 70 separate principles.

Many of these measures are nonstarters for Democrats and some Republicans and insisting on them could put the congressional effort to legalize the young immigrants into jeopardy. A White House official said the president isn’t issuing any veto threats but declined to detail which of the ideas were the highest priority, saying the administration didn’t care to negotiate with itself.

Among the principles is a call for funding sufficient to “complete construction” of a Southern border wall. The White House wants to end legal protections for unaccompanied minors who arrive without authorization and allow them to wait inside the country while their cases are considered. The administration also wants to make it harder for people to qualify for asylum and detain asylum applicants while their cases are being considered. In most cases applicants currently are allowed to live freely inside the U.S. during what can be a lengthy wait for a decision on their status.

The document also calls for punishing jurisdictions that don’t cooperate with federal immigration enforcement – so-called “sanctuary cities” – by withholding federal grant money. And it wants Congress to mandate the use of E-Verify by employers to check the immigration status of prospective workers. The system is currently voluntary.

The principles also lay out changes to the legal immigration system that Mr. Trump has already endorsed, including large cuts to green cards issued for family members and shifting existing employment-based green cards to a skills-based system.

Democrats are opposed to some of these ideas outright and don't support others unless they are part of a comprehensive package that includes a path to citizenship for almost all of the estimated 11 million people living in the U.S. illegally.

"The administration can't be serious about compromise or helping the Dreamers if they begin with a list that is anathema to the Dreamers, to the immigrant community and to the vast majority of Americans," Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D., N.Y.) and House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D., Calif.) said in a joint statement Sunday.

Last month, Mr. Trump met with the pair for dinner and, afterward, it seemed that a deal to legalize Dreamers might be at hand. All three of them suggested that they had agreed to pair protections for the young migrants with border security provisions that didn't include the proposal for a wall along the U.S. border with Mexico.

But immediately after that, many congressional Republicans said they would seek to extract more significant enforcement provisions as part of any deal. And on Sunday, a White House official said that the only agreement was that dealing with Dreamers was a priority and that they would try to come to a resolution as quickly as possible.

None of the White House goals is surprising in and of itself, with the president and his aides having articulated most if not all of them in the past, sometimes at length. But it was unexpected that the administration would suggest trading such a sweeping enforcement agenda for legalization affecting only a slice of the undocumented population.

Frank Sharry, executive director of the advocacy group America's Voice, raised the possibility that the principles reflect immigration restrictionists such as White House aide Stephen Miller more than Mr. Trump. "We will be watching to hear from the president himself," he said, suggesting the proposals may be designed as a "signal to his base that he's still a hard-liner, not a list of must-haves."

But conservatives in Congress said the proposals would bolster their case in negotiations. House Judiciary Committee Chairman Bob Goodlatte (R., Va.) called it a "serious proposal" that would be considered by a GOP working group.

While the principles went into detail on some matters, other questions remained, including details of the border wall. Administration officials declined to say how many miles of barrier it wants or how much it would cost and didn't offer a timetable for construction.

Many of the proposals outlined are included in legislation that has passed the GOP-controlled House but hasn't been considered in the Senate, in part because they likely don't have support from the 60 senators that would be needed to pass them.

Another contentious question is what sort of protections Congress might enshrine for the young people who had been protected by the Obama-era Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program. The program currently covers about 690,000 people.

A White House official said that the administration wasn't interested in providing these people with a path to citizenship, as the Dream Act provides. But last week, two

administration officials told a Senate committee young people should have the opportunity for citizenship.

*- Rebecca Ballhaus contributed to this article.*