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## BOEHNER SAYS HE WON'T PUSH THROUGH AN IMMIGRATION BILL

By Ashley Parker  
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WASHINGTON — Speaker John A. Boehner said Tuesday that he would not bring any immigration measure to the floor for a vote unless it had the support of a majority of House Republicans, raising potential new obstacles to Congressional approval of a broad immigration overhaul.

As the Senate headed toward votes on amendments in its second week of considering an immigration measure, Mr. Boehner tried to put to rest discussion that he would consider pushing through an immigration bill with a combination of Democrats and receptive Republicans in the House, where conservative Republican sentiment runs strongly against allowing those who entered the country illegally to qualify for legal status.

"I also suggested to our members today that any immigration reform bill that is going to go into law ought to have a majority of both parties' support if we're really serious about making that happen, and so I don't see any way of bringing an immigration bill to the floor that doesn't have a majority support of Republicans," Mr. Boehner said at a news conference after meeting with House Republicans.

Mr. Boehner's comments, both privately in the closed-door meeting at the Capitol Hill Club and publicly, came as some House Republicans have begun to draw a firm and vocal line in the sand, warning Mr. Boehner that his speakership could be at risk if he tries to force through an immigration bill without the support of his conference.

In an interview with World Net Daily radio on Monday, Representative Dana Rohrabacher, Republican of California, said Mr. Boehner "should be removed as speaker" if, on immigration, he violates the "Hastert rule" — an unofficial principle named for J. Dennis Hastert, a former Republican speaker who would rarely allow a vote on a bill that did not have the support of a majority of his conference.

Though Mr. Boehner has violated the Hastert rule several times this year — to help avert a fiscal showdown, provide relief for victims of Hurricane Sandy and pass the Violence Against Women Act — he explicitly said on Tuesday that he would not take up an immigration bill without the support of a majority of his party.

Mr. Boehner's comments will make it harder for him to buck conservatives on an immigration overhaul, something that many consider crucial for Republicans hoping to regain their national standing with Hispanic voters. His position will also make it harder to strike a deal between the House and the Senate on a final immigration measure if the legislative process gets that far.

In insisting on a measure that most of his members can support, Mr. Boehner is calling for legislation that is likely to contain border security requirements and limits on attaining legal status that many Democrats and other proponents of new legislation will resist.

Mr. Boehner is well aware of the difficult political situation he finds himself in. When asked if he believed he could lose his job if he violated the Hastert rule on immigration, he said, to laughter, "Maybe."

In the meeting before his news conference, Mr. Boehner offered further reassurances to his members.

"This town thrives on non-stories, and the biggest non-story of the week is this speculation that I'm somehow planning secretly to pass an immigration bill without a majority of Republicans," Mr. Boehner said, according to a source who was present at the meeting. "I have no intention of putting a bill on the floor that will violate the principles of our majority and divide our conference."

Still, Mr. Boehner's comments come as conservative Republicans are increasingly worried about how the immigration bill will be handled in the House. Representative Steve King, an Iowa Republican and leading opponent of the immigration overhaul making its way through the Senate, plans to hold a six-hour news conference outside the Capitol on Wednesday to voice his concerns about the current bill.

Mr. Boehner also sought to deflect some of the criticism from himself and onto President Obama and Senate Democrats, who he said are using immigration as a political wedge issue.

"I'm increasingly concerned that the White House and Senate Democrats are — would rather have this as an issue in the 2014 election, rather than to resolve it," Mr. Boehner said. "It was the president who said that he wanted a robust vote coming out of the Senate to help move this process along. And yet here's the president and the Senate Democrats working to limit the number of Republican votes that this immigration bill is likely to get."

Despite his assurances, Mr. Boehner would not say whether he would also require majority Republican support on any legislation to emerge from a conference negotiating process with the Senate.

"We'll see when we get there," he said.