



## DEMOCRATIC LAWMAKER: GOP BASE 'ANIMATED BY RACISM'

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An overhaul to the nation's broken immigration system remains stalled because "the Republican base does have elements that are animated by racism," the head of the House committee to elect Democratic lawmakers said Sunday.

Rep. Steve Israel's comments are in line with those from House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi earlier this week, in which she blamed racial issues for the GOP's failure to act on comprehensive immigration legislation. Asked about Pelosi's comments, New York's Israel said he agreed with her assessment.

"To a significant extent, the Republican base does have elements that are animated by racism. And that's unfortunate," said Israel, who heads the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee.

Frustration is mounting among the House's Democratic minority and immigration activists about Republicans' refusal to act on a far-reaching immigration bill passed by the Senate last year. The Senate bill would provide a path to citizenship for the estimated 11 million immigrants living in the country illegally and tighten border security.

Republicans remain wary of a contentious debate on the divisive issue, which could anger their core voters and undercut potential electoral gains in the November elections.

"I think race has something to do with the fact that they're not bringing up an immigration bill," Pelosi told reporters Thursday.

Pelosi was responding to a question about whether race factors into how Republicans deal with members of the Obama administration. She accused Republicans of being generally disrespectful to members of the administration and to women.

Oregon's Rep. Greg Walden, who heads Republicans' efforts to elect House members, said blaming racism was "both wrong and unfortunate." He said his Republican colleagues have been critical of President Barack Obama and his party on policy grounds, not racial ones.

"You know, there have been a lot of executive overreaches by this administration," said Walden who leads the National Republican Congressional Committee. "The American people just want to know the truth. . . . They want to know answers. And that's all we're trying to do."

Israel and Walden spoke on CNN's "State of the Union."