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## GOP PLANS BILL TO SEPARATE OBAMA IMMIGRATION PLAN FROM HOMELAND SECURITY FUNDING

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Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R., Ky.) said Monday he planned to bring up a bill targeting President Barack Obama's executive action on immigration, separating it from the Homeland Security Department funding Republicans have used as leverage in the immigration fight.

Mr. McConnell didn't say how the Senate would address Homeland Security funding, which expires on Friday at midnight, leaving open the question of whether Congress will reach an agreement to keep the agency running. Senate Democrats are unlikely to agree to quickly consider the new immigration bill without assurances the department will be fully funded.

Until now, most Republicans have said they would only extend the department's funding if they can block the implementation of Mr. Obama's November decision to bypass Congress and shield millions of undocumented immigrants from deportation.

The House last month passed a bill extending the agency's funding through September and rolling back a series of Mr. Obama's immigration policies. Senate Democrats have blocked that measure in four different roll-call votes, most recently on Monday evening.

"The new bill I described offers another option we can turn to," Mr. McConnell said Monday evening after the latest vote. "It's another way to get the Senate unstuck from a Democrat filibuster and move the debate forward."

But it isn't clear exactly how removing the immigration language would break the impasse. A funding measure that doesn't block Mr. Obama's immigration program would face opposition from conservatives, who view the funding as the leverage needed to force Democrats to make concessions on immigration.

One possibility is that Mr. McConnell could bring up a short-term bill, to buy more time to work out the issue in negotiations or in the courts. But even that could face high hurdles passing the House. Some House GOP aides said they expected funding would lapse at week's end.

Democrats are unlikely to agree to vote on the new bill unless they have an iron-clad guarantee that it would be accompanied by full funding for Homeland Security, a Senate Democratic aide said. Unless Mr. McConnell has full consent of all 100 senators to speed up proceedings, a first procedural vote couldn't occur until Friday at the earliest.

Republicans said they relished the prospect of having Democrats vote specifically on the president's November executive action. Some Democrats have criticized the president for sidestepping Congress on immigration, but so far Democrats have blocked all measures yoking efforts to undo it with Homeland Security funding.

"This vote will highlight the irresponsible hypocrisy of any Senate Democrat who claims to oppose President Obama's executive overreach on immigration, but refuses to vote to stop it," Michael Steel, a spokesman for House Speaker John Boehner (R., Ohio) said in a statement Monday night.