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SOME HOUSE REPUBLICANS WARY OF GOP PLAN TO ROLL BACK OBAMA IMMIGRATION POLICIES

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A House Republican plan to roll back President Barack Obama's immigration policies has touched off unusually vocal opposition from centrists in the party who are concerned that the measure goes too far.

The House is expected to vote on the measure on Wednesday.

House GOP leaders often face resistance from conservatives concerned the party isn't taking a strong enough stance to curb illegal immigration, but their latest strategy has ignited objections from the party's other flank.

At the center of the GOP tensions is an amendment under consideration Wednesday that would undo a 2012 action protecting young people brought to the U.S. illegally as children. The measure is one of several that the House will consider attaching to a bill funding the Homeland Security Department through September.

"I don't believe this is the right place to have the immigration debate," said Rep. Jeff Denham (R., Calif.) who said House Republicans were burdening homeland security funding with a slate of provisions likely to doom its passage in the Senate. "We are overreaching into an area that goes above and beyond what we're trying to accomplish with the Homeland Security bill."

GOP leaders split off funding for the agency, which oversees immigration activities, late last year to give Republicans, now that they control both chambers of Congress, a way to challenge the executive action Mr. Obama signed in November shielding millions of illegal immigrants from deportation. Congress funded the rest of the government through September.

At the urging of conservatives, House GOP leaders agreed to let the chamber vote on a series of measures seeking to not only block Mr. Obama's latest immigration plan, but to also unravel other Obama administration policies, including the push to concentrate deportation efforts on criminals and those who recently crossed the border. One amendment from Rep. Marsha Blackburn (R., Tenn.) would end the already-implemented 2012 program offering shelter to people brought to the U.S. illegally as children known as Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA.

Supporters say the amendments give House Republicans a chance to push back on what they see as Mr. Obama's earlier missteps on immigration.

"President Obama has embarked on some of the biggest executive power grabs in American history by unilaterally rewriting our nation's immigration laws," Judiciary Committee Chairman Bob Goodlatte (R., Va.) said on the House floor Tuesday. "These actions ignore the will of the American people, who voted in November to change the way Washington operates."

GOP lawmakers who plan to oppose Ms. Blackburn's amendment said House Republicans were losing an opportunity to offer a more constructive plan.

"We have an opportunity here to say not just what we're against but what we're for and I think we ought to do something affirmative in putting forward the kind of legislation that would allow these young people to stay in the country," said Rep. Mike Coffman (R., Colo.)

Mr. Denham said he expected to see more GOP opposition to the amendment than the 11 House Republicans who voted against a similar measure in August.

"If we were just focusing on homeland security and ending the president's unconstitutional act, not only would it pass with I believe our entire majority, but I think we would have a great deal of Democrats with us and really have a chance of passing it through the Senate," Mr. Denham said. "By adding these other amendments, I think that it turns into a political maneuver rather than a serious policy discussion."

That could leave Republicans unable to pass anything through Congress other than an unencumbered measure extending Homeland Security funding without any changes to the immigration system, Mr. Denham said. "It's hard to tell what comes back from the Senate, but ultimately when they need 60 votes I assume they'll get back to a clean bill."

Republicans hold 54 seats in the Senate, short of the 60 votes most bills need to clear procedural hurdles. Centrist Senate Democrats have indicated they are unlikely to support the House funding bill if amended to roll back Mr. Obama's immigration plans.

It isn't clear what Senate leaders will do if the House bill stalls in their chamber.

"If we can't pass the House bill we'd have to come up with an idea of what could pass the Senate," said Senate Majority Whip John Cornyn (R., Texas.)

House GOP leaders intend to wait to see how the Senate responds before making their next move in the House, GOP aides and lawmakers said.

Democrats criticized Republicans for jeopardizing the Homeland Security Department, whose current funding expires Feb. 27 in the political jousting over immigration.

"This was problematic from the start," said Rep. David Price of North Carolina, the top Democrat on the House Appropriations Homeland Security subcommittee. "The political need that the Republicans feel to poke the president in the eye over his executive action" is being indulged "at the expense of a critical government function," he said.

GOP leaders opted to keep the immigration-related proposals separate from the main Homeland Security bill in part so that centrist Republicans can still vote for the funding bill. Other less contentious amendments may draw wider support from Republicans, such as one from Rep. Aaron Schock (R., Ill.) establishing that it is the "sense of Congress" that the government should not divert resources processing applications aiding illegal immigrants at the expense of those in the U.S. legally and who have their own immigration applications pending.