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## SENATE IMMIGRATION BACKERS TARGET WAYS TO WIN SUPPORT

By Kristina Peterson  
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With the Senate expected to vote on a far-reaching immigration bill by early July, supporters are stepping up their courtship of the many lawmakers who remain publicly undecided. Efforts to address the concerns of the holdouts will shape the next two weeks of action in the Senate.

On Tuesday, 82 senators voted to bring the bill to the floor, but many of the 28 Republicans who voted to start debate have said they have reservations about supporting the final bill. All 54 Democrats and independents voted to advance the bill this past week, but a handful of them haven't yet said they would back it on final passage.

The bill will need 60 votes to pass, but proponents are hoping a large show of support from 70 or more senators would put pressure on the House to take action. Here are some of the key issues and blocs of senators:

### Border security

Many Republicans have cited border security as their main reservation, saying they want to be sure the legislation stops the flow of illegal immigrants for good. Most supporters of the bill, by contrast, balk at significantly beefing up security requirements, in part because the legislation says its benchmarks must be met before anyone now in the country illegally can gain permanent legal status. Sen. Charles Schumer (D., N.Y.) said Thursday that lawmakers are working on a compromise they hope both sides can live with.

Their aim is to woo lawmakers such as Sen. Mark Kirk (R., Ill.), who has listed border security as his chief concern. Mr. Kirk, a frequent Democratic ally, surprised many by voting against opening debate this past week, citing security worries. But the Republican drafters of the legislation said they aren't counting him out from the final tally.

### Visas for foreign workers

The bill's guest-worker programs for low-wage laborers, such as agricultural workers, are important to lawmakers from states with significant agricultural industries. Additional measures to expand the flow of those workers or streamline procedures could help win over Georgia's two Republicans, Saxby Chambliss and Johnny Isakson, and others. Drafters of the bill's agricultural section gave particular consideration to the interests of southeastern states, including North Carolina, a Senate Democratic aide said.

Similarly, the bill's expansion of visas for highly skilled workers could help secure the support of Republicans trying to help high-tech companies, including Sen. Orrin Hatch of Utah.

## Benefits for immigrants

Some Republicans say they want to be sure that illegal immigrants don't gain access to taxpayer subsidies for health care and certain tax benefits. Sen. Marco Rubio (R., Fla.) and Mr. Hatch have teamed up for a series of amendments that, among other things, curb immigrants' access to subsidies available through the new federal health-care law until five years after they gain legal permanent residency.

Sen. Mike Johanns (R., Neb.), who seems unsupportive of the bill but voted to start debate, has said illegal immigrants "shouldn't benefit from income-tax refunds in excess of the taxes they paid."

## Centrist philosophy

Beyond the four GOP senators who helped write the bill, supporters are looking first for Republican allies among a group of centrists who align at times with Democrats. Chief among these are Susan Collins of Maine, Lisa Murkowski of Alaska and Dean Heller of Nevada, who called the bill a "promising piece of legislation" this past week.

## Red-state Democrats

Democrats up for re-election in conservative-leaning states often break with their party on contentious issues, and a few could defect on the immigration bill. Senate Democratic aides think the party isn't likely to lose more than three votes from within its ranks. The focus among those in this group has been on Mark Begich of Alaska and the retiring Max Baucus of Montana. Mr. Begich has said he wants to make sure Alaskan fisheries have enough access to more foreign workers if they can't find enough local applicants. He is viewed as a potential supporter, according to Senate aides.

## Wild cards

Potential 2016 GOP presidential candidate Rand Paul has said he sees a need to overhaul the immigration system, and some view the Kentucky senator's softer tone and libertarian bent as suggestive that he might support an overhaul. But Mr. Paul has introduced border-security amendments that Democrats likely won't swallow. The views of New Jersey's new GOP senator, Jeff Chiesa, remain largely unknown. Sen. Bernie Sanders of Vermont, an independent who usually votes with Democrats, opposed a 2007 immigration bill and worries proposed guest-worker programs could harm Americans, but he supports many other aspects of the current Senate b