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BOEHNER SEES POTENTIAL 'BOON' IN IMMIGRATION BILL

By Janet Hook
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House Speaker John Boehner (R., Ohio) Thursday said that the Senate immigration bill could be "a real boon" if it actually realizes the economic benefits and deficit reduction predicted by the Congressional Budget Office.

Still, Mr. Boehner reiterated his criticism that the Senate bill was inadequate because it didn't do enough to secure the border.

"Immigration reform must be grounded in real border security," he said. "Border security in the Senate bill is not sufficient to solve this problem."

He refused to comment on the border-security compromise drafted by GOP Sens. Bob Corker of Tennessee and John Hoeven of North Dakota, which was expected to be unveiled Thursday afternoon. The proposal, a bid to strengthen the bill's border provisions and draw more GOP votes, would double the number of border patrol agents and require 700 miles of border fencing before any people now in the U.S. illegally could be set on a pathway to citizenship.

Bolstering his critique of the Senate bill as written, Mr. Boehner cited the Congressional Budget Office analysis that found the net influx of illegal immigration would be reduced only 25% under the Senate bill.

However, that report also found that the bill would reduce the deficit by \$175 billion over ten years. Mr. Boehner said he had asked House Budget Committee Chairman Paul Ryan (R. Wis.) to conduct his own analysis of the bill, but said that if the CBO analysis were true, "it would be a real boon for the country."

But Mr. Boehner is under pressure from conservatives in his own party to block any bill to provide a pathway to citizenship for the roughly 11 million people in the U.S. illegally. He reiterated his stance that the House will not take up and vote on the Senate bill, and that any major changes in immigration law "should not be enacted without broad bipartisan support."