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ANTI-CITIZENSHIP PROTESTERS ISSUE WARNING TO HOUSE

By Julia Preston
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About 2,000 demonstrators opposed to an immigration bill passed by the Senate marched down Pennsylvania Avenue in sweltering heat on Monday and rallied outside the Capitol, hoping to stop any similar measure — especially one that would grant legal status to illegal immigrants — from advancing in the House of Representatives.

Conservative protesters came to Washington from 26 states to “march for jobs” and decry any bill that includes legalization, which they reject as amnesty that would erode the rule of law and, in a new emphasis, threaten the jobs of American workers. The gathering was organized by a group called the Black American Leadership Alliance in an effort to unite several forces for the immigration battle in the House, including conservative blacks and Tea Party followers, as well as supporters of restrictive immigration policy who have long been in the fight.

The comprehensive Senate bill, which includes a pathway to citizenship for 11 million immigrants in the country illegally, passed on a strong bipartisan vote, but House Republicans made it clear that they would not take it up. Speaker John A. Boehner of Ohio said the House would deal with immigration in smaller, “bite-sized” pieces over the coming months.

Opponents of the overhaul were on the defensive during the Senate debate, but now, with many conflicting views emerging among House Republicans, they see a chance to stop the House from passing any legislation that could be paired with the Senate bill to produce a compromise measure.

“Kill the bill!” was the marchers’ rallying cry. They wore red T-shirts saying, “Protect American Jobs, No Amnesty!” Some protesters carried big signs with black letters and one word: “Deport!” While there were many black speakers, the crowd was largely white.

Allen West, a retired lieutenant colonel from Florida who served one term in Congress and is a favorite of Tea Party groups, said lawmakers should focus on creating jobs for United States citizens. “Take care of Americans first,” said Mr. West, who is black. “Get Americans back to work. Get our children back in colleges and universities.”

By passing immigration reform that includes a path to legalization, Mr. West said, Congress was sending the wrong message to immigrants who are here illegally. He described it as: “You don’t care about respecting our laws, it’s O.K. Just come on in and we’ll tell the Americans to take the back seat.”

“That’s not how we are in this country,” he said. Evoking an image from the black civil rights movement, Mr. West added, “Americans ride in the front seat of this bus.”

Representative Mo Brooks, an Alabama Republican who is a vigorous critic of the Senate plan, said it would bring a “huge influx” of low-wage foreigners who would become a burden on the federal government.

"You bring in foreigners who are going to be net tax producers, not net tax consumers," Mr. Brooks said. "You bring in foreigners who are going to be a positive for our country, not a negative for our country."

Supporters of the immigration overhaul have organized much larger rallies in Washington this year. But opponents appear to have the advantage of greater leverage over conservative Republican lawmakers in their home districts.

Ken Crow, a Texan and founder of Tea Party Community, an online social media group, congratulated the crowd for having the "bloodlines" of the nation's founders. "You guys have incredible DNA, don't forget that," he said.

As an indication of the pressures House Republican leaders can expect from conservatives, Mr. Crow addressed a warning directly to Mr. Boehner. "If you want to run this bill through," he said, referring to the Senate measure, "if you want something similar but not quite, you do so at your own political peril."

If any legalization measure passes the House, Mr. Crow advised the speaker, "Tea Party conservatives across this nation will ensure that next year you're going to get to send your résumé out."