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BOEHNER OPTIMISTIC ABOUT IMMIGRATION BILL

By Ashley Parker
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WASHINGTON – As the immigration debate dragged on during this particularly hot week in July, Speaker John A. Boehner offered perhaps his most optimistic assessment yet of the chances in the House for a broad overhaul of the nation’s immigration laws.

“I think it’s going pretty well,” Mr. Boehner told reporters on Thursday. “We had a great conversation last week. The more this issue is around, the more action there is in committee, the more information there is for the members to put their hands on. And, frankly, the American people are engaged in this issue as well.”

He added: “You know, it’s not just organizations that are up here lobbying for immigration reform. You got a lot of individuals, a lot of constituents, who have opinions on this, and all this serves to help educate our members.”

Mr. Boehner has repeatedly said that he will not allow a vote on legislation that has already passed the Senate, which includes a path to citizenship for the 11 million undocumented immigrants. But at a closed-door meeting last week, he warned House Republicans about the high political price of inaction.

Senator Charles E. Schumer, an author of the Senate immigration bill, said he was pleased to hear that Mr. Boehner was encouraging Republicans to pass an immigration bill in the House.

“I understand they don’t want to do a bill exactly like ours,” said Mr. Schumer, Democrat of New York, “but if we can have both sides do bills that are not light years apart, we can get something done.”