

Update on Senate Action

June 7, 2007

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(Thanks to the National Immigration Forum for this Update)

This morning, there was a first attempt to limit debate on the Senate immigration bill. There was a vote on a cloture motion filed by Majority Leader Reid. A cloture motion must be passed by 60 votes. A successful cloture vote limits debate on a bill to 30 additional hours. Republicans claimed that the cloture motion was premature; that they had many more amendments they wanted the Senate to consider. The motion failed by a vote of 33 to 63

http://www.senate.gov/legislative/LIS/roll_call_lists/roll_call_vote_cfm.cfm?congress=110&session=1&vote=00203 . This means that continued Senate debate on the bill is not limited to the 30 hours. So far, more than 300 amendments have been filed on the bill, many of them would make the bill more punitive and less workable as comprehensive reform. There will be another cloture vote late this afternoon. By then, Republican leadership may be satisfied that they will have ample opportunity to amend the bill.

Last night, the Senate worked late into the night considering amendments to the bill. Since the last update, a number of amendments have been voted on.

* A Cornyn (R-TX) amendment (1250) that in effect nullifies the confidentiality provisions of Senate bill was agreed to by a vote of 57 to 39

http://www.senate.gov/legislative/LIS/roll_call_lists/roll_call_vote_cfm.cfm?congress=110&session=1&vote=00190 . This seriously undermines the viability of the legalization program and will have to be fixed in a future amendment.

* A Reid (D-NV) amendment (1331) , offered as a "side-by-side" amendment to the Sessions amendment (below) and restating current law regarding the inability of undocumented immigrants to benefit from the Earned Income Tax Credit, was agreed to by a vote of 57 to 40

http://www.senate.gov/legislative/LIS/roll_call_lists/roll_call_vote_cfm.cfm?congress=110&session=1&vote=00191 .

* A Sessions (R-AL) amendment (1234) , barring legalized undocumented workers with provisional Z visas and temporary worker Y visa holders from the Earned Income Tax Credit, was agreed to by a vote of 56 to 41

http://www.senate.gov/legislative/LIS/roll_call_lists/roll_call_vote_cfm.cfm?congress=110&session=1&vote=00191 .

* A Menendez (D-NJ) amendment (1194) , would have reduced more of the family visa backlog by including immigrants for whom a family petition was filed between May 1, 2005 and January 1, 2007. (The Senate bill would require anyone for whom a family sponsorship petition was filed after May 1, 2005 to re-apply through the new point system set up by the bill. Republicans raised a "budget point of order" against the amendment. Any Senator can challenge a bill that would increase federal spending and violates the terms of a budget resolution. The Menendez amendment would have resulted in greater federal outlays in the short term, as more immigrants admitted from the backlog would become eligible for certain benefits or tax credits. A budget resolution can be waived, but in the Senate, a waiver must gain 60 votes. The waiver to the budget point of order failed by a vote of

53 to 44

[http://www.senate.gov/legislative/LIS/roll call lists/roll call vote cfm.cfm?congress=110&session=1&vote=00193](http://www.senate.gov/legislative/LIS/roll_call_lists/roll_call_vote_cfm.cfm?congress=110&session=1&vote=00193) .

* A Kyl (R-AZ) amendment (1460), meant as a "side-by-side" amendment to the Menendez amendment, that would re-configure the family backlog reduction formula with uncertain results, was agreed to by a vote of 51 to 45

[http://www.senate.gov/legislative/LIS/roll call lists/roll call vote cfm.cfm?congress=110&session=1&vote=00194](http://www.senate.gov/legislative/LIS/roll_call_lists/roll_call_vote_cfm.cfm?congress=110&session=1&vote=00194) . The effect of the amendment is still being analyzed.

* A Clinton (D-NY) amendment (1183), that would have re-classified the spouses and minor children of permanent residents as "immediate relatives" (treating them like the spouses and minor children of citizens) was also challenged by a budget point of order. The motion to waive the budget point of order defeated by a vote of 44 to 53

[http://www.senate.gov/legislative/LIS/roll call lists/roll call vote cfm.cfm?congress=110&session=1&vote=00195](http://www.senate.gov/legislative/LIS/roll_call_lists/roll_call_vote_cfm.cfm?congress=110&session=1&vote=00195) .

* An Ensign (R-NV) amendment (1374), that would have changed the point system to place more emphasis on high-skilled workers, was rejected by a vote of 42 to 55

[http://www.senate.gov/legislative/LIS/roll call lists/roll call vote cfm.cfm?congress=110&session=1&vote=00196](http://www.senate.gov/legislative/LIS/roll_call_lists/roll_call_vote_cfm.cfm?congress=110&session=1&vote=00196) .

* A Salazar (D-CO) amendment, meant as a "side-by-side" amendment to the Inhofe amendment (below), "to preserve and enhance the role of the English language," was agreed to by a vote of 58 to 39

[http://www.senate.gov/legislative/LIS/roll call lists/roll call vote cfm.cfm?congress=110&session=1&vote=00197](http://www.senate.gov/legislative/LIS/roll_call_lists/roll_call_vote_cfm.cfm?congress=110&session=1&vote=00197) .

* An Inhofe (R-OK) amendment (1151) , that declares English to be the official language of government (but does not prohibit the use of other languages) was agreed to by a vote of 64 to 33

[http://www.senate.gov/legislative/LIS/roll call lists/roll call vote cfm.cfm?congress=110&session=1&vote=00198](http://www.senate.gov/legislative/LIS/roll_call_lists/roll_call_vote_cfm.cfm?congress=110&session=1&vote=00198) .

* A Vitter (R-LA) amendment (1339) that would add the full implementation of the US VISIT system at all land, sea, and air ports of entry to the Senate bill's "trigger" provisions was rejected by a vote of 48 to 49

[http://www.senate.gov/legislative/LIS/roll call lists/roll call vote cfm.cfm?congress=110&session=1&vote=00199](http://www.senate.gov/legislative/LIS/roll_call_lists/roll_call_vote_cfm.cfm?congress=110&session=1&vote=00199) .

* An Obama (D-IL) amendment (1202) to sunset the proposed point system after five years was rejected by a vote of 42 to 55

[http://www.senate.gov/legislative/LIS/roll call lists/roll call vote cfm.cfm?congress=110&session=1&vote=00200](http://www.senate.gov/legislative/LIS/roll_call_lists/roll_call_vote_cfm.cfm?congress=110&session=1&vote=00200) .

* A Dorgan (D-ND) amendment (1316) to sunset the Y-1 visa program after five years was agreed to by a vote of 49 to 48

[http://www.senate.gov/legislative/LIS/roll call lists/roll call vote cfm.cfm?congress=110&session=1&vote=00201](http://www.senate.gov/legislative/LIS/roll_call_lists/roll_call_vote_cfm.cfm?congress=110&session=1&vote=00201) .

So far today, there have been two votes. In addition to the cloture vote mentioned above, there was the following:

* A Coburn amendment (1311) , yet another amendment to make the triggers more onerous, was rejected by a vote of 42 to 54

[http://www.senate.gov/legislative/LIS/roll call lists/roll call vote cfm.cfm?congress=110&session=1&vote=00202](http://www.senate.gov/legislative/LIS/roll_call_lists/roll_call_vote_cfm.cfm?congress=110&session=1&vote=00202) .

Stay tuned for more action alerts and updates on the bill.