

# Immigration Updates

**Negative**

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### **Obama's push ensures passage but maintaining bipartisan consensus is key**

**Economic Times 1/28** ("US lawmakers optimistic about immigration reform",

<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/nri/visa-and-immigration/us-lawmakers-optimistic-about-immigration-reform/articleshow/18212224.cms>

WASHINGTON: **Leading** Democratic and Republican **senators said** on Sunday **there were encouraging signs in the push to overhaul US immigration laws - a top priority for President Obama's** second term - and they would introduce their plan this week. ¶ **With Obama set to begin his push for immigration** reform with a speech in Las Vegas on **Tuesday, a group of** three Democratic and three Republican **senators have been working for weeks on a plan.** ¶ One of those senators, Republican John McCain of the border state of Arizona, said on ABC's "This Week" program that the group still had hard work ahead but that he was pleased with the progress and that the principles of a comprehensive plan would be put forth this week. ¶ McCain said the plan was much like a 2007 immigration proposal that died during the presidency of George W. Bush. That plan included a path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants, tighter borders, a guest worker program and requirements for employers to verify workers' immigration status. ¶ The immigration issue was largely pushed aside during Obama's first term as economic concerns weighed more heavily, but the president, who had overwhelming backing from Hispanic voters in his 2012 re-election, cited it as part of his agenda when sworn in for a second term last week. ¶ McCain said **the political aspect of immigration** reform **should sway** any **Republicans** who object to a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants. ¶ "We are losing dramatically the Hispanic vote, which we think should be ours, for a variety of reasons, and we've got to understand that," he said. ¶ McCain said change also was needed because "we can't go on forever with 11 million people living in this country in the shadows in an illegal status. We cannot forever have children who were born here, who were brought here by their parents when they were small children, to live in the shadows, as well." ¶ Democrat Dick Durbin of Illinois, another member of the six-person Senate group, said on "Fox News Sunday" that work remained to be done but that the progress was encouraging. ¶ "We are trying work our way through some very difficult issues but we are committed to a comprehensive approach to finally in this country having an immigration law that we can live with," he said. "We have virtually been going for maybe 25 years without a clear statement about immigration policy. That's unacceptable in this nation of immigrants." ¶ Senator Robert **Menendez**, a Democrat from New Jersey who is also a member of the immigration group, said on "This Week" that he **was cautiously optimistic because of the bipartisan spirit that has prevailed in the recent reform effort.** ¶ "I see things that were once off the table for agreement and discussion being on the table with a serious pathway forward," he said. ¶ Senator Bob **Corker** of Tennessee, a Republican who is not a member of the group, **said he had spoken with one of its members, who said he was "very optimistic" about reform.**

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### **Will pass – it’s a top priority and capital key to passage**

Rosalind S. **Helderman** and David **Nakamura** **1/25** “Senators nearing agreement on broad immigration reform proposal”, Washington Post, [http://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/senators-nearing-agreement-on-broad-immigration-reform-proposal/2013/01/25/950fb78a-6642-11e2-9e1b-07db1d2ccd5b\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/senators-nearing-agreement-on-broad-immigration-reform-proposal/2013/01/25/950fb78a-6642-11e2-9e1b-07db1d2ccd5b_story.html)

**A** working **group of senators** from both parties **is nearing agreement on broad principles for overhauling** the nation’s immigration laws, **representing the most substantive bipartisan effort toward major legislation in years.** ¶ The three Democrats and three Republicans, who have been meeting quietly in recent months, plan to announce a final agreement as early as next Friday. ¶ The move would amount to **the first tentative step toward comprehensive immigration reform after long-standing gridlock on the issue.** The new effort was spurred in large part by the growing influence of Latino voters who strongly backed President Obama and other Democrats in November. ¶ **Obama has** also **called immigration reform** one of **his top legislative priorities** and is launching his own public campaign on the issue next week in Nevada. But a significant number of Americans, particularly within the Republican Party, remain opposed to laws that would make it easier for illegal immigrants to stay in the country or obtain legal status. ¶ The senators are expected to call for normalizing the status of the nation’s 11 million undocumented immigrants, including allowing those with otherwise clean criminal records to obtain legal work permits, officials said. The group is also likely to endorse stricter border controls and a better system for employers to verify the immigration status of workers. ¶ It was not clear, however, whether the final agreement will offer guidance on perhaps the thorniest issue in the immigration debate: what mechanism illegal immigrants could use to pursue full citizenship. ¶ **“We have basic agreement on many of the core principles,”** Senate Majority Whip Richard J. Durbin (D-Ill.), a member of the group, said this week. “Now we have to draft it. It takes time.” ¶ Other senators involved in the talks are Democrats Charles E. Schumer (N.Y.) and Robert Menendez (D-N.J.) and Republicans Lindsey O. Graham (S.C.), John McCain (Ariz.) and Marco Rubio (Fla.). ¶ Two others, Sens. Jeff Flake (R-Ariz.) and Michael F. Bennet (D-Colo.), have also been involved in some of the discussions. ¶ Congressional aides stress that a final agreement has not yet been reached. But the **negotiations mark the most in-depth immigration talks involving members of both parties since** a similar attempt broke down in **2010** without producing a bill. ¶ **McCain**, who spearheaded an earlier failed effort in 2007, **said Republican attitudes have dramatically shifted since the party’s losses at the polls** in November. Obama won more than 70 percent of the vote among Latinos and Asians, **and a growing number of GOP leaders believe that action on immigration is necessary to expand the party’s appeal to minority groups.** ¶ “Obviously, it’s had a very distinct impression,” said McCain, who lost his own bid for the White House in 2008. “It’s time to move forward on this.” ¶ **But,** he added, **“don’t claim that it’s going to be easy.”** ¶ **The accelerated pace signals that immigration reform is expected to be one of Congress’s highest priorities,** and it comes as the White House prepares to launch its own public campaign on the issue. ¶ Obama will travel to Las Vegas on Tuesday to speak about the need to “fix the broken immigration system this year,” the administration announced Friday. Nevada has a rapidly growing number of Hispanic voters, who overwhelmingly supported Obama’s reelection. ¶ **Obama** also met with members of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus on Friday, and aides said he **vowed that immigration reform will be his “top priority.”** ¶ “What has been absent in the time [since] he put principles forward is a willingness by Republicans to move forward with comprehensive immigration reform,” White House press secretary Jay Carney said Friday. “He hopes that dynamic has changed and there are indications what was once a bipartisan effort to push forward . . . will again be a bipartisan effort to do so.” ¶ Past efforts begun amid similarly high hopes have sputtered. ¶ In 2007, a bill crafted in the Senate died after failing to win support of 60 members despite backing from President George W. Bush. Many Republicans, and some centrist Democrats, opposed that effort because it offered a path to citizenship for illegal immigrants. ¶ In 2010, extended negotiations between Graham and Schumer broke down without producing legislation. ¶ The timetable would aim for a bill to be written by March or April and potentially considered for final passage in the Senate as early as the summer. Proponents think a strong bipartisan vote in the Senate would make it easier to win adoption in the GOP-held House. ¶ The working group’s principles are expected to address stricter border control, better employer verification of workers’ immigration status, new visas for temporary agriculture workers and expanding the number of visas available for skilled engineers. They would also include a call to normalize the status of the nation’s 11 million illegal immigrants and help young people who were brought to the country illegally as children become citizens. ¶ But obstacles abound. For instance, Rubio has said he thinks immigrants who came to the country illegally should be able to earn a work permit but should be required to seek citizenship through existing avenues after those who have come here legally. ¶ Many Democrats and immigration advocates fear Rubio’s approach would result in wait-times stretching for decades, creating a class of permanent legal residents for whom the benefits of citizenship appear unattainable. They have pushed to create new pathways to citizenship specifically available to those who achieve legal residency as part of a reform effort. ¶ It is not yet clear whether the Senate group will endorse a mechanism allowing such people to eventually become citizens — something Obama is expected to champion. Schumer said it would be “relatively detailed” but would not “get down into the weeds.” ¶ A

source close to Rubio said he joined the group in December at the request of other members only after they agreed their effort would line up with his own principles for reform. As a possible 2016 presidential contender widely trusted on the right, Rubio could be key to moving the bipartisan effort. ¶ Rubio and other Republicans have said they would prefer to split up a comprehensive immigration proposal into smaller bills that would be voted on separately, but the White House will pursue comprehensive legislation that seeks to reform the process in a single bill. ¶ "I doubt if there will be a macro, comprehensive bill," said Sen. Johnny Isakson (R-Ga.), who supported the 2007 effort. "Anytime a bill's more than 500 pages, people start getting suspicious. If it's 2,000 pages, they go berserk." ¶ But Schumer said Friday that a single package will be key for passage. "We'll not get it done in pieces," he said. "Every time you do a piece, everyone says what about my piece, and you get more people opposing it." ¶ Eliseo Medina, secretary treasurer of the Service Employees International Union, which spent millions recruiting Hispanic voters last year, said **immigration advocates expect Obama to be out front on the issue.** ¶ **"The president needs to lead and then the Republicans have a choice,"** Medina said. **"The best way to share the credit is for them to step up and engage and act together with the president."**

## **Obama is ramping up push for immigration reform --- it's a top priority and quick action expected**

**Meckler, 1/25** (Laura, Dow Jones Top North American Equities Stories, "Obama May Talk Immigration Overhaul Next Week," Factiva,

WASHINGTON--President Barack **Obama will travel to Las Vegas next week for a speech that that could serve as the starter's gun for the drive to overhaul immigration laws.** ¶ Mr. **Obama has said that overhauling national immigration policy is one of his top priorities for 2013,** and he has laid out what he hopes to see in the legislation. But **the speech, set for Tuesday, is meant to "help prod the process along," said one of the people familiar with his plans.** ¶ "He is using the megaphone that he has to say, 'You guys need to act on this,'" this person said. A second person confirmed Mr. Obama's plans. ¶ A White House official said that Mr. Obama would travel to Las Vegas but would not discuss the topic of his remarks. ¶ The speech comes as a group of eight senators working on immigration legislation nears a self-imposed February deadline for putting out principles for a bill. The group hopes to have legislative language by March and to pass a bill through the Senate by August. ¶ The process is expected to move more slowly in the House, where some Republicans have expressed interest in similar legislation and others are vocally opposed. ¶ The senators' plan is expected to include the same elements that Mr. Obama has long supported: stepped up border security, a better system that employers use to verify that potential hires are in the U.S. legally, more visas for high-tech workers, a temporary worker program for lower-skilled workers and a path to citizenship for some 11 million people now in the U.S. illegally. ¶ It was unclear how specific Mr. Obama would be next week about what elements he wants in an immigration bill. During his first term, he laid out his principles publicly, though it has been some time since the president spoke about them in detail. ¶ **The White House also has prepared legislative language,** and some have urged that the president send it to Capitol Hill as a way of moving the legislative process forward. But others argue that putting specific legislation forward could derail the process, potentially causing political problems for some Republicans involved who want distance between their work and the White House. ¶ One person familiar with events said that **the White House has told allies that the purpose of the speech is to show that Mr. Obama is engaged in the issue and not just sitting back, waiting for Congress to act.** ¶ **"He wants to try and influence the process and move it forward," said Angela Kelley, an immigration expert** at the liberal think tank Center for American Progress. **"He wants to nudge this along."** ¶ White House Press Secretary Jay **Carney said** Thursday that Mr. **Obama wanted to work with people from both parties to move legislation to his desk.** ¶ **"I think you can expect him to be true to his word, which is to take up this issue very early in his second term,"** he said. ¶ He said the White House put out details of what the president would like to see in a bill long ago. "He does absolutely believe that we need to do this in a comprehensive way," Mr. Carney said of the president. ¶ Many, though not all, Democrats have supported a multi-pronged immigration bill, but other issues took precedence. Before the November election there was little support or urgency among Republican lawmakers for a broad immigration bill. But after Mr. Obama won reelection with overwhelming support from Hispanics, many Republicans said they would support the effort, giving it new life in Congress.

## **Immigration reform is likely to pass --- it is Obama's top priority**

**Fifield, 1/23** (Anna, Financial Times, "The road to recognition; Immigration; There is growing optimism across the spectrum - from business and unions to Latino groups and religious bodies - that a broken system will finally be fixed," Factiva

Now Mr **Obama says he will try again, placing immigration reform at the top of his legislative agenda.** ¶ "Our journey is not complete until we find a better way to welcome the striving, hopeful immigrants who still see America as a land of opportunity, until bright young students and engineers are enlisted in our workforce rather than expelled from our country," Mr Obama said

during his second inaugural address . **He can expect formidable opposition.** Immigration is one of the most highly charged political issues, as exemplified by the efforts of states such as Arizona, Alabama and Georgia to take matters into their own hands. Those states have passed tough anti-illegal immigrant laws aimed at deterring undocumented workers, and farms in Alabama and Georgia in particular have reported acute labour shortages as a result. Republican leaders in states such as these can be expected to push back hard against comprehensive reform. **Yet despite immigration reform's troubled history, there is growing optimism from across the spectrum** - from business and unions to Latino groups and religious leaders - that this is the year in which the broken immigration system will be fixed. "This is a moment," says Steve Case, the co-founder of AOL who now runs Revolution, a start-up fund, and has long pushed for more high-skilled visas for engineers and scientists. "There is desire on the part of the White House to deal with it in a comprehensive way and the business community also wants to have it dealt with. Now is the time," Mr Case says. Mr **Obama is expected to outline a plan soon for immigration reform that would include the "big enchilada" of creating a pathway to citizenship for the 11m undocumented people already in the US**, as well as a requirement for them to pay fines and back taxes. The plan will include provisions on border security and penalties for companies that knowingly hire and exploit illegal immigrants. It will also deal with business concerns about difficulties hiring both high- and low-skill workers. **While there are plenty of roadblocks in the way** - not least a Congress where "bipartisan" has become a slanderous term - **a unique confluence of events makes the chances better than ever this year**. First, the presidential election served as a wake-up call to Republicans. After an ugly primary campaign in which candidates tried to outdo each other in their hostility to illegal immigrants, the Republicans realise they are swimming against the demographic tide. Hispanics are the fastest-growing part of the US population and their number is expected to triple by 2050. Already, there are about 60,000 Latinos turning 18 - the voting age - every month. Republicans acknowledge that they cannot afford to alienate such a large chunk of the population . Last year Mitt Romney, the Republican presidential candidate, won only 27 per cent of the demographic to Mr Obama's 71 per cent. A sizeable number of Republicans have indicated a willingness to overhaul the system, and Marco Rubio, the Florida senator, is leading an effort to craft a less generous alternative to the president's reforms. Many people remain opposed to a pathway to citizenship for illegal immigrants and favour incremental reform rather than one big package. Second, the number of people stopped on the Mexican border is at its lowest level since 1972, when illegal immigration had not even become a pressing political issue. The number of those detained has dropped from about 1m in 2007 to 340,000 last year, the result of much stronger enforcement but also of the weak US economy and job market. "The soft economy has really reduced the pressure at the border so we should take advantage of that," says John Engler, the president of the Business Roundtable, a group of more than 200 chief executives. "The time to do this is now." Third, **there is a coalition of "strange bedfellows"**, as one participant called it, **forming to push for comprehensive reform**. Encouraged by Chuck Schumer, a Democratic senator, and Lindsey Graham, a Republican senator, representatives from the US Chamber of Commerce, the big business lobby group, and the AFL-CIO, the biggest federation of unions, have met regularly over the past year to hash out a compromise deal. Both groups agree on the need to create a pathway to citizenship, a mechanism for ensuring employers abide by the laws and continued border controls. **The theory is that this will inevitably be sufficiently bipartisan to win the backing of majorities in both the Republican-controlled Congress and the Democratic-led Senate.** There are a clutch of other conversations going on, with the Business Roundtable and the SEIU union also involved, as well as evangelical Christian and Jewish leaders and, of course, Latino and immigrant groups. The last big push for immigration reform came in 2006, during the final years of the Bush administration, and was a bipartisan effort led by John McCain, the Republican, and the late Ted Kennedy, a Democrat. But supporters of immigration reform suffered internal divisions - notably within the labour movement over an expanded guest worker programme, weakening the effort to convince lawmakers to pass the bill. Conservatives attacked the bill for providing a pathway to citizenship for people in the US illegally. The effort failed in 2007 because it could not win the votes it needed in the Senate. Six years on, are the prospects any better? Analysts and interest groups say yes. Labour unions have overcome their disagreements, having been through an 18-month consultation that resulted in a shared immigration policy framework. "There was a unanimous consensus that we should not and could not walk into any legislative battle divided because if the legislators saw the labour movement was divided they would not listen to anyone," says Ana Avendano, director of immigration action at the AFL-CIO. Immigrant advocacy groups are now more established while networks of day labourers and domestic workers have formed. Talks among this unlikely coalition are likely to continue for six or so more weeks, during which time it will become clear whether they can forge an agreement. Economic arguments will be at the forefront of the debate. Economists generally agree that immigration is a net positive to the US, a factor that cannot be ignored as baby boomers retire and pressure builds on government healthcare and pension systems. The legislative programme ushered through by Ronald Reagan in 1986 showed that comprehensive immigration reform would raise wages, increase consumption, create jobs and generate additional tax revenue, says Raúl Hinojosa-Ojeda, a University of California professor. Even though those reforms were implemented during a recession and high unemployment, they still helped raise wages and spurred increases in educational, home, and small-business investments by newly legalised immigrants, Prof Hinojosa-Ojeda wrote in a study for the Cato Institute, a libertarian think-tank generally supportive of Republican ideas. Immigration reform would add at least \$1.5tn to the gross domestic product over a decade, he estimated. Businesses say they need more certainty. "My members wouldn't be as interested in this issue as they are if it didn't hurt them," said Randel Johnson, the Chamber of Commerce's vice-president of labour, immigration and employee benefits. Mr Johnson cites agriculture as a sector where business is crying out for a "stabilised, legalised" workforce. Advocates such as Mr Case are calling for an overhaul of the way H-1B high-skilled visas are allocated. "Any organisation or nation is only as good as its talent," he says. "That's certainly true in the business context and even more so in start-ups, where there is such a fight for talent." Mr Case has long been lobbying for an end to the caps that he says force about 20,000 foreigners who graduate with science, technology, engineering and maths degrees to leave the country every year. He wants to eliminate the caps and create a new Stem visa category. Bills have been introduced by lawmakers on both sides of the aisle that would award green cards to the top graduates, but failed to pass. At the other end of the spectrum, the current system allows employers to sponsor

foreign "guest workers" for temporary or seasonal work, or to hire highly skilled workers in "speciality occupations". But the numbers of visas is set by Congress and employers complain that the numbers are not adjusted for reality.¶ There is widespread agreement that this system is not working well, but there is disagreement about how to fix it - just as there was in 2006.¶ Unions say the "guest worker" programme creates a second class of employee and are pushing for any new arrivals to have full rights and privileges. "We need an employment system that meets the real needs of the labour market so that when there are actual shortages, business can bring in workers and the workers will have full rights," Ms Avendano says, citing the UK's Migration Advisory Committee as an example of a system for managing flows.¶ Groups such as the Chamber of Commerce think an overhauled guest worker programme must be a central part of any comprehensive reform package. "Some parts of the union movement believe there ought to be this commission that would set how many plumbers we need," says Mr Johnson. "But the data in an economy this big is never going to be good."¶ The question will be whether the parties can overcome such differences and form a coalition strong enough to withstand the slings and arrows of Congress.¶ **"The architecture of an immigration reform solution is being designed and manufactured," says Richard Land, a leader in the influential Southern Baptist Convention and a strong proponent of reform. "All we need now is some political leadership in Washington."**

## Immigration will pass by the summer – PC is key and no thumpers -

Chris Weigant 1/23 Political writer and blogger with the Huffington Post, "Handicapping Obama's Second Term Agenda," [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/chris-weigant/obama-second-term\\_b\\_2537802.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/chris-weigant/obama-second-term_b_2537802.html)

**Realistically, Obama's only going to have anywhere from a few months to (at most) a year and a half to get anything accomplished. Which is why he is right to push his agenda immediately**, as evidenced by his inaugural speech. **But even he must realize that he's not going to get everything he wants, so it will be interesting to see what makes it through Congress and what dies an ignoble legislative death. There is reason for hope. Obama begins from a position of strength, politically. His job approval ratings have been consistently over 50 percent since he was re-elected** -- a range Obama hasn't seen since 2009. As mentioned, **the Republican presence in both houses of Congress has shrunk. More importantly, though, the House Republicans are visibly chastened (or even "shaken") by the election's outcome.** This has already allowed Obama to rack up two early victories in the endless budget debates -- and in both, Obama got almost everything he asked for, did not give up much of anything, and held firm on some very bold negotiating tactics. **Obama won the fight over the fiscal cliff**, which resulted in the first rise in income tax rates in two decades, **and** the only thing he had to budge on was the threshold for these higher taxes. Today, the House Republicans passed a "clean" rise in **the debt ceiling**, after Obama swore over and over again that he "was not going to negotiate" on the issue at all. **The score so far is: Obama two, House Republicans zero** (to put it in sporting terms). Of course, the Republicans only extended the debt ceiling for a few months, but this shouldn't really worry anyone, because a longer-term extension will doubtlessly be a part of any sort of grand bargain on the budget talks. **The Republicans**, very wisely, **realized they were playing a losing game and decided to reshuffle the deadlines on the calendar.** Rather than being faced with the debt ceiling crisis first, and then two budgetary crises, they **have moved the debt ceiling problem to the end of the list.** Which means the next big fight Obama faces is going to be another haggle over the budget. This is going to be a tough battle, and Obama is bound to disappoint some of his supporters in the midst of it. Some sacred cows are going to wind up as hamburger, although at this point it's hard to see which ones. The real measurement of success here will be whether the House Republicans and Obama can come to terms with a budget for the next year or year-and-a-half. Long-term budget stability has been largely absent from Washington for a while now, so if any agreement can be reached perhaps it'll help the economy recover a lot faster throughout 2013 and 2014. In the long run, that will be a positive thing, no matter what such a budget agreement actually contains. One safe bet for what will be in it, though, is a long-term extension of the debt ceiling. **Budget battles are going to happen no matter what else does -- that's another safe bet. What is more interesting, though, is handicapping which of Obama's agenda items will actually see some action.** **There are three major initiatives that Obama is currently pushing: action on global warming, comprehensive immigration reform, and gun control. Obama did mention other issues in his speech, but these are the big three for now.** Gay marriage, for instance, is in the hands of the Supreme Court right now, and no matter how they rule it's hard to see any legislative action (good or bad) happening on it immediately afterwards. Gun control will likely be the first of these debated in Congress. Vice President Biden laid out a wide array of possible actions Congress could take on the issue, all of which Obama then backed. While the Newtown massacre did indeed shift public opinion dramatically on the overall issue, the biggest initiative is not likely to become law. **An assault rifle ban** is very important to some Democrats, but the way I read it is that this was included to have something to "trade away" in the negotiations. If Obama gets most of the other gun control initiatives -- closing loopholes on background checks, much better tracking of weapons, and all the other "small bore" (sorry about that pun) ideas -- then he will at least be able to say he accomplished

something at the end of the day. Perhaps this is pessimistic, but the mechanics of banning "assault weapons" become very tricky, when you have to actually define what they are in legal language. And such a ban may not get universal Democratic backing anyway, so I fully expect this **will be shelved at some point in exchange for support for all the other initiatives. Without such a ban,** the prospects for other meaningful **gun control legislation** get a lot better, though, and I think that a bill **will eventually pass.** **The second big agenda item is immigration reform. President Obama holds virtually all the cards, politically, on this one.** All Republicans who can read either demographics or polling numbers know full well that this may be their party's last chance not to go the way of the Whigs. Their support among Latinos is dismal, and even that's putting it politely. Some Republicans think they have come up with a perfect solution on how to defuse the issue, but they are going to be proven sadly mistaken in the end, I believe. The Republican plan will be announced by Senator Marco Rubio at some point, and it will seem to mirror the Democratic plan -- with one key difference. Republicans -- even the ones who know their party has to do something on the immigration problem -- are balking at including a "path to citizenship" for the 11 million undocumented immigrants who are already in America. The Republicans are trying to have their cake and eat it too -- and it's not going to work. "Sure," they say, "we'll give some sort of papers to these folks, let them stay, and even let them work... but there's no need to give them the hope of ever becoming a full citizen." This just isn't going to be good enough, though. There are essentially two things citizens can do which green card holders cannot: serve on juries, and vote. The Republicans are not worried about tainted juries, in case that's not clear enough. Republicans will bend over backwards in an effort to convince Latinos that their proposal will work out just fine for everyone. Latinos, however, aren't stupid. They know that being denied any path to citizenship equals an effort to minimize their voice on the national political stage. Which is why, as I said, Obama holds all the cards in this fight. Because this is the one issue in his agenda which Republicans also have a big vested interest in making happen. Obama and the Democrats will, I believe, hold firm on their insistence on a path to citizenship, and I think **a comprehensive immigration bill will likely pass some time this year, perhaps before the summer congressional break.** The path to citizenship it includes will be long, expensive and difficult (Republicans will insist on at least that), but it will be there. On gun control, I think Obama will win a partial victory. On immigration, I think he will win an almost-total victory. **On global warming,** however, **he's going to be disappointed.** In fact, **I doubt -- no matter how much "bully pulping" Obama does -- that any bill will even appear out of a committee in either house of Congress.** This will be seen as Obama's "overreach" -- a bridge too far for the current political climate. Anyone expecting big legislative action on global warming is very likely going to be massively disappointed, to put it quite bluntly. In fact, Obama will signal this in the next few months, as he approves the Keystone XL pipeline -- much to the dismay of a lot of his supporters. Of course, I could be wrong about any or all of these predictions. I have no special knowledge of how things will work out in Congress in the immediate future. I'm merely making educated guesses about what Obama will be able to achieve in at least the first few years of his second term. **Obama has a lot of political capital right now, but that could easily change soon.** The House **Republicans** seem almost demoralized right now, and Obama has successfully splintered them and called their bluff on two big issues already -- but they **could regroup and decide to block everything** the White House wants, and damn the political consequences. **Unseen issues will pop up** both on the domestic and foreign policy stages, as they always do. **But, for now, this is my take on how the next few years are going to play out in Washington.** Time will tell whether I've been too optimistic or too pessimistic on any or all of Obama's main agenda items. We'll just have to wait and see.

## Immigration reform will pass – top priority and national GOP support

Kevin Freking 1/20 Boston.com,

<http://www.boston.com/news/politics/2012/president/candidates/obama/2013/01/20/obama-adviser-optimistic-immigration-reform/Wjj0yJsCqKYaiKr0FTvu3N/story.html>

A top White House adviser said Sunday **the stars seem aligned for Congress to pass a comprehensive immigration overhaul this year,** but he sounded less confident about prospects for toughening the nation's gun laws.¶ White House Senior Adviser David Plouffe made the rounds on Sunday talk shows, outlining the president's agenda for the months ahead. He said past presidents have been able to make significant progress during their second terms, noting that President Ronald Reagan pushed through more tax cuts and that President Bill Clinton helped transform budget deficits into budget surpluses.¶ He said Obama's focus will be on improving the economy, saying the president believes the best way to do that is to invest in education and manufacturing while also seeking what he called "balanced deficit reduction."¶ Republicans agreed to let tax cuts expire this year for those workers whose incomes exceed \$400,000 a year, but Plouffe said that future negotiations on reducing the deficit will have to include more tax revenue as well as spending cuts and changes to entitlement programs.¶ "We've dealt with the tax rate issue. Now it's about loopholes," Plouffe said on ABC. "And I think the country would be well-served by tax and entitlement reform, because it'll help our economy."¶ Beyond the economy and the budget, **Plouffe indicated that two social issues will be a focus at the outset of the president's second term: immigration and gun control.**¶ On gun control, he mixed statements of optimism with an acknowledgement of political realities. Republicans control the House, and even some Democrats in the Senate have been extremely cautious in addressing the issue.¶ "It's going to be very, very hard," Plouffe said on CBS's "Face the Nation."¶ Republican Sen. John Barrasso of Wyoming underscored that point. He said he doubted supporters could get 60 votes in the Senate for legislation allowing universal background checks for gun purchasers and for limiting gun magazines to 10 rounds and under.¶ "The debt and spending. That's where people are focused. That's the big anxiety of this country," Barrasso said on CNN.¶ Sen. Roy



Blunt, R-Mo., would not answer whether he could support background checks for every gun purchase. Without getting into specifics, he advocated for better information-sharing to prevent some people with mental health problems from buying guns.¶ “Let’s do things that will make a difference here, rather than take one more opportunity to go at an old agenda,” Blunt, a gun-rights advocate, said on Fox News

Sunday.¶ **When it comes to overhauling the nation’s immigration laws**, Plouffe said he believes **there’s broader**

**support from Republicans** nationally than there is from Republicans in Congress. Still, “the stars are aligned” for a bill to include beefing up border security as well as giving those already in the U.S. illegally a path to citizenship. He cited **business organizations and religious leaders as key players backing a comprehensive immigration bill**

## Obama is pushing Comprehensive Immigration Reform and it will pass – it’s top of the agenda

Sandra **Hernandez**, LA Times Staff, **1/19/13**, “Who stands to lose more if immigration reform fails?”, <http://www.latimes.com/news/opinion/opinion-la/la-ol-immigration-reform-obama-20130118,0,5616515.story>

As President **Obama’s second term gets underway, there is a growing debate about whether comprehensive immigration reform will remain a priority given the ambitious agenda he has outlined, including** the need to address the **budget, tax reform, climate change and gun violence**. So far, **the White House continues to say that immigration reform is on the front burner. More important, the administration is acting as if it is a priority. This week, for example, administration officials met with key members of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus to discuss how to push forward legislation**. Also this week, Sen. Patrick **Leahy** (D-Vt.), **who heads up the Senate Judiciary Committee, announced that the committee would probably take up the issue** next month. And **already, some bipartisan discussions are underway**. Outside Washington, business and religious **leaders** say they **consider immigration reform a top legislative priority and are launching a grass-roots drive to build support**. Yet some advocates and observers remain skeptical that federal lawmakers will actually move forward with new laws. Why? Well, for starters because **any type of effort to overhaul the immigration system will require support from moderate Republicans, such as** Sen. Marco **Rubio** (R-Fla.). He concedes that his party needs to improve its standing with Latino voters, who overwhelmingly cast their ballots for Obama, even in states that traditionally vote for a Republican candidate. But just how far Rubio and others are willing to go on the most vexing aspect of immigration reform remains a question. **Rubio and other moderates have signaled their support for legislation that would provide legal status to** so-called Dreamers, or **young undocumented immigrants who were brought to the United States unlawfully** as children. And **those same lawmakers will likely back plans to provide more visas for high-skilled workers and foreign students who earn advanced degrees from U.S. universities in math, science and engineering**. But those GOP lawmakers may fall short of supporting legislation that would provide a path to citizenship for the estimated 11 million undocumented immigrants already here. The party’s conservative base has traditionally opposed such efforts because some argue it’s little more than amnesty that rewards immigrants who broke the rules. But **I disagree with those who believe immigration reform is once again doomed**. I think **both parties understand they would pay a high price with Latino voters**.

## Immigration reform will pass – bipartisan push

David S **Jones**, Global Immigration Blog, **1/22/13**, “Momentum Grows for Comprehensive Immigration Reform”, <http://www.globalimmigrationblog.com/2013/01/articles/us-immigration/momentum-grows-for-comprehensive-immigration-reform/>

**Lawmakers return to Washington for the 113th Congress with comprehensive immigration reform once again moving to the front burner**. Comments and **proposals are being fielded by prominent political figures**, including former President George W. Bush <http://trailblazersblog.dallasnews.com/2012/12/george-w-bush-debate-immigration-policy-with-a-benevolent-spirit.html/> and Senator Marco Rubio <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887323442804578235844003050604.html>. **These and similar calls for Congress to finally address the country’s immigration system, widely criticized as “broken” on both sides of the aisle, seem to be resonating with the White House**, at

least mildly [http://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/citing-rubios-ideas-on-immigration-reform-white-house-sees-hope-for-bipartisan-deal/2013/01/15/d83f4102-5f48-11e2-9940-6fc488f3feccd\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/citing-rubios-ideas-on-immigration-reform-white-house-sees-hope-for-bipartisan-deal/2013/01/15/d83f4102-5f48-11e2-9940-6fc488f3feccd_story.html). **The growth of bipartisan support for comprehensive immigration reform may move the Administration and Congress to initiate a new push to enact immigration reform legislation as early as this March.** Senate **Majority Leader Harry Reid** recently noted publicly that a bipartisan group of senators, led by Democratic Sens. **Chuck Schumer and Dick Durbin** and Republican Sens. **John McCain and Lindsey Graham**, have been crafting an **immigration package** and that this **was to be “first thing” on the Senate’s agenda**. While the exact scope and language is still being discussed, **all indications are that the Administration is looking to pass comprehensive legislation that addresses multiple elements of immigration reform.** Key elements of any comprehensive solution **include: mandatory verification of legal status of newly hired workers, additional visa numbers for highly skilled immigrants and creation of a temporary guest-worker program.** Reform legislation also is **expected to address the approximately 11 million individuals currently residing in the U.S. without legal status.**

### **Immigration reform will pass – it’s a top priority, but push will be key**

Stacy **Kaper** and **Rebecca Kaplan**, NationalJournal, **1/21/13**, “What Obama Wants and What Congress Will Give Him”, <http://www.nationaljournal.com/congress/what-obama-wants-and-what-congress-will-give-him-20130121>

Immigration reform: **The president has made no secret of the fact that he is going to make comprehensive immigration reform a top priority of his second term. There is some bipartisan support, especially in the Senate, for legislation, but several sticking points remain.** Lawmakers disagree on whether there should be a path to citizenship or merely legal status for illegal immigrants, and whether it should be presented as a comprehensive bill or several smaller pieces of legislation. And for immigration reform to pass in the House, Speaker John Boehner might have to violate the Hastert rule and bring legislation to the floor without the majority backing of his conference. **Obama voiced support for one specific policy, arguing that immigration reform would be incomplete “until bright young students and engineers are enlisted in our workforce rather than expelled from our country.” Easing the path to citizenship for high-skilled workers enjoys broad bipartisan support in the House and Senate,** but will get caught up in the debate about the size of legislation.

### **Will pass**

**Associated Press**, Arkansas Online, **1/20/13**, “Obama adviser optimistic on immigration reform”, <http://www.arkansasonline.com/news/2013/jan/20/obama-adviser-optimistic-immigration-reform/?f=latest>

WASHINGTON — **A top White House adviser said the stars seemed aligned for Congress to pass comprehensive immigration reform this year.** Speaking Sunday on CNN’s “State of the Union,” **David Plouffe said support for reform is strong among lawmakers, the business community and the American people.** He said **there’s** quote, **“no reason” immigration reform shouldn’t move through Congress this year.**

### **Immigration reform will pass – enjoys support from tech lobbies and has bipartisan support**

Jennifer **Martinez** **1/21** The Hill, <http://thehill.com/blogs/hillicon-valley/technology/278323-obama-makes-call-for-high-skilled-immigration-reform-in-inaugural-address>

President **Obama made** a brief **mention** about **the need for high-skilled immigration reform during his inaugural address** at the United States Capitol on Monday. **Obama has made clear that passing comprehensive immigration legislation will be a policy priority** during his second term. **It’s expected that** a measure aimed at **boosting the number of visas available to foreign-born graduates** of U.S. universities with master’s degrees and

Ph.D.s in engineering, math and science fields **will be included in forthcoming immigration legislation.**¶ In his speech, Obama argued that foreign-born engineers and graduates with advanced degrees should be able to stay in the U.S. and join the workforce rather than be forced to return to their home countries.¶ "Our journey is not complete until we find a better way to welcome the striving, hopeful immigrants who still see America as a land of opportunity; until bright young students and engineers are enlisted in our workforce rather than expelled from our country," Obama said.¶ **The issue is a cornerstone policy priority for tech giants** such as Microsoft and Intel, which argue that they struggle to fill positions for engineering and research jobs because most applicants don't have the requisite skills for these positions. Tech companies also argue that they want to keep this talent in the U.S. rather than lose it to competitors abroad.¶ Obama has advocated for high-skilled immigration reform before. During the presidential debates last year, Obama noted that immigrants in the U.S. have founded some of the most prominent American tech companies, such as Google and Intel.¶ **High-skilled immigration legislation has** typically **enjoyed bipartisan support**, but past efforts to pass such measures have been tangled up in the larger immigration debate. **The momentum for passing a comprehensive immigration package**

**has ramped up** after Obama received roughly 70 percent of the Hispanic vote during the 2012 election.¶ Sen. Marco **Rubio** (R-Fla.) **is working with** Sen. Orrin **Hatch** (R-Utah) **to put forward immigration legislation, which is expected to include a high-skilled immigration** measure. In an interview with The Wall Street Journal this month, Rubio said bringing more high-skilled labor into the U.S. would be beneficial to the economy.

## **Obama pushing and efforts are already underway to build a compromise**

**Espo, 1/4** (David, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, 1/4/2013, "MORE FISCAL CLASHES LOOM A NEW CONGRESS BEGINS, STILL DIVIDED OVER FEDERAL DEFICIT," Factiva

**While neither** Mr. **Boehner** nor Mr. **Reid** mentioned immigration in their opening-day speeches, Mr. **Obama** **is expected to highlight the issue in the first State of the Union address** of his new term. **Lawmakers are already working toward a compromise** they hope can clear both houses.

## **Will Pass – Obama will use visa increase to get GOP support for comprehensive reform**

### **Bloomberg Business Week 1/21** <http://www.businessweek.com/articles/2013-01-21/the-hard-line-on-immigration-hidden-in-obamas-inaugural-speech>

President **Obama's** second **inaugural address was heavy on the theme of unity.** He used the word "together" seven times in the 15-minute speech. **But tucked inside was a prelude to a contentious fight he'll soon have with Republicans—the battle over** reforming the nation's **immigration** laws.¶ Obama couched his comments about the issue in uplifting language: "Our journey is not complete until we find a better way to welcome the striving, hopeful immigrants who still see America as a land of opportunity," he said. "Until bright young students and engineers are enlisted in our workforce, rather than expelled from our country."¶ On the surface, there's nothing controversial about that. Increasing the number of visas for highly-skilled immigrants is one of the few policy goals Obama and the GOP agree on. That reflects a big change in Republican thinking in recent months, as party leaders saw support among Hispanics drop in the face of tough anti-immigrant rhetoric. When Mitt Romney talked about immigrants during the Republican primaries, he focused on undocumented workers, suggesting they should "self-deport." By the summer, he had softened his tone, saying he wanted to "staple a green card to the diplomas" of all foreign math and science grads who study at U.S. universities.¶ **If visas** for highly-skilled workers **were the only issue on the table, Democrats and Republicans could solve it fairly quickly.** The GOP would need a little time to convince the staunchest conservatives to sign on. Democrats would have to win over unions, but that might not be too difficult because most science and engineering grads work in fields with few union jobs, anyway.¶ **But that's not the way it's going to happen.** What **Obama** didn't say in his speech, and the thing Republicans will latch onto in the days ahead, is that he **wants to tie the popular idea of raising visas for skilled workers to making broader changes in immigration laws—to which that Republicans strongly object.**¶ Last week, administration officials—speaking

anonymously, of course—"leaked" to reporters some of the details of Obama's immigration plan. For the first time, the White House made clear that the president won't agree to raise the visa caps for highly skilled immigrants unless it's part of an overall reform plan that includes a path to citizenship for many of the estimated 11 million immigrants living illegally in the U.S.¶ These immigrants aren't the "bright young" future job-creators Obama lauded in his speech. Most work dirty jobs for low wages, and many lack high-school diplomas. They're the undocumented workers that Republican governors in Arizona, Georgia, Alabama, and other states have driven away with tough anti-immigration laws.¶ **Obama's insistence on an everything-at-once approach puts Republicans in a difficult position as the party struggles to settle on a policy that its different factions can rally around.** For many House Republicans from Southern and border states, such words as "legalization" and "citizenship" are non-starters. But increasingly, party leaders and other prominent conservatives—House Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio), Senator Marco Rubio (R-Fla.), Charlie Spies, counsel for the pro-Romney Restore Our Future super PAC, even Bill O'Reilly—are advocating for a compromise—yet to be defined—between "throw them out"

and “let them stay.”¶ **This means that skilled would-be immigrants** hoping for the door to open could be in for a long wait. They’ve **become the essential bargaining chip in** what will likely be a tense, **protracted negotiation**—not just **between Democrats and Republicans**, but among Republicans themselves.

## Will pass – compromise coming

**Wand 1/21** <http://www.wandtv.com/story/20639869/senator-durbin-closer-to-passing-immigration-reform>

Senator Dick Durbin says **the chances are good that the U.S. Senate will pass immigration reform**.¶ Durbin says that he is one of three Democrats working with three Republicans to draft an immigration bill. He says all six senators agree that the legislation should include “The Dream Act” making college affordable for undocumented immigrants.¶ Durbin explains that **the bill will need support** of the Hispanic Caucus and Republicans, **so compromise is necessary**. He was not able to speculate about the prospects of approval in the republican-controlled house.

## Immigration reform will pass – Obama and the GOP will come together despite budget battles – must have space for agreement – the plan prevents it

**Reuters 1/4** [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/01/04/obama-second-term-plans\\_n\\_2411168.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/01/04/obama-second-term-plans_n_2411168.html)

**Obama** has **promised to pursue** a broad second-term agenda focused on comprehensive **immigration reform**, bolstering domestic energy production, fighting climate change and gun control. **After the “fiscal cliff” deal**, **he** said he **would not curtail his agenda because of the looming budget fights**.¶ **“We can** settle this debate, or at the very least, **not allow it to be so all-consuming all the time that it stops us from meeting a host of other challenges** that we face,” Obama said on New Year’s Day before boarding a flight to Hawaii to resume a holiday interrupted by the fiscal cliff fight.¶ “It’s not just possible to do these things; it’s an obligation to ourselves and to future generations,” he said.¶ PRIMED FOR A FIGHT¶ Republicans are primed for the coming fight, believing they have more leverage against Obama than during the fiscal cliff battle. Failure to close a deal on the debt ceiling could mean a default on U.S. debt or another downgrade in the U.S. credit rating like the one after a similar showdown in 2011.¶ A failure to reach agreement on a government funding bill could mean another federal shutdown like brief ones in 1995 and 1996.¶ Republicans say they will not back an increase in the federal debt ceiling without significant spending cuts opposed by many Democrats, particularly to popular “entitlement” programs such as the government-funded Medicare and Medicaid healthcare plans for the elderly and poor.¶ “When you look at what’s coming down the pike, it will make the fiscal cliff look like a day in Sunday school,” said Democratic strategist Chris Kofinis.¶ “You’re talking about a battle that’s going to last weeks or months. If they get a deal, it’s going to be ugly, it’s going to be brutal. Once you get past that, where do you find the will to address other issues? It’s going to be very hard,” he said.¶ **Administration officials promise to move quickly in** January in **pursuit of** new legislation on gun control and **immigration**. The gun control effort will be led by Vice President Joe Biden, who was appointed to develop a response to the deadly Connecticut school shootings in December.¶ But what seemed to be fresh momentum for new measures such as a ban on assault rifles after the mass killing in Connecticut could be stalled by a protracted focus on the seemingly never-ending budget showdowns.¶ **Obama** also **plans to introduce comprehensive immigration legislation this month**. Republicans will have fresh incentive on the issue after Hispanics soundly rejected Republican presidential contender Mitt Romney in the November election, giving Obama more than 70 percent of their vote.¶ But a Senate Republican leadership aide said economic issues would be the prime concern of Congress for months, pushing back consideration of gun control and immigration. The aide blamed Obama.¶ “The lack of leadership on spending and debt has put us behind on a number of other issues. That is not something that can be resolved quickly,” the aide said.¶ When blocked in Congress, Obama has shown a willingness to use executive orders and agency rules to make policy changes. During last year’s campaign, Obama ordered an end to deportations of young undocumented immigrants who came to the country as children and had never committed a crime.¶ This week, the Department of Homeland Security changed its rules to make it easier for undocumented immigrants to get a waiver allowing them to stay in the country as they seek permanent residency.¶ **With Republicans motivated to improve their standing with Hispanics, there is a chance Congress will work with the White House to pass an immigration bill** that both bolsters border security and offers a pathway to legal status for undocumented immigrants who pay their back taxes and fines.¶ **Finding the rare sweet spot where Obama and Republicans** actually **agree on an issue could be the key to** second-term **legislative success**.

## Passage likely – GOP support and momentum – prefer experts

**MacAskill 1/6** (Ewen, “Barack Obama readies for host of reforms on Washington return”, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2013/jan/06/barack-obama-second-term-reforms>)

Norman **Ornstein, a widely respected analyst at** Washington’s **American Enterprise Institute**, cautioned that second terms were usually less productive than first terms. Ornstein identified potential problems as “the continuing hold on the GOP [Grand Old Party] by

the radical right, and the continuing dysfunction **in our politics**", and also the high expectations among the Democratic base.¶ Ornstein, author of one of the best-received political books of the year, *It's Even Worse Than It Looks*, quickly **qualified** this gloomy assessment to add: "But that is not a surefire prediction that Obama will have a mediocre second term. **The election produced a new momentum for comprehensive immigration reform**, which would be a major advance. There is, obviously, a new dynamic on gun control."¶ Obama appears emboldened by his election victory, his confidence apparent around the White House and in his dealings with Republicans in Congress.¶ The broad outlines of his second term are already taking shape. When he initially jotted down his list of aims, gun control was not on it. Now it is a central issue, with proposed legislation planned for early this year – opening the way for confrontation with the gun lobby as well as members of Congress, predominantly the Republican party.¶ The start of the new Congress on 3 January was accompanied by a blizzard of proposed gun laws from Democrats, which include bans on automatic and semi-automatic weapons, a ban on large-capacity magazines (restricting the number of bullets to around half-a-dozen or so), and plugging loopholes that allow sales at gun shows without background checks.¶ **Republicans are coming round to the prospect of immigration reform, having been punished by Latino voters.** A path to citizenship for the estimated 12 million undocumented immigrants may be a step too far for many Republicans but they could put into legislation the Dream Act, building on Obama's executive order legalising the position of young Latinos brought to the US illegally by their parents.¶ Other priorities for a second term on the domestic front include steering the economy towards full recovery and consolidating healthcare reforms introduced in the first term but not due to start until 2014.¶ On the foreign front, the biggest challenge remains Iran and the prospect of direct talks between the US and Iran, as reported in the *New York Times* before the election and denied at the time by the White House, seem in the offing. There is Syria, Israel-Palestine and winding down the war in Afghanistan. Also outstanding is his failure to fulfil pledge to close Guantánamo. He will also face pressure to reduce the number of drone strikes.¶ If he manages to secure some foreign policy successes – adding to first-term achievements that include healthcare reform, ending the use of torture, recognition of gay service personnel in the military, and ending the war in Iraq – he could be well on his way to going down in history as one of the better Democratic presidents, up there with LBJ and Bill Clinton.¶ Tom **Mann, a political analyst at the Brookings Institution and author of many books on the presidency and Congress**, including co-authoring *It's Even Worse Than It Looks*, **predicts Obama has a "decent chance" of achieving something on** gun violence and **immigration.**

## Obama will push this month, will pass

Tom Kludt, "Report: Obama to Make Push for Immigration Reform this Month," TPM LIVEWIRE, 1--3--13, <http://livewire.talkingpointsmemo.com/entry/report-obama-to-make-push-for-immigration-reform>

President Barack **Obama is prepared to use his political capital to pursue immigration reform this month**, according to a report published Wednesday in the *Huffington Post*. ¶ The report cited an anonymous official in the Obama administration, who suggested that **the president is unlikely to be deterred by the protracted fiscal cliff debate that will be revisited in the coming months.** As such, **the administration will reportedly move quickly on both immigration reform and gun control.** ¶ The report also quoted an unnamed Senate Democratic aide, who gauged the likelihood of immigration reform to pass Congress. **Citing the fiscal cliff deal that passed the House of Representatives this week with a combination of Republican and Democratic votes, the aide expressed confidence that** House Speaker John **Boehner** (R-OH) **will be able to overcome expected opposition from the conservative wing** of his caucus.¶ "He already did it with this fiscal issue, so I would not be surprised if when it came down to it he puts up a bill that **he just allows to go through with a combination of Democratic and Republican votes, without worrying about a majority of the majority**," the aide said.

## Obama's push ensures passage but it could still be derailed – turns and solves their economy impacts

Koba 1/7/13 (Mark, "Why Immigration Reform May Happen This Year", 2k13, <http://www.cnbc.com/id/100351691>

A long-awaited **overhaul of U.S. immigration law has a good chance of happening this year**, bringing major changes to the millions of people living here illegally—and perhaps **giving the economy a boost**. ¶ While details are sketchy right now, the **Obama administration last week announced it is launching a major effort to push reforms through Congress soon**. ¶ A major goal is to expand the guest worker program to allow more foreign nationals to legally work in the U.S. But the biggest hurdle may be whether to grant amnesty to millions of illegal immigrants in the U.S.—or deport them. ¶ Analysts say that unlike failed attempts in the past, **they expect reform to get done this time—and it could end up being beneficial for the still sluggish economy**. (Read more: *Bleak Global Economy*) ¶ **If there's a way to bring millions of**

people legally into our system, they'd be **paying more taxes and spending more money and creating more jobs**," said Michael Wildes, managing partner of the immigration law firm Wildes & Weinberg. **"It would be a big boost to the economy"** and

any kind of amnesty provision that includes fees from illegal immigrants would help fill the treasury." Others agree that **this is the year something will get done**. "I think **some type of reform will happen soon**," said Jim Witte, director of the Institute for

**Immigration Research at George Mason University**. "There are traditional allies among Democrats but **there's also a growing conservative coalition of businesses and law enforcement who want immigration reform** as well." (Read more:

Disney To Layoff Workers?) It's estimated that some 40 million people in the U.S. are immigrants, according to the Census Bureau, with anywhere from 7 million to 20 million of them in the country illegally. Economic activity produced by illegal immigrant spending employs about 5 percent of the total U.S. workforce, according to a study by UCLA. The research indicates illegal immigrants produce a total of \$150 billion of economic activity each year. And billions of dollars from illegal worker paychecks flow into and support the Social Security system--some \$7.2 billion in 2009 alone, that they will be unable to collect. "The irony is that illegal immigrants are not entitled to many of the benefits they pay for," said Jamie Longazel, a professor of sociology at the University of Dayton. "The reality is that many people receive benefits on the backs of those who suffer." How to integrate them--or not--into the country could be the a stumbling block to any reform. But the idea of deporting millions of people isn't realistic, said Christine Greer, an assistant professor of political science at Fordham University. "We can't just pick up and move some 15 million people and their families out of the country," Greer said. "It's not feasible to do that. Besides, many kids came here with parents and had no choice. Some of

the kids don't even speak the language of their native land." But it's not just illegal immigration that's at stake. Some analysts have argued that since the late 1990s, **the U.S.**

**needs to find a way to allow more workers--most specifically skilled tech workers--to enter legally**. There are nearly one million people working in the U.S. under the current guest worker programs that allow U.S. employers to sponsor non-U.S. citizens in the country with temporary visas. That number is not big

enough, said Scott Cooper, managing attorney at the immigration law firm of Fragomen, Del Rey, Benson & Lowey. (Read more: Why End of Stimulus May Not Be All Bad) **The U.S.**

**needs more skilled workers from abroad and be more receptive to the contributions they make economically**," said Cooper. **"We're limiting our economy by not letting more in."** "We need go beyond the current quota of 140,000

legal immigrants per year and allow more qualified people with math and science skills to enter the U.S.," said Ted Ruthizer, a lawyer who teaches immigration law and policy at Columbia University. said. **"The Job market is screaming for them."** But not everyone sees an economic rainbow with immigrants, legal or not. (Read more: US May Get

Messy Again: Roubini) "Their contribution is large, but I think it's hard to accurately say what impact immigrants have on the economy, especially when it comes to the earnings and spending of illegal immigrants," said Jim Witte. "You can say that some competition from illegal workers may depress the wages of legal workers. On the other hand you can also say that cheaper illegal labor frees up people at higher skill levels to put their talents to a higher value," Witte said. Business groups, like the U.S. Chamber of Commerce have called for tighter border security but also say they advocate establishing provisional visas for lesser skilled workers, having sufficient numbers of visas for the highly skilled and for agriculture workers. "These changes would allow employers to hire immigrants in accordance with the demands of the economy, when U.S. workers are unavailable," according to the chamber's web site. For the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR), who contend that immigrants are a drain on the economy, any reforms must include not only stricter border controls but tougher laws limiting any kind of immigration -- with amnesty for no one. "We blame the business community as well as others because we're bringing in people who have poor job skills, are poorly educated and relegated to the lower rung on the economic ladder," said Ira Mehlman, a spokesman for FAIR. "We end up paying for all their health care they take away jobs from Americans." (Read more: Health Insurance Rates Rise) The last attempt at reform came in 2007 from President George W. Bush who advocated an expanded guest worker program that would tighten security along the southern border while allowing about 11 million illegal immigrants to work legally in the country temporarily before forcing them to return home. But the measure failed to get any support in

Congress. That lack of action spurred some states, like Arizona and Alabama, to pass their own stringent and controversial immigration laws. **What's different now on**

**the national level--and why reform is likely to become law in the months ahead -- is a shift in the**

**political scene**, said Scott Cooper. "The recent presidential election changed things with the immigration vote going so strongly to Obama," Cooper said. "So that's why I think

there will be reform because **the Republicans need it to win elections and Obama has to give something to the**

**immigration groups that voted for him**." Despite what many consider the best chances in decades for reform, **getting it done won't be**

**easy**. "I'm not optimistic about any reform package because of the extent to which current policy reflects corporate interests for cheap labor and the fact that most politicians lack the courage to stand up to those who spout anti-immigration sentiment," said Jamie Longazel. Immigration reform is hard to do anytime because of the many misconceptions about it, said Evie P. Jeang, founder and managing partner of the Ideal Legal Group, an immigration and labor law firm. "The myths are that immigrants steal jobs, commit more crimes, mooch off our health care and don't pay taxes," said Jeang. "The studies have shown that's not true. Even unlawful immigrants pay more in taxes that they use in welfare services." **But there are**

**reasons for optimism**. A so called bi-partisan 'Gang of Eight' of U.S. senators has been meeting since the first week of December to discuss reform. They include Democrats

Chuck Schumer, Dick Durbin and Bob Menendez as well as Republicans Lindsey Graham, Mike Lee and John McCain. Schumer said he and Graham are reviving talks about an immigration

reform proposal they started in 2010. (Read more: Most Stressful Jobs) President **Obama has moved in pieces on immigration**, despite having deported record numbers of illegal immigrants in his first term--some 409,849 from October 2011 through September 2012, the fourth consecutive fiscal year that the number increased. Obama issued an executive order on January 2, making it easier for illegal immigrants to obtain permanent residency if they have immediate relatives who are U.S. citizens. And before the November election, Obama issued a directive that grants people who'd be eligible for the DREAM Act -- a law that would give certain illegal immigrants between 16 and 30 legal standing -- a reprieve from

deportation and work-authorization papers. Whether a reform bill includes deportation mandates, amnesty provisions or a broader guest worker program, **expect a hard**

**fight** in Washington, said Christine Greer. **However**, Greer said, **something will get done**.



## 2nc UQ – top priority

### **Obama will push immigration – 3 weeks**

**LA Times 1/21** <http://www.latimes.com/news/politics/la-pn-axelrod-immigration-reform-coming-early-in-obamas-agenda-20130121,0,2596253.story>

WASHINGTON -- **While fiscal battles have dominated** discussions of President Obama's second term, a top advisor said Monday that **the president will push forward with immigration reform** early on -- possibly as soon as the State of the Union speech **in three weeks**. Speaking shortly after the inauguration ceremony, senior advisor David Axelrod suggested **Obama carries the goodwill of the American public** with him as he sets out on his second term. "I think the country likes this president. I think they support this president. Now he has four years to finish the work he's begun," Axelrod told reporters as he walked through the halls at the Capitol. "We've got a foundation on which to build and he has a chance to build on it." Axelrod suggested congressional **Republicans should reconsider their opposition to the president's agenda**, as polls show Americans have grown tired of the cycle of brinkmanship. Several top Republicans panned Obama's inauguration speech on Monday, suggesting Obama did not signal a willingness to reach across the aisle to find common ground on issues. Arizona Sen. John McCain of Arizona, a former Republican presidential nominee, was among those lobbing a note of criticism. "Really? I'm surprised because Sen. McCain is usually so receptive to what the president has to say," Axelrod said, in a sarcastic reference to the 2008 combatants' routine disagreement. The longtime Obama advisor defended the president's approach. "I think he did reach out in the sense that he made the point that we always have achieved what we achieved as a country by working together and we have to work together now," Axelrod said. "You hear in the speech what you want to, I suppose. But I don't believe that it was a particularly political speech. I think it was a speech about the values and principles that should unite us -- and I hope they do." **Axelrod declined to prioritize the top few issues** on the president's agenda, **but suggested immigration is gaining in importance** as the budget battles consume the early months ahead. **"I expect you're going to see immigration surface early** in the year," he said. "We have certain immutable deadlines relative to the fiscal discussion, but I do believe **he's going to move quickly on immigration** as well -- he's got a State of the Union in three weeks." So perhaps an immigration message at that time? "Early means early."

### **Immigration comes first – it's where Obama is focusing**

**FOX News, 1/21/13**, "Obama warns against steep spending cuts, presses for immigration bill in inaugural address", <http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2013/01/21/obama-official-swearing-in-monday-but-celebrations-second-term-in-full-swing/>

More immediately, Obama has stated that Congress must increase the debt ceiling to keep the country from defaulting on its bills and that he will not negotiate on the issue. However, **the White House has already put Congress on notice that budget talks could be delayed because Obama will miss the legal Feb. 14 deadline** to submit his plan.

**Despite having to deal with those issues** right away, **Obama appears committed to addressing immigration reform in the early months**, purportedly **in a one-step, comprehensive package**.

### **None of your thumpers matter – Immigration is the only thing Obama will be able to spend capital on**

Todd J. **Gillman**, Washington Bureau, **1/19/13**, "Analysis: Barack Obama appears to bring new toughness to second term", <http://www.dallasnews.com/news/politics/headlines/20130119-analysis-barack-obama-appears-to-bring-new-toughness-to-second-term.ece>

**Divided government and tight budgets are likely to keep Obama from achieving much in the way of new agenda items**. He'll spend much of the next few years fending off cuts to Social Security and warding off threats to undermine his signature health care reforms. **One of the few major areas where Obama may find it easier to reach accommodation with Republicans is immigration. It's a rare issue on which Republicans have a strong electoral incentive to take many of the same steps sought by Democrats, because Latino voters overwhelmingly supported Obama and GOP strategists are keenly aware of the risk of long-term alienation of that growing bloc.**

## Top priority – but new issues will cause crowd-out

**González 1/4/12** (and Dan Nowicki, “Cliff” fight, gun control pushing immigration reform out of spotlight”, <http://www.azcentral.com/news/politics/articles/20130103immigration-reform-at-crossroads.html>,

In an interview Sunday on NBC’s “Meet the Press,” **Obama reiterated** that “**fixing** our broken **immigration** system is a **top priority**.” ¶ “We’ve talked about it long enough,” he said. ¶ **The overwhelming support Obama received from Latino voters in November** also **prompted many Republicans to call for immigration reform** in a bid to rehabilitate their party’s negative image with Latinos. ¶ **But immigration reform has a long history of being sidetracked by other issues**. Health-care reform and fixing the economy knocked immigration reform off the table in 2009 and 2010. Now, spending cuts and gun control are threatening to derail immigration reform again. ¶ That’s because **the window to pass immigration legislation is short**, analysts and immigration-reform advocates say. ¶ **If nothing happens this year, immigration reform may become too politically radioactive to tackle leading up to the 2014 congressional midterm election and then the 2016 presidential election.**

## Top priority – will invest all his PC

**Peterson 1/3/13** (Hayley, “Obama will introduce broad immigration reform as early as January”, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2256426/Obama-introduce-broad-immigration-reform-early-January.html>

**Now, with his second election behind him, Obama is again pushing to make immigration a top priority for his administration.** ¶ **'Fixing our broken immigration system is a top priority,' he said** on NBC's 'Meet the Press' last week. **Obama also said** during the interview he would act quickly on passing new restrictions on firearms in 2013. ¶ **'I'm going to be putting forward a package and I'm going to be putting my full weight behind it.'** he said. **'I'm going to be making an argument to the American people about why this is important and why we have to do everything we can to make sure that something like what happened at Sandy Hook Elementary does not happen again.'**



## 2nc top of docket

### Immigration first, Obama pushing, capital key

**ABC NEWS**, "Analysis: 6 things Obama Needs to Do for Immigration Reform," 1--2--13, [http://abcnews.go.com/ABC\\_Univision/News/things-president-obama-immigration-reform/story?id=18103115#.UOYgd5PjIJ8](http://abcnews.go.com/ABC_Univision/News/things-president-obama-immigration-reform/story?id=18103115#.UOYgd5PjIJ8)

On Sunday, President Barack **Obama said** that **immigration reform is a "top priority" on his agenda** and that he would introduce legislation in his first year. To find out what he needs to do to make reform a reality, we talked to Lynn Tramonte, the deputy director at America's Voice, a group that lobbies for immigration reform, and Muzaffar Chishti, the director of the New York office of the Migration Policy Institute, a think tank. Here's what we came up with. 1. Be a Leader During Obama's first term, bipartisan legislation never got off the ground. The president needs to do a better job leading the charge this time around, according to Chishti. "He has to make it clear that it's a high priority of his," he said. "He has to make it clear that **he'll use his bully pulpit and his political muscle to make it happen, and** he has to **be open to using his veto power.**" His announcement this weekend is a step in that direction, but he needs to follow through. 2. Clear Space on the Agenda Political priorities aren't always dictated by the folks in D.C., as the tragic Connecticut school shooting shows us. While immigration had inertia after the election, the fiscal cliff and gun violence have been the most talked about issues around the Capitol in recent weeks. **The cliff could recede from view now that Congress has passed a bill, but** how quickly **the president** can resolve the other issues on his agenda **could determine whether immigration reform is possible** this year. "There's only limited oxygen in the room," Chishti said.

### Yes Obama will push.

**Oman Observer**, 1-1-2013, p. [main.omanobserver.com/node/136439](http://main.omanobserver.com/node/136439)

President Barack **Obama is pledging to focus in his second term on immigration reform**, boosting economic growth through infrastructure repair and energy policies that nod to environmental protection. The president is mired in a difficult fight with congressional Republicans to avoid sharp spending cuts and steep tax increases collectively referred to as the "fiscal cliff." However, **he** still **has a** longer-term **to-do list for his remaining four years in office**, he said in an interview on NBC's Meet the Press that was broadcast on Sunday. Obama, who won re-election in November after a campaign in which he succeeded in painting himself as a strong advocate for the middle class and those aspiring to join it, also promised in the interview to make a run at passing gun control legislation in the first year of his second term. **"Fixing our broken immigration system is a top priority," he said. He renewed a pledge to introduce legislation in the first year of his second term to get it done.** Immigration reform is a sensitive subject for the president, who failed to fulfil his promise to revamp the system during his first term. Latino voters were a critical part of the coalition that helped get him re-elected, a fact that may soften political opposition from Republicans, who are eager to bolster their support with that demographic group.

## A2 thumper – generic

**Top priority – comes before everything, including gun control**

**AP 1/26** (“Obama, senators launching immigration push”,

<http://www.newsday.com/news/nation/obama-senators-launching-immigration-push-1.4514347>

President Barack **Obama will launch a campaign next week aimed at overhauling** the nation's flawed **immigration** system and creating legal status for millions, as a bipartisan Senate group nears agreement on achieving the same goals.¶ **The proposals from Obama** and lawmakers **will mark the start of** what is expected to be **a contentious** and emotional **process** with deep political implications. Latino voters overwhelmingly backed Obama in the 2012 election, leaving Republicans grappling for a way to regain their standing with an increasingly powerful pool of voters.¶ **The president will press his case for immigration** changes during a trip to Las Vegas Tuesday. The Senate working group is also aiming to outline its proposals next week, according to a Senate aide.¶ Administration officials say **Obama's** second-term immigration **push will be a continuation of the principles he outlined during his first four years in office** but failed to act on. He is expected to revive his little-noticed 2011 immigration "blueprint," which calls for a **pathway to citizenship** for illegal immigrants that includes paying fines and back taxes; increased **border security**; mandatory **penalties for businesses that employ unauthorized immigrants**; and **improvements to the legal immigration** system, including giving **green cards to high-skilled workers** and **lifting caps on legal immigration for the immediate family members** of U.S. citizens.¶ "What has been absent in the time since he put those principles forward has been a willingness by Republicans, generally speaking, to move forward with comprehensive immigration reform," White House press secretary Jay Carney said. "What he hopes is that that dynamic has changed."¶ The political dynamic does appear to have shifted following the November election. Despite making little progress on immigration in his first term, Obama won more than 70 percent of the Latino vote, in part because of the conservative positions on immigration that Republican nominee Mitt Romney staked out during the GOP primary. Latino voters accounted for 10 percent of the electorate in November.¶ The president met privately Friday morning with the Congressional Hispanic Caucus to discuss his next steps on immigration. Among those in the meeting was Rep. Linda Sanchez, D-Calif., who said **Obama told lawmakers "immigration reform is his number one legislative priority."**¶ **That could bump back** the president's efforts to seek legislation enacting **stricter gun laws**, another issue he has vowed to make a top second term priority.

## A2 thumper – guns

### **Immigration will pass and guns will not thump it**

**News Times 1/19** <http://www.newstimes.com/local/article/Immigration-reform-suddenly-approachable-4208125.php>

Ironically, **the success of the domestic agenda** in his second term -- which, as of **now, appears centered on immigration reform** and gun control -- **depends on playing to both red states and the blue ones**.¶ Neither immigration nor gun control had a significant place in Obama's first-term agenda.¶ Indeed, at their core, both are public safety programs -- messy and dark and generally removed from the "hope" that got him to the White House. But in the span of a few weeks, the 2012 presidential election and the massacre at Newtown provided the impetus for a renewed push for both comprehensive immigration reform and comprehensive gun controls.¶ The question now is whether the White House can do both, and that has proponents of immigration reform very anxious. Pro-immigration forces had the president's ear in November. Hispanics are now over 10 percent of the total electorate, twice as big a portion as just 20 years ago, and they gave Obama over 70 percent of their votes.¶ But then all those children were killed in Newtown, and immigration reform became a lesser priority. The moral obligation to address gun violence fell quickly on Obama and Vice President Joe Biden. Their announcement last week of sweeping legislative and administrative changes was driven by a near-universal revulsion at what happened in Connecticut.¶ A CBS News/New York Times poll released last Thursday showed that, among Democrats, 93 percent support background check for gun purchasers; among Republicans, it's 89 percent. These numbers are more than a mandate; they make some kind of change a foregone conclusion.¶ **The political reality today is that immigration reform and gun control can occur simultaneously, because they are being driven by different forces**. This is hopeful news for those who believe we should be judged as a nation both by how we treat our newest citizens and protect our youngest ones.¶ **With Republicans now eager to engage in a discussion on immigration reform**, to undo some of the damage of their past resistance, **Obama can leave much of the impetus for immigration to the red states** and promote gun control via the blue ones.¶ The last part is already happening: Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick, Maryland Governor Martin O'Malley, and New York Governor Andrew Cuomo either are pushing, or have already passed, state legislation in tandem with the White House's gun-control effort. Democrats in conservative states, like Senator Mary Landrieu of Louisiana and Majority Leader Harry Reid on Nevada, will need the White House to stay engaged on gun control, if only to provide them with cover.¶ Meanwhile, as Republicans become more recalcitrant on gun control -- and the lunacy of the NRA's media campaign continues -- they will need to find an issue that makes them seem kinder and gentler. Enter immigration reform.¶ **The Republicans know that their future rests on embracing a more diverse electorate. They need immigration reform as much as it needs them**. This pressure is felt most acutely by state-level Republican leaders aiming for 2016, such as Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal.¶ Hints of this strategy were apparent last week, when the White House complimented Florida Republican Senator Marco Rubio for conceding, in a Wall Street Journal interview, that he would support a path for citizenship for 11 million illegal immigrants. The Obama administration can afford to be gracious to Rubio, the GOP's rising star and a likely 2016 presidential candidate. They had stolen his thunder last summer when they stopped deportations of young, illegal immigrants (the DREAMers) before Rubio could get a similar proposal out.

### **Immigration 1<sup>st</sup> – comes before everything, including gun control**

**AP 1/26** ("Obama, senators launching immigration push",

<http://www.newsday.com/news/nation/obama-senators-launching-immigration-push-1.4514347>

President Barack **Obama will launch a campaign next week aimed at overhauling** the nation's flawed **immigration** system and creating legal status for millions, as a bipartisan Senate group nears agreement on achieving the same goals.¶ **The proposals from Obama** and lawmakers **will mark the start of** what is expected to be a **contentious** and emotional **process** with deep political implications. Latino voters overwhelmingly backed Obama in the 2012 election, leaving Republicans grappling for a way to regain their standing with an increasingly powerful pool of voters.¶ **The president will press his case for** **immigration** changes during a trip to Las Vegas Tuesday. The Senate working group is also aiming to outline its proposals next week, according to a Senate aide.¶ Administration officials say **Obama's** second-term immigration **push will be a continuation of the principles he outlined during his first four years in office** but failed to act on. He is expected to revive his little-noticed 2011 immigration "blueprint," which calls for a **pathway to citizenship** for illegal immigrants that includes paying fines and back taxes; increased **border security**; mandatory **penalties for businesses that employ unauthorized immigrants**; and **improvements to the legal immigration** system, including giving **green cards to high-skilled workers** and **lifting caps on legal immigration for** the **immediate family members** of U.S. citizens.¶ "What has been absent in the time since he put those principles forward has been a willingness by Republicans, generally speaking, to move forward with comprehensive immigration

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## Won't be a fight or effect immigration

**Hopkins 1/20** (Cheyenne, "Plouffe Predicts Passage of Gun Control, Immigration Changes", <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2013-01-20/plouffe-predicts-passage-of-gun-control-immigration-measures.html>,

President Barack Obama's proposed **immigration law** changes **and gun control** measures **should be able to pass Congress**, said David Plouffe, Obama's senior political adviser.¶ **Newtown has changed the debate**, Plouffe said on CNN's "State of the Union" today, referring to the Connecticut town where 20 schoolchildren and 6 educators were killed last month. "Sadly, it took a tragedy like that, but you're seeing **a lot of people** -- by the way Democrats and Republicans -- **think differently about this issue** since this tragedy."¶ Enlarge image Obama Takes Oath at White House to Begin Second Term¶ U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts administers the oath of office as U.S. President Barack Obama is sworn in for a second term in the Blue Room of the White House in Washington, D.C. on Sunday. Photographer: Brendan Smialowski/Pool via Bloomberg¶ Obama was officially sworn in today, as required by the Constitution, in a small ceremony at the White House. He will take the oath a second time tomorrow in a public event on the steps of the U.S. Capitol. Chief Justice John Roberts will administer both oaths.¶ Vice President Joe Biden was also sworn in today for a second term by Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor at his residence at the Naval Observatory in Washington. Later, Obama and Biden laid a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknowns in Arlington National Cemetery.¶ Obama has staked out a second term agenda of overhauling immigration, gun control and the tax code. **Plouffe took an optimistic stance, saying that the time has come for both immigration change and gun control.**¶ Republican Reaction¶ U.S. Senator Roy Blunt, a Republican from Missouri, said he wants to see a detailed gun control plan from Obama.¶ "Let's do things better rather than take an opportunity to go after an old agenda," Blunt said today on "Fox News Sunday" program. "There has to be a plan that could possibly work or the president won't get it done."¶ Senator John Barrasso, a Republican from Wyoming, said the president's plan won't pass Congress and he doubts Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid will bring it to the floor.¶ "He has six Democrats up for election in two years in states where the president received fewer than 42 percent of the vote," Barrasso said on CNN's "State of the Union." Democrats control the Senate with 53 seats to 45 Republican seats. The two independent senators caucus with the Democrats.¶ "He doesn't want his Democrats to have to choose between their own constituencies and the president's positions," Barrasso. He said the president is focusing too much on gun control and ignoring mental health and violence in society.¶ Economic Wreckage¶ Obama's first term was largely consumed by repairing economic wreckage from the 2008 financial crisis and getting his health care law passed. His second term is starting with efforts to reach a compromise with Congress on raising the debt ceiling and cutting deficit spending.¶ A Republican plan for a short-term debt ceiling increase, giving the Treasury Department three more months of borrowing capacity, is "progress," Plouffe said on the "Fox News Sunday" program. "We don't think short-term is smart for the economy" because it doesn't offer certainty, he said on Fox.¶ The debt limit has been periodically raised since its creation in 1917, when Congress and President Woodrow Wilson authorized the Treasury to issue long-term securities to help finance entry into World War I. Since 1960, Congress has raised or revised the limit 79 times, including 49 times under Republican presidents, according to the Treasury Department, noting the U.S. never has defaulted on its obligations.¶ Three Months¶ "Three months is no way to run the economy or railroad or anything else so that's not ideal," Plouffe said on CBS's "Face the Nation" program. Still, "it's a significant moment that the Republican party now has moved off their position that the only way they're going to pay their bills is if they get the correct kind of concessions."¶ The Senate will pass a budget this year, U.S. Senator Charles Schumer, a Democrat from New York, said on NBC's "Meet the Press" program.¶ "It's going to have revenues in it and our Republican colleagues better get used to that fact," Schumer said.¶ House Republicans last week said they plan to vote on a three-month extension of U.S. borrowing authority in an effort to force the Democratic-led Senate to adopt a budget.¶ Financing for government agencies is scheduled to lapse in March. Congress faces two other fiscal deadlines in the next 90 days, and House Republicans plan to use those debates -- rather than the struggle over the debt limit -- to try to force spending cuts.¶ The last time Congress fought over the ceiling, Obama signed an increase on Aug. 2, 2011, the day that the Treasury warned U.S. borrowing authority would expire.¶ Credit Rating¶ Standard & Poor's cut the nation's credit rating. Still, Treasury bond investors -- who most directly bear the risk of any government default -- haven't shown alarm. Yields on 10-year U.S. Treasury notes declined to 2.56 percent on Aug. 5, 2011, the day of the S&P downgrade, and continued to fall.¶ Yields on 10-year Treasuries, a benchmark for everything from mortgages to corporate borrowing costs, are down from more than 5 percent in 2007, before the financial crisis of 2008.¶ Treasury 10-year notes rose last week for a second week for the first time since November as the absence of a resolution to the impasse the U.S. debt ceiling sustained demand for the safest securities. The 10-year note yield fell this week three basis points, or 0.03 percentage point, to 1.84 percent, according to Bloomberg Bond Trader pricing.¶ Plouffe said Congress has the votes to pass Obama's agenda.¶ "We're confident and that's one reason we want to stay in communication with the American people because I think they are going to demand action here," Plouffe said on CNN.¶ Gun Control¶ The Dec. 14 shooting in a Connecticut grade school thrust gun control to the top of Obama's second-term agenda. This past week, he unveiled the most ambitious gun-control proposals in decades, announcing a \$500 million package of legislation and executive actions aimed at curbing firearms violence.¶ The president called on Congress to require background checks for all gun buyers, ban high-capacity

ammunition clips, and reinstate a ban on sales of assault weapons. Obama also signed 23 executive actions aimed at circumventing congressional opposition to new gun restrictions, including several designed to maximize prosecution of gun crimes and improve access to government data for background checks. Plouffe said **the president should be able to get the 60 votes in the Senate and the 219 votes in the House needed to pass a gun control bill.** Assault Weapons. "If you look at high-capacity magazines, assault weapons, universal background checks, progress we can make on mental health and school safety, **all of these things enjoy enormous support of** the American people, **both Democrats and Republicans,**" Plouffe said on ABC's "This Week with George Stephanopoulos." "Putting together the legislative coalition is going to be hard, obviously, but **we're very confident.** I do think **things have changed** since Newtown," Plouffe said. Obama's call has put him in conflict with the National Rifle Association, which opposes the restrictions and has called for armed guards in every school. The gun lobby last week released an ad saying Obama's own daughters are protected by armed guards at school and calling the president an "elitist hypocrite." Obama's inaugural address tomorrow and State of the Union speech on Feb. 12 will set the tone as he pushes for action. Plouffe said **there is no reason** "that **immigration reform shouldn't pass.**" "Obviously **the legislative process has to work its way through but this is the moment,**" Plouffe said. **"The stars seem to be aligned** to finally get comprehensive immigration reform."

## **Immigration will pass by the summer – PC is key and no thumpers -**

Chris Weignat 1/23 Political writer and blogger with the Huffington Post, "Handicapping Obama's Second Term Agenda," [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/chris-weigant/obama-second-term\\_b\\_2537802.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/chris-weigant/obama-second-term_b_2537802.html)

**Realistically, Obama's only going to have anywhere from a few months to (at most) a year and a half to get anything accomplished. Which is why he is right to push his agenda immediately,** as evidenced by his inaugural speech. **But even he must realize that he's not going to get everything he wants, so it will be interesting to see what makes it through Congress and what dies an ignoble legislative death. There is reason for hope. Obama begins from a position of strength, politically.** His job approval ratings have **been consistently over 50 percent since he was re-elected** -- a range Obama hasn't seen since 2009. As mentioned, **the Republican presence in both houses of Congress has shrunk. More importantly,** though, **the House Republicans are visibly chastened (or even "shaken") by the election's outcome.** This has already allowed Obama to rack up two early victories in the endless budget debates -- and in both, Obama got almost everything he asked for, did not give up much of anything, and held firm on some very bold negotiating tactics. **Obama won the fight over the fiscal cliff,** which resulted in the first rise in income tax rates in two decades, **and** the only thing he had to budge on was the threshold for these higher taxes. Today, the House Republicans passed a "clean" rise in **the debt ceiling,** after Obama swore over and over again that he "was not going to negotiate" on the issue at all. **The score so far is: Obama two, House Republicans zero** (to put it in sporting terms). Of course, the Republicans only extended the debt ceiling for a few months, but this shouldn't really worry anyone, because a longer-term extension will doubtlessly be a part of any sort of grand bargain on the budget talks. **The Republicans,** very wisely, **realized they were playing a losing game and decided to reshuffle the deadlines on the calendar.** Rather than being faced with the debt ceiling crisis first, and then two budgetary crises, they **have moved the debt ceiling problem to the end of the list.** Which means the next big fight Obama faces is going to be another haggle over the budget. This is going to be a tough battle, and Obama is bound to disappoint some of his supporters in the midst of it. Some sacred cows are going to wind up as hamburger, although at this point it's hard to see which ones. The real measurement of success here will be whether the House Republicans and Obama can come to terms with a budget for the next year or year-and-a-half. Long-term budget stability has been largely absent from Washington for a while now, so if any agreement can be reached perhaps it'll help the economy recover a lot faster throughout 2013 and 2014. In the long run, that will be a positive thing, no matter what such a budget agreement actually contains. One safe bet for what will be in it, though, is a long-term extension of the debt ceiling. **Budget battles are going to happen no matter what else does -- that's another safe bet. What is more interesting, though, is handicapping which of Obama's agenda items will actually see some action.** **There are three major initiatives that Obama is currently pushing: action on global warming, comprehensive immigration reform, and gun control. Obama did mention other issues in his speech, but these are the big three for now.** Gay marriage, for instance, is in the hands of the Supreme Court right now, and no matter how they rule it's hard to see any legislative action (good or bad) happening on it immediately afterwards. Gun control will likely be the first of these debated in Congress. Vice President Biden laid out a wide array of possible actions Congress could take on the issue, all of which Obama then backed. While the Newtown massacre did indeed shift public opinion dramatically on the overall issue, the biggest initiative is not likely to become law. **An assault rifle ban** is very important to some Democrats, but the way I read it is that this was included to have something to "trade away" in the negotiations. If Obama gets most of the other gun control initiatives -- closing loopholes on background checks, much

better tracking of weapons, and all the other "small bore" (sorry about that pun) ideas -- then he will at least be able to say he accomplished something at the end of the day. Perhaps this is pessimistic, but the mechanics of banning "assault weapons" become very tricky, when you have to actually define what they are in legal language. And such a ban may not get universal Democratic backing anyway, so I fully expect this **will be shelved at some point in exchange for support for all the other initiatives. Without such a ban,** the prospects for other meaningful **gun control legislation** get a lot better, though, and I think that a bill **will eventually pass.** **The second big agenda item is immigration reform. President Obama holds virtually all the cards, politically, on this one.** All Republicans who can read either demographics or polling numbers know full well that this may be their party's last chance not to go the way of the Whigs. Their support among Latinos is dismal, and even that's putting it politely. Some Republicans think they have come up with a perfect solution on how to defuse the issue, but they are going to be proven sadly mistaken in the end, I believe. The Republican plan will be announced by Senator Marco Rubio at some point, and it will seem to mirror the Democratic plan -- with one key difference. Republicans -- even the ones who know their party has to do something on the immigration problem -- are balking at including a "path to citizenship" for the 11 million undocumented immigrants who are already in America. The Republicans are trying to have their cake and eat it too -- and it's not going to work. "Sure," they say, "we'll give some sort of papers to these folks, let them stay, and even let them work... but there's no need to give them the hope of ever becoming a full citizen." This just isn't going to be good enough, though. There are essentially two things citizens can do which green card holders cannot: serve on juries, and vote. The Republicans are not worried about tainted juries, in case that's not clear enough. Republicans will bend over backwards in an effort to convince Latinos that their proposal will work out just fine for everyone. Latinos, however, aren't stupid. They know that being denied any path to citizenship equals an effort to minimize their voice on the national political stage. Which is why, as I said, Obama holds all the cards in this fight. Because this is the one issue in his agenda which Republicans also have a big vested interest in making happen. Obama and the Democrats will, I believe, hold firm on their insistence on a path to citizenship, and I think **a comprehensive immigration bill will likely pass some time this year, perhaps before the summer congressional break.** The path to citizenship it includes will be long, expensive and difficult (Republicans will insist on at least that), but it will be there. On gun control, I think Obama will win a partial victory. On immigration, I think he will win an almost-total victory. **On global warming,** however, **he's going to be disappointed.** In fact, **I doubt -- no matter how much "bully pulping" Obama does -- that any bill will even appear out of a committee in either house of Congress.** This will be seen as Obama's "overreach" -- a bridge too far for the current political climate. Anyone expecting big legislative action on global warming is very likely going to be massively disappointed, to put it quite bluntly. In fact, Obama will signal this in the next few months, as he approves the Keystone XL pipeline -- much to the dismay of a lot of his supporters. Of course, I could be wrong about any or all of these predictions. I have no special knowledge of how things will work out in Congress in the immediate future. I'm merely making educated guesses about what Obama will be able to achieve in at least the first few years of his second term. **Obama has a lot of political capital right now, but that could easily change soon.** The House **Republicans** seem almost demoralized right now, and Obama has successfully splintered them and called their bluff on two big issues already -- but they **could regroup and decide to block everything** the White House wants, and damn the political consequences. **Unseen issues will pop up** both on the domestic and foreign policy stages, as they always do. **But, for now, this is my take on how the next few years are going to play out in Washington.** Time will tell whether I've been too optimistic or too pessimistic on any or all of Obama's main agenda items. We'll just have to wait and see.



## A2 thumper – NLRB

### **More ev to support this distinction – Obama’s legislative prioritization ensures passage**

**Gomez, 1/25** (Alan, “Obama, members of Congress start immigration push,”

<http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2013/01/25/obama-immigration-congress-legislation/1865129/>,

**Obama has vowed to make immigration a 'top legislative priority.'** The push to overhaul the nation's immigration laws is officially underway. President **Obama met with Hispanic members of Congress** at the

White House on Friday **and is planning** a speech in Las Vegas on Tuesday **to "redouble the administration's efforts to work with Congress to fix the broken immigration system this year,"** according to a White House statement.

**Obama insisted that he would lead on the issue** and emphasized that any changes to the nation's immigration laws would include an "earned pathway to citizenship" for the nation's 11 million illegal immigrants. Republicans have insisted that the country fully secure the borders and enact tight restrictions on businesses from hiring illegal immigrants before granting any new rights to people illegally living in the country. STORY: Jeb Bush pushes comprehensive immigration strategy After Friday's meeting, **members of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus** — all Democrats — **said they were enthusiastic by the president's commitment to moving**

**on an immigration bill.** **"The president is the quarterback and he will direct the team, call the play**

**and be pivotal if we succeed,"** said Rep. **Luis Gutierrez**, D-Ill., one of the House members who will be shepherding the bill

through Congress. **Both Republicans and Democrats have discussed the need to tackle immigration this term, but there are many disagreements over what it will look like and how to proceed.** Republicans,

including Sen. Marco Rubio of Florida, have insisted that they approach it piece by piece. A bipartisan group of senators plan on introducing a bill on Tuesday focused on increasing the number of visas for high-skilled immigrants with degrees in the STEM fields — science, technology, engineering and mathematics — according to The Hill. Meanwhile, many Democrats support a "comprehensive" bill that would address all the issues at once. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid filed Senate Bill No. 1 as the "Immigration Reform that Works for America's Future Act," a symbolic, but telling indication of how important the issue will be in the new Congress. Another bipartisan group of senators is almost ready to unveil their own comprehensive immigration plan, according to The Washington Post. **Whatever the approach, members feel**

**the stars are finally aligned** to tackle an issue that eluded George W. Bush during his White House years and Obama during his first term in office. "Immigration reform is not a matter of 'if' but 'when,'" said Rep. Xavier Becerra, D-Calif., chairman of the House Democratic Caucus. "After today's meeting, it's clear that President Obama is determined to fix our long broken immigration system."

### **Get real – the decision was a joke and won't stick**

**AP 1/26** (White House: Ruling won't affect other Obama picks, [http://www.pal-](http://www.pal-item.com/article/20130126/UPDATES/130126003/White-House-Ruling-won-t-affect-other-Obama-picks)

[item.com/article/20130126/UPDATES/130126003/White-House-Ruling-won-t-affect-other-Obama-picks](http://www.pal-item.com/article/20130126/UPDATES/130126003/White-House-Ruling-won-t-affect-other-Obama-picks),

The **Justice Department hinted** that **the administration would ask the Supreme Court to overturn the decision**, which was rendered by **three conservative judges** appointed by **Republican presidents**. "We

disagree with the court's ruling and believe that **the president's recess appointments are constitutionally sound**," the

statement said. The court acknowledged that **the ruling conflicts with what** some **other federal appeals courts have**

**held about** when **recess appointments** are valid, **which only added to the likelihood of an appeal** to the high court.

## PC key

**Obama is making a commitment to work with Congress to pass immigration reform --- it's a top priority and capital is key**

**Gomez, 1/25** (Alan, "Obama, members of Congress start immigration push,"

<http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2013/01/25/obama-immigration-congress-legislation/1865129/>

**Obama has vowed to make immigration a 'top legislative priority.'** **The push to overhaul the nation's immigration laws is officially underway.** **President Obama met with Hispanic members of Congress** at the White House on Friday **and is planning** a speech in Las Vegas on Tuesday to **"redouble the administration's efforts to work with Congress to fix the broken immigration system this year,"** according to a White House statement.

**Obama insisted that he would lead on the issue** and emphasized that any changes to the nation's immigration laws would include an "earned pathway to citizenship" for the nation's 11 million illegal immigrants. Republicans have insisted that the country fully secure the borders and enact tight restrictions on businesses from hiring illegal immigrants before granting any new rights to people illegally living in the country. **STORY: Jeb Bush pushes comprehensive immigration strategy** After Friday's meeting, **members of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus** — all Democrats — **said they were enthusiastic by the president's commitment to moving on an immigration bill.** **"The president is the quarterback and he will direct the team, call the play**

**and be pivotal if we succeed,"** said Rep. Luis **Gutierrez**, D-Ill., one of the House members who will be shepherding the bill through Congress. **Both Republicans and Democrats have discussed the need to tackle immigration this**

**term, but there are many disagreements over what it will look like and how to proceed.** **Republicans**, including Sen. Marco Rubio of Florida, have insisted that they approach it piece by piece. A bipartisan group of senators plan on introducing a bill on Tuesday focused on increasing the number of visas for high-skilled immigrants with degrees in the STEM fields — science, technology, engineering and mathematics — according to The Hill. **Meanwhile**, many Democrats support a "comprehensive" bill that would address all the issues at once. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid filed Senate Bill No. 1 as the "Immigration Reform that Works for America's Future Act," a symbolic, but telling indication of how important the issue will be in the new Congress. Another bipartisan group of senators is almost ready to unveil their own comprehensive immigration plan, according to The Washington Post. **Whatever the approach, members feel**

**the stars are finally aligned** to tackle an issue that eluded George W. Bush during his White House years and Obama during his first term in office. **"Immigration reform is not a matter of 'if' but 'when,'"** said Rep. Xavier Becerra, D-Calif., chairman of the House Democratic Caucus. **"After today's meeting, it's clear that President Obama is determined to fix our long broken immigration system."**

## Capital key

**DALLAS MORNING NEWS**, editorial, "Actions Must Match Obama's Immigration Pledge," **1--2--13**, <http://www.dallasnews.com/opinion/editorials/20130102-editorial-actions-must-match-obamas-immigration-pledge.ece>

President Barack **Obama said** all the right things Sunday about immigration reform. The president told NBC's Meet the Press that he **is serious about getting Congress to overhaul the laws governing immigrants**. He even declared that he will introduce an immigration bill this year. This newspaper welcomes that announcement. Texans particularly understand the unique challenges that an outdated immigration system presents. Even though the flow of illegal immigrants into the U.S. has subsided in the last few years, the many holes in the system leave families, schools, businesses and law enforcement struggling. And those are just some of the constituents challenged by flawed immigration laws. The president's words to NBC's David Gregory are only that — words. **What will really matter is whether he puts his muscle into the task** this year. We suggest that Obama start by looking at the example of former President George W. Bush. Back in 2006 and 2007, the Republican and his administration constantly worked Capitol Hill to pass a comprehensive plan. They failed, largely because Senate Republicans balked. But the opposition didn't stop the Bush White House from fully engaging Congress, including recalcitrant Republicans. **Obama may have a similar problem with his own party**. The dirty little secret in the 2006 and 2007 immigration battles was that some Democrats were content to let Senate Republicans kill the effort. **Labor-friendly Democrats didn't want a bill**, either. And they may not want one this year. **That reluctance is a major reason the president needs to invest in this fight**. He must figure out how to bring enough Democrats along, while also reaching out to Republicans. In short, the nation doesn't need a repeat of the process through



which the 2010 health care legislation was passed. Very few Republicans bought into the president's plan, leaving the Affordable Care Act open to partisan sniping throughout last year's election. **If the nation is going to create a saner immigration system, both parties need to support substantial parts** of an answer. The new system must include a guest worker program for future immigrants and a way for illegal immigrants already living here to legalize their status over time. Some House Republicans will object to one or both of those reforms, so Speaker John Boehner must be persuasive about the need for a wholesale change. But **the leadership that matters most will come from the White House.** The president has staked out the right position. Now he needs to present a bill and fight this year for a comprehensive solution. Nothing but action will count.

### Capital's key

Michael **Shifter**, President, Inter-American Dialogue, "Will Obama Kick the Can Down the Road," REVISTE IDEELE, **12--27--12**, <http://www.thedialogue.org/page.cfm?pageID=32&pubID=3186>

Not surprisingly, **Obama has been explicit that reforming** the US's shameful and broken **immigration** system will be a top priority in his second term. There is every indication that **he intends to use some of his precious political capital** – especially in the first year – to push for serious change. The biggest lesson of the last election was that the "Latino vote" was decisive. No one doubts that it will be even more so in future elections. During the campaign, many Republicans -- inexplicably -- frightened immigrants with offensive rhetoric. But the day after the election, there was talk, in both parties, of comprehensive immigration reform. **Despite the sudden optimism** about immigration reform, there is, of course, no guarantee that it will happen. **It will require a lot of negotiation and deal-making. Obama will have to invest a lot of his time and political capital -- twisting some arms, even in his own party.** Resistance will not disappear. There is also a chance that something unexpected could happen that would put off consideration of immigration reform. Following the horrific massacre at a Connecticut elementary school on December 14, for example, public pressure understandably mounted for gun control, at least the ban of assault weapons. But a decision to pursue that measure -- though desperately needed -- would take away energy and time from other priorities like immigration.

### Political capital key to immigration.

**ABC News, 1-2-2013**, p. [abcnews.go.com/ABC\\_Univision/News/things-president-obama-immigration-reform/story?id=18103115#.UOUq8onjkax](http://abcnews.go.com/ABC_Univision/News/things-president-obama-immigration-reform/story?id=18103115#.UOUq8onjkax)

On Sunday, President Barack **Obama said that immigration** reform **is a "top priority"** on his agenda **and that he would introduce legislation** in his first year. To find out what he needs to do to make reform a reality, we talked to Lynn Tramonte, the deputy director at America's Voice, a group that lobbies for immigration reform, and Muzaffar Chishti, the director of the New York office of the Migration Policy Institute, a think tank. Here's what we came up with. 1. Be a Leader **During Obama's first term, bipartisan legislation never got off the ground. The president needs to** do a better job **leading the charge this time around**, according to Chishti. **"He has to make it clear that it's a high priority of his,"** he said. **"He has to make it clear that he'll use his bully pulpit and his political muscle to make it happen,** and he has to be open to using his veto power." His announcement this weekend is a step in that direction, but **he needs to follow through.**

### Political capital key to immigration reform.

**American Prospect, 12-29-2012**

**Address Immigration** While **Obama was unable to make good on his promise of passing**

**comprehensive immigration reform** in his first two years in office thanks to Republican stonewalling after passage of the Affordable Care Act, the president was able to offer some administrative relief to those left in legal limbo by our dysfunctional immigration system. In June of this year, the administration announced it would stop deporting undocumented immigrants who had been brought to the country #8216;through no fault of their own#8217; before age 16; had graduated from high school, earned a GED, or served in the military; and had no criminal record. The move was widely seen as an effort to provide relief for undocumented youth after the DREAM Act, which would have given undocumented youth brought to the country by their parents a path to citizenship, failed to pass the Senate in 2010. The Department of Homeland Security also suspended its 287(g) program, which authorized local law-enforcement officials like Arizona's notorious Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio to enforce federal immigration laws. But none of these administrative measures scratches the surface of the problems with the immigration system, which include overburdened courts, deplorable conditions in immigrant-detention centers, draconian family-unification policies, insufficient work Visas and arbitrary Visa caps, years-long administrative delays, and per-country caps that do not reflect current economic and humanitarian demands. The dysfunction in our immigration system is largely the reason there are 12 million undocumented immigrants currently living in the U.S.

**Buoyed by his re-election and with key Republicans eager to soften their image with Latino**

**voters, Obama has a prime opportunity to modernize** our outdated and dysfunctional **immigration system**. **Doing so is** both savvy politically and **necessary from an economic and humanitarian standpoint: It will** redound to the president and his party's advantage; serve to **meet the needs of the agriculture and technology sectors, which rely heavily on immigrant labor; and provide humanitarian relief for those fleeing poverty** in their home countries. **While the president is sure to face stalwart opposition from hard-line anti-immigrant legislators, he only needs to rally his party behind him and win over** the support of **a critical mass of Republicans. Immigrant-rights groups are** rightly **pushing for the president to undertake** comprehensive immigration **reform** in 2013, **before his political capital begins to wane** and he **slips into the lame-duck twilight** of his presidency.

## Obama's push ensures passage of comprehensive immigration reform

**Babington 12/24** (Charles, "Obama Agenda Provides Long Work List To Tackle When He Returns", 2012, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/12/24/obama-agenda\\_n\\_2359400.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/12/24/obama-agenda_n_2359400.html), CMR)

Americans' affinity for firearms runs deep, and **many political activists think Obama could have** more **sweeping success with immigration changes.** **He won a big majority of Hispanics' votes in both his elections. The trend alarms Republican strategists who fear their party won't win another presidential election until it repairs its bad relations with Latinos.** **With Democrats and Republicans increasingly aware of Hispanics' growing political clout, this might be an historic opportunity,** **Troy said.** **Chris Dolan, a political scientist at Lebanon Valley College in Pennsylvania, agrees.**

**He** **said he expects Obama to be** **incredibly ambitious** **on comprehensive immigration reform.** **The effort, Dolan said,**

could "build a lasting Democratic support group. You can't do that with gun control." **Still, opposition** to granting citizenship to illegal immigrants **runs deep in many circles,** especially the Republican Party's base. Bids for "comprehensive immigration reform" have gone nowhere in Congress in recent years. **Several advocacy groups want Obama to make the most of his executive powers to enact**

measures that don't require congressional action. **The Migration Policy Institute** earlier this year made several suggestions regarding immigrants. They included "establishing uniform enforcement priorities," defining "what constitutes effective border control," and "allowing applicants for immigrant visas to file in the United States." **Now that Obama has won re-election, however, the advocacy group**

**wants him instead to** **push a broader agenda** **through Congress.** **"With the issue teed up for possible**

**action,**" said Doris Meissner, a former commissioner at the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, **antagonizing congressional Republicans with executive actions "would not be politically smart."** **The political climate for sweeping immigration**

**changes "is** **significantly better**," Meissner said, "but that does not mean it will happen." **Even with a full plate of challenges and a hostile party controlling the House, she said, "I think**

**Obama absolutely has to go big on immigration.**"

## YES political capital

### PC High—reelection

Jeff **Fong**, 1/24/2013. (MA, Political Science, San Jose State University) Policy Mic. “Obama's Inauguration Will Be the Highlight of His Second Term”  
<http://www.policymic.com/articles/24030/obama-s-inauguration-will-be-the-highlight-of-his-second-term>

**The president is entering his second term with good field position and decent political capital** — at least **compared to the Republicans as a party**. The fight, however, is going to be messy wherever pockets of the opposition have circled the wagons. **What's likely going forward is the political system** continuing to seize up as it operates under an intense partisan divide, and one that **features a less-than cohesive Republican Party**. To return to the original metaphor, **it certainly is all downhill from here for the president. The hardest work is over** but there are still some serious cracks in the **pavement he'll have to avoid on the way down**.

### Obama is steamrolling

Joan **Walsh** (Salon's editor at large) 1/21 “Obama II: Older, wiser, stronger”,  
[http://www.salon.com/2013/01/21/obama\\_ii\\_older\\_wiser\\_stronger/](http://www.salon.com/2013/01/21/obama_ii_older_wiser_stronger/)

But he's never had a month like this last one. **In** January alone, over **the final three weeks of his first term, the president faced down three of the most toxic forces in American politics** — call them the three Ns: the National Rifle Association, Norquist (as in Grover) and the neocons — **and won crucial battles**, if not the war.¶ On Jan. 2 he signed a deal that raised top tax rates on the wealthiest Americans, winning the first GOP votes for a tax hike since 1990, despite their solemn vow otherwise to Norquist. On Jan. 7, he appointed former Sen. Chuck Hagel his Secretary of Defense despite once-fatal charges that he's anti-Israel — or worse, anti-Semitic — from neocon bullies. On Jan. 16, he rallied the nation behind a gun control agenda and issued 23 “executive actions” that shouldn't be controversial but are, thanks to the way the NRA has controlled gun politics in the last 20 years.¶ **And after** flatly **refusing to negotiate over a debt-ceiling** deal again, on Friday **he won a big battle with House GOP** dead-enders. The overmatched Republican leadership announced it would back lifting the ceiling for three months, and if they cave this time it's hard to see them mounting a challenge in April.¶ A president who began his first term trying tirelessly to compromise with people who despise him completed it by finally standing up to them. It no doubt helped that **in November he became the first president since Dwight Eisenhower to win 51 percent of the vote twice**. Just in January, **Obama faced down menacing political forces other presidents have ducked or placated**. As he takes the oath of office a second time (well, the fourth time, technically) on the nation's official holiday honoring Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., it's hard not to be optimistic. **If Obama keeps up his January pace, his second term will make even more history than his first**

### PC High: same sex marriage support

Rick **Sanchez**, 1/24/2013. “Rick Sanchez: Is President Obama Smarter than an 11th Grader?” Fox News Latino. <http://latino.foxnews.com/latino/opinion/2013/01/24/rick-sanchez-is-president-obama-smarter-than-11th-grader/#ixzz2lySqF2Vb>

Now let's move on to gay rights, or more specifically, **same sex marriage**. It **is very much an issue where the president has collected enormous amounts of political capital for a variety of reasons, including coming out in support of same sex couples' right to marry** in May of last year and now becoming the first president to mention gays **in an inaugural speech** and bring the matter front and center. Obama presently owns the issue, and it's not like the LGBT community is looking for an excuse to vote Republican. So why make waves? In the end, this is one that will be decided by the courts, not the White House. And the president would be smart to not interfere.

## YES political capital – A2 Assault Weapons

### **PC Spent on Assault Weapons gets regenerated. Kills opposition.**

Anthony **Gregory**, 1/24/2013. (Research Fellow at the Independent Institute; Author of forthcoming 'The Power of Habeas Corpus') "The Bellicosity of a Democrat's Second Term" HUFFPO  
[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/anthony-gregory/democratic-presidents-war\\_b\\_2522143.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/anthony-gregory/democratic-presidents-war_b_2522143.html)

But what could be the motive? Here is my fear: **Obama**, like most progressive Democrats before him, probably wants to go down in history as a truly great president. Meanwhile, he **is spending lots of political capital on gun control measures he knows will face major resistance** and can hurt his party. **What better way to win back support from the center and neutralize the conservatives than to** take a cue from the Democratic Party's playbook and **save the big explosions for Act II?** **His progressive supporters** might say they won't stand for it, but **historically**, they **either looked the other way or, more often, lined up enthusiastically**, when their president decided it was time for war. Indeed, we have already seen the opposition to militarism, indefinite detention, and even torture decline on the mainstream left every year Obama's been in power.

### **Obama won't push assault weapons. Won't lose PC**

Rick **Moran**. 1/25/2013 "What the...? Proposed 'assault weapon' ban includes shotguns, handguns"  
[http://www.americanthinker.com/blog/2013/01/what\\_the\\_proposed\\_assault\\_weapon\\_ban\\_includes\\_shotguns\\_handguns.html#ixzz2lybs7FJg](http://www.americanthinker.com/blog/2013/01/what_the_proposed_assault_weapon_ban_includes_shotguns_handguns.html#ixzz2lybs7FJg)

**There aren't many Democratic Senators or House members who are vulnerable in 2014 - and the list is long - who will sign on to this political suicide pact. I haven't heard of a single Republican who will vote for it, and there might be as many as 12 Democratic Senators and 60 House members who wouldn't vote for it either. Those numbers may shrink if the president does any serious arm twisting but I can't see Obama spending any political capital to try and pass an assault weapons ban.** Verdict: **Feinstein's bill is DOA.**

## YES political capital – A2 Same Sex Marriage

### **Obama won't spend PC on gay marriage**

Goldstein, **Nancy**. **1/24/2013**. "Obama, civil rights is about legislation, not alliteration" THE GUARDIAN. [Nancy Goldstein is a writer and commentator whose work has appeared in the Guardian, the Washington Post, Salon, the Nation and National Public Radio. She also co-edited The Gender Politics of HIV/Aids in Women (1997)] <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2013/jan/24/obama-legislation-alliteration-lgbt-rhetoric>

Cynical, me? No indeed. **The Obama who boomed** on Monday **that "our journey is not complete until our gay brothers and sisters are treated like anyone else** under the law – for if we are truly created equal, then surely the love we commit to one another must be equal as well" **sent out his press secretary the very next day to assure us that the president won't be expending any political capital to make his rhetoric a reality. When it comes to audacity, Obama's real legacy is not one of hope, but of feigned helplessness. There's plenty he could do about LGBT inequality in America if he wanted to, Congress be damned.**

## YES Public Popularity

### Public popularity is high – agenda

Mark **Murray**, Senior Political Editor at NBC News, **1/17/13**, “NBC/WSJ poll: Public lowers expectations heading into Obama's 2nd term”, [http://firstread.nbcnews.com/\\_news/2013/01/17/16570498-nbcwsj-poll-public-lowers-expectations-heading-into-obamas-2nd-term?lite](http://firstread.nbcnews.com/_news/2013/01/17/16570498-nbcwsj-poll-public-lowers-expectations-heading-into-obamas-2nd-term?lite), acc. 1/25/13

**As** President Barack **Obama is set to begin his second term next week, he finds himself with a job-approval rating above 50 percent and with majorities supporting his general direction** on gun control and immigration, **according to a new** NBC News/Wall Street Journal **poll**. But he also confronts an American public holding mixed attitudes about the next four years, concerns about the economy and a belief that tougher times lie ahead. It's a stark reversal from four years ago, when Obama's first inauguration – despite taking place in the midst of the Great Recession – contained high expectations and seemed more like a “coronation,” says Democratic pollster Peter D. Hart, who conducted the survey with Republican pollster Bill McInturff. “If 2009 was all about hope, 2013 is about the ability to cope,” Hart adds of the public's lower expectations about the economy and reducing partisanship in Washington. General support for Obama's gun, immigration agenda In the poll, **52 percent of adults approve of the president's overall job performance**, which is down one point from last month. In addition, **49 percent approve of his handling of the economy, versus 48 percent who disapprove**. What's more, **the public appears to be receptive to the broad outlines of his top agenda items for a second team**.

### Public popularity is high

Robert B. **Reich**, former Secretary of Education, **1/25/13**, “Obama's debt-limit strategy lies with the GOP”, <http://www.tennessean.com/article/20130125/COLUMNIST0150/301250003/Robert-B.-Reich-Obama-s-debt-limit-strategy-lies-with-the-GOP>, acc. 1/25/13

The timing may be right for such a strategy. **The president is riding a wave of post-election popularity. A recent Gallup poll showed him with a 56 percent job approval rating, his highest rating in more than three years**.

### As the economy recovers, so will Obama's approval

**Kornacki 1-21** (Steve, Salon.com “Obama's Best Days are probably ahead” access google [http://www.salon.com/2013/01/21/obamas\\_best\\_days\\_are\\_probably\\_ahead/](http://www.salon.com/2013/01/21/obamas_best_days_are_probably_ahead/))

Obviously, **the biggest** single **factor in** determining **Obama's second term popularity will be the economy**. **As it improves**, and especially if the pace of improvement accelerates, **his numbers** should **rise**. **Following through on** his promise of **an** orderly **end to the Afghanistan war** in the next two years **should also help** Obama's standing. Avoiding high-profile scandals, one of his first-term strengths, will also help his numbers. And then there's the opposition. Obama talked during the campaign of breaking the Republican fever, and while that hasn't happened yet, the last month has brought some genuinely encouraging signs. **The president may well notch the sort of big bipartisan deals he so eagerly sought in his first term. Voters love idea of bipartisanship**; if they're suddenly exposed to lots of noise about Obama striking deals with Republicans that both sides seem to like, there should be a polling benefit. In other words, the idea that **Obama's approval rating might climb well into the 50s and maybe even cross the 60 percent mark in his second term** is quite plausible. This would be good for Obama's legacy, of course, but it would also have a dramatic impact on the next presidential race.

### America loves a winner - Obama's approval is resilient – fiscal cliff proves

**Hagler '12** (Frank Hagler, Policy Mic, “Obama Approval Rating is Strong, Despite Fiscal Cliff Muck-Ups” <http://www.policymic.com/articles/21530/obama-approval-rating-is-strong-despite-fiscal-cliff-muck-ups> access google)

If President Obama's approval ratings are any indication, **America sure does love a winner**. According to the Rasmussen Daily Presidential Tracking Poll, **55% of Americans approve of Obama's** job performance. Staggeringly **Obama's approval** rating **has been**

**above 50% every day since the November 2.** Obama's approval rating was at 50% on election day and it has climbed 5 points to its current level. But nothing has changed so why **is Obama polling better now** than he did during the election season? Could it be related to the unemployment rate? Unemployment has stayed below 8% for three consecutive months. In September when unemployment dropped below 8% for the first time in 43 months, Obama's opponents accused the government of cooking the books. Now that it has stayed under 8% these conspiracy theorists have gone silent. Obama's approval rating and the unemployment rate were the key performance indicators used to attack Obama's re-election plans. There was a constant stream of articles and pundit analysis documenting the statistical anomaly of re-electing a president with an approval rating below 50% and an unemployment rate above 8%. It seems that

there should be equal time given to the president's current numbers, 55% approval rating and 7.7% unemployment rate. **The Gallup Poll also supports the notion that America loves a winner. On election day, Obama's approval rating was**

**52%. It is now 57%.** Obama's approval rating is at a 52 week high for 2012 and is 16 points higher than the 52 week low of 42% he hit in January 2012. Talking Points Memo noted that Obama's post-election approval rating "calls to mind the bullish days of his first year in office before a stagnant economy and protracted disputes with Congressional Republicans took a toll on his approval rating." That is not a good sign for his 2013 approval rating. Obama is still engaged in that same fight as evidenced by his inability to get a budget deal done with House Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio). The two leaders have until January 1 to get a deal done and avoid the fiscal crises that will be brought on by automatic tax increases and spending cuts. Obama cut his holiday vacation short to return to Washington and work on a deal. Obama appears to be right back where he started in 2009. Unemployment is at the same place it was when he took office in his first term, the economy has

stabilized and things have gotten better, but we are not in full recovery yet and the fiscal cliff threatens to throw us back into a recession. **His approval numbers indicate that some people are still hoping that he can make a change in the way politics**

**are done in Washington.** There is the possibility that he can break the gridlock and lead a bipartisan government. If Obama fails to get a deal done the Bush tax cuts will expire, raising taxes on all Americans. Additionally extended unemployment benefits will also expire putting millions of Americans in jeopardy. If Obama fails to get a deal done and unemployment begins to tick up then the ride he is enjoying from his post-election bump in approval ratings will be short lived. Next week the December unemployment numbers will be released. It will probably stay below 8% given the current trend, however the January 2013 report to be released in February will be telling because it will show whether the 4th quarter 2012 numbers were skewed by seasonal employment. TPM said "all it took was a victorious election for Obama to earn higher marks for his job performance." All it will take is a repeat of 2012 –like government gridlock to reverse that trend.

## **Obama's popularity boosted by gun control efforts**

**Enten '12** (The Guardian, "Gun control fate tied to presidential popularity", access google <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2013/jan/25/fate-gun-control-tied-presidential-popularity>)

**Want to know how people feel about President Obama's gun control plan?** Simply **ask whether they approve** or disapprove **of how the president and his administration are doing their job. The two questions are nearly perfectly linked,** and that could have major consequences for the future of gun control legislation.

**The latest ABC/Washington Post polls prove the strong relationship.** Many individual gun proposals are highly popular. In fact, seven tested gun measures, including background checks and bans on assault weapons and semi-automatic handguns, have majority support ranging from 51% to 88%. **When you attach Obama's name by calling it "Barack Obama's proposals",** the Post discovered that 53% **of Americans favor the proposals – nearly identical to Obama's approval rating of 55%** in a separate Post poll last week. Gallup found the same, with 53% in favor of Obama's gun control plan, compared to his monthly approval rating of 52%.

# **Affirmative**



## No pass

### Won't pass

Chris **Johnson, 1/23/2013** (staff writer, "Will Obama include gay couples in immigration reform?" <http://www.washingtonblade.com/2013/01/23/will-obama-include-gay-couples-in-immigration-reform/>)  
Gay Rep. Jared **Polis** (D-Colo.), who's also been a leading advocate of immigration reform, **remains skeptical about the prospects for passing immigration reform this Congress** — with or without inclusion of UAFAs. ¶ "Immigration reform is going to be very difficult to pass," Polis said. "The consideration of LGBT families is one of the less controversial aspects. **The most controversial aspect is the treatment of the 10 to 15 million people who are already here illegally. So, it's going to be difficult to get it through.**" If there is a vehicle to pass immigration reform, I'm going to work hard and I know that Sen. Schumer is also committed to immigration equality for gay and lesbian families."

### (--) **Pathway to citizenship & fights over border security block immigration reform:**

Daniel **Strauss, 1/18/2013** (staff writer, "Reid: No immigration reform bill will pass Senate without pathway to citizenship," <http://thehill.com/blogs/blog-briefing-room/news/278033-reid-no-immigration-reform-bill-will-pass-senate-without-pathway-to-citizenship>, Accessed 1/23/2013, )  
**Democrats want a bill to include a pathway to residency or citizenship for illegal immigrants, while Republicans have generally opposed such measures. Republicans also say strengthening border security should be a top priority in new immigration reform legislation. ¶ Reid said the emphasis in a new immigration reform bill should not be on border security. ¶ "**

### Won't pass

**Kaplan, 1-16-13** (Rebecca, National Journal, "What Gets in the Way of Immigration Reform" <http://www.nationaljournal.com/congress/what-gets-in-the-way-of-immigration-reform-20130116>)  
The Gang of Eight is drafting principles. The White House says immigration reform could be in the State of the Union. Sen. Patrick Leahy, D-Vt., is planning Judiciary hearings. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce and AFL-CIO have joined hands to push for action. **There's no shortage of political will to get immigration reform done** in this Congress, **but attempts at an overhaul of the system have failed before, and lawmakers still have several major hurdles to overcome** this time. Here are a few: A **path to citizenship versus legal status: This is the single most divisive issue** that lawmakers will have to **overcome**. Democrats, in general, will demand that any legislation include a path to citizenship (this is also a priority for the AFL-CIO). Many **Republicans**, on the other hand, **remain staunchly opposed to anything resembling amnesty**. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid told a Nevada news outlet that a bipartisan group of senators "have agreed tentatively on a path to citizenship, which is the big stumbling block." But **it remains to be seen whether that agreement would be acceptable to the entire Congress.**  
**Comprehensive versus piecemeal reform:** Proponents say a comprehensive package is the only way to fix the system. It's also a top priority of the president and the aim of the Gang of Eight—Sens. Michael Bennet, D-Colo., Dick Durbin, D-Ill., Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., Robert Menendez, D-N.J., John McCain, R-Ariz., Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., Mike Lee, R-Utah, and newly elected Sen. Jeff Flake, R-Ariz. But a comprehensive bill also gives everyone something to hate. Some lawmakers, such as Rep. Raul Labrador, R-Idaho, say it will be easier to tackle different reforms in smaller bills because different coalitions will support each piece. **Inclusion of a guest-worker program:** Disagreement over granting foreign workers temporary visas to work in the United States has historically separated business and labor groups, but the two are trying to find common ground this time. Jeff Hauser, spokesman for the AFL-CIO—which has opposed such programs in the past—said his group is talking to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce about ways to create a depoliticized body to manage the future flow of workers. **The Hastert Rule:** While a number of high-profile Republicans such as McCain have worked on immigration reform for years, it's still likely that legislation will have more Democratic than Republican support. But House Speaker John **Boehner has generally run the House in the style of former House Speaker Dennis Hastert, always ensuring that a majority of the majority party supports legislation before bringing it to the floor.** The rule was violated to get the fiscal-cliff legislation passed. **Redistricting** after the 2010 election **put more** and more **lawmakers into safe districts, meaning they**

have **less incentive to compromise**. So it may not be possible for Boehner to get a majority of the majority to back immigration reform. A crowded agenda: The temporary nature of the deal produced to avert the fiscal cliff means that within the first few months of the year, Congress will have to negotiate a deal to raise the debt ceiling, deal with the sequester, and fund the government. President Obama is also pushing gun control as a top priority. With limited time before legislators start focusing on their 2014 midterm races, **there might not be enough oxygen for immigration reform** to happen this year as well. Plain old politics: **There's a reason that immigration reform has failed so many times: It's a tough political nut to crack**, and can bring out ugliness and name-calling on both sides of the aisle. At a Politico Pro event Tuesday, Labrador suggested that Obama wanted a political victory instead of a policy victory—which may be easier if nothing gets done and Republicans get the blame. That's not the way Rep. Zoe Lofgren, D-Calif., a longtime immigration-reform advocate, sees it. "I have had Republicans say they don't want Obama to do a bill because they want flexibility, but if he doesn't do a bill, he's criticized," she said at the event. She says she's just waiting for Boehner to get the ball rolling. "It's not that tough, it's just the decision to do it," she said.

### **Immigration reform won't pass—basic political realities have not changed:**

Elise **Foley, 1/15/2013** (staff writer, "Obama Gears Up For Immigration Reform Push In Second Term," [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/01/15/obama-immigration-reform\\_n\\_2463388.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/01/15/obama-immigration-reform_n_2463388.html), Accessed 1/23/2013, )

**It's not clear whether the politics have changed enough for a bill to pass. Conservatives who stress the "enforcement first" approach don't think so.** Mark Krikorian, executive director of the Center for Immigration Studies, rejects the findings of the Migration Policy Institute and fears that **reform might not prevent future swells in unauthorized immigration -- a key goal, after all, of any new policy and the major sticking point for many, if not most, Republicans in Congress. "I don't think the basic reality has changed,"** Krikorian said of immigration politics.

### **Amnesty concerns prevent immigration reform from passing:**

Elise **Foley, 1/15/2013** (staff writer, "Obama Gears Up For Immigration Reform Push In Second Term," [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/01/15/obama-immigration-reform\\_n\\_2463388.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/01/15/obama-immigration-reform_n_2463388.html), Accessed 1/23/2013, )

**Such concerns allow some Republicans to draw a hard line on the idea of citizenship for the undocumented.** Rep. Lamar Smith (R-Texas), a key figure in the ongoing debate and the former head of the House Judiciary Committee, said on Monday that **Congress shouldn't trust the president on "mass amnesty" and that a bill including citizenship "will have a hard time" in the House.**

## No pass – no vote

### No vote till Summer

**Helderman 1/26** (Rosalind S. Helderman and David Nakamura, “Obama, senators start push on immigration reform”, [http://www.denverpost.com/nationworld/ci\\_22453721/obama-senators-start-push-immigration-reform](http://www.denverpost.com/nationworld/ci_22453721/obama-senators-start-push-immigration-reform))

Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., a veteran of the 2007 effort who is part of the current working group, said Republican attitudes have dramatically shifted since the party's defeat at the polls in November. Obama won more than 70 percent of the vote among Latinos and Asians, and a growing number of **Republican** leaders **think action on immigration is necessary** to expand the party's appeal to minority groups. ¶ "Obviously, it's had a very distinct impression," said **McCain**, who lost his own bid for the White House in 2008. "It's time to move forward on this." ¶ But he **added**, "**I don't claim that it's going to be easy**." ¶ Also included in **the** new **Senate** group are Schumer, who is chairman of the key Senate subcommittee where legislative action will begin; Graham; Robert Menendez, D-N.J.; and Marco Rubio, R-Fla.. Two others, Jeff Flake, R-Ariz. and Michael Bennet, D-Colo., have also been involved in some talks. ¶ Their **timetable would aim for a bill to be written by** March or **April** and **potentially considered for final passage in the Senate as early as the summer**.

### No vote till August

Chris **Johnson, 1/23/2013** (staff writer, “Will Obama include gay couples in immigration reform?” <http://www.washingtonblade.com/2013/01/23/will-obama-include-gay-couples-in-immigration-reform/>, Accessed 1/23/2013, CMR)

But while signs indicate that Obama will ask Congress to pass a UAFA-inclusive immigration reform bill, questions linger over whether the Senate will come to an agreement to pass an immigration package that would protect LGBT families. ¶ **Concurrent with the plan the White House is developing, a bipartisan group of senators has engaged in talks to craft a comprehensive bill that**, according to the Times, **could be introduced as early as March** with the plan to hold **a floor vote** before **August**. **Legislation is expected to start in the Democratic-controlled Senate before moving over the Republican-controlled House for final passage.**

## No pass – house blocks

### House blocks – PC can't overcome

**DeFrancesco 1/4** – Dr. Victoria M. DeFrancesco Soto is an NBC Latino and MSNBC contributor, Senior Analyst for Latino Decisions and Fellow at the Center for Politics and Governance at the LBJ School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas, at Austin (“Opinion: Immigration reform will not be easy, but it’s not impossible”, <http://nbclatino.com/2013/01/04/opinion-immigration-reform-will-not-be-easy-but-its-not-impossible/>)

Unlike in his first administration, **the president** seems to be on board and ready for **rolling up his sleeves** and getting into immigration reform, but that **won't cut it**. **The problem** for immigration reform in 2013 **is rooted in Capital Hill**. **The president's support** is a necessary condition for any major policy overhaul, but it is **not a sufficient condition**. ¶ Let's just assume the president can arm-wrestle the Senate Democrats and a few Senate Republicans into supporting his immigration reform. **Two out of three won't cut it**. ¶ **The Republican-controlled House** is what **stands in the way** of immigration reform. More specifically, **the GOP's split mindset** regarding Latinos and immigration is what **will** likely **prevent the president from crossing off immigration** reform from his 2013 **to-do list**. ¶ There are **moderate GOP voices**, such as that of Jeb Bush, that are calling for Republicans to not just go along, but lead in an immigration overhaul effort. These are the folks who see the demographic handwriting on the wall and recognize that the Republican Party cannot survive by alienating the fastest-growing segment of the electorate. However, those voices **are few and far between**.

## Thumper – Fiscal fights

### Fiscal fights and foreign policy *obliterate* PC and the agenda

**Benac 1/21** – over 3 decades of experience covering govt and politics in Washington (Nancy,

“Analysis: Optimistic Obama faces tough to-do list”,

<http://www.greenbaypressgazette.com/viewart/20130122/GPG06/301220172/Analysis-Optimistic-Obama-faces-tough-do-list>

**First up is certain battle with Congress in the next few months over** deadlines on automatic **budget cuts**, expiring **government spending** authority **and** raising the **debt limit**. House Republicans last week agreed to bump up the debt limit slightly, but that just puts off that part of the fight for a few months. **Obama’s goal is to get through that trifecta and still have the political capital left for** the things he’d rather focus on: reducing **gun violence**, overhauling **immigration** policy, revamping **tax laws, addressing climate change** and more. **With Republicans in Congress approaching the new year with very different goals, it’s a formula for deadlock and difficulty for the president,”** says James **Thurber, director of the Center for Congressional and Presidential Studies at American University.** **“I don’t think this president has even a month of political capital.”** **International worries, including** the civil war in **Syria, Iran’s nuclear intentions and** instability in **Mali could complicate the president’s Term Two game plan as well.** **“Things are stacked up,”** Obama senior adviser David Plouffe acknowledged Sunday on ABC’s “This Week.”

### Fiscal fights first – derails immigration

**O'Brien 1/21** (Michael, “Ambitious agenda: Debt fight, gun control and immigration top president's to-do list”, 2k13, [http://nbcpolitics.nbcnews.com/\\_news/2013/01/21/16610922-ambitious-agenda-debt-fight-gun-control-and-immigration-top-presidents-to-do-list?lite](http://nbcpolitics.nbcnews.com/_news/2013/01/21/16610922-ambitious-agenda-debt-fight-gun-control-and-immigration-top-presidents-to-do-list?lite)

**Confronting** the **fading effectiveness of a second-term presidency, dogged opposition from Republicans in Congress and unexpected hurdles that will inevitably arise** over the next four years, **Obama must act** with a sense of urgency on his plans, particularly **amid** the **fiscal cliff negotiations.** **“Second-term presidents generally get eight months or so ... where there's a honeymoon to push an agenda,”** said James **Thurber, the director of Center for Congressional and Presidential Studies at American University.** **“He doesn't even have a month.”** **“I don't believe that he can wait until the last minute to deal with the debt ceiling and sequestration,”** said Martin Frost, a former Democratic congressman from Texas. **“That's got to be worked out during February.”** **That fight would threaten to consume much of the political oxygen in Washington in any normal year. And Obama’s ability to pivot toward his other major priorities, gun violence and immigration, may well hinge up on how quickly and cleanly he can dispense with this spring’s spending fight.** History suggests that many presidents cannot hope to accomplish much in the

last two years of their term, when the jockeying for the next presidential campaign begins. And **with midterm elections looming** in 2014, **lawmakers will inevitably turn at some point from governing to politicking.**¶ "There's kind of an arc of achievement in presidential administrations. Usually the first few months of a new administration is where most of the accomplishment takes place," **said** **Ross Baker, a presidential historian at Rutgers University.** **"It's hard to imagine** getting **another piece of legislation of the magnitude of the Affordable Care Act in the second term.**"¶ And Obama's hopes of significant reforms to immigration and gun laws might well depend upon how well (or how poorly) the spending fight with Congress proceeds.¶ The president last week laid out a series of measures intended to curb gun violence, most significantly proposals to limit the size of ammunition magazines, ban assault weapons and require universal background checks on firearm purchases. That plan won little praise from Republicans, and Obama might have to lean upon any reservoir of goodwill he has left after the spending fight to reach his goals.¶ Obama is practically obligated to attempt **immigration reform** after soothing the Latino community during last year's election about his inability to follow through with a pledge to accomplish immigration reform in his first term. If re-elected, Obama told Hispanic voters, he would make immigration reform a priority in this second term.¶ Both proposals **could engender significant Republican resistance**, a phenomenon familiar to any observers of Obama's first four years in office.¶

## Thumper – gun control

### Gun control

**Klein 1/14** (Rick, “Analysis: Gun Control Set to Crowd Out President Obama’s Second-Term Agenda,” 1/14/2013, <http://abcnews.go.com/blogs/politics/2013/01/analysis-gun-control-set-to-crowd-out-president-obamas-second-term-agenda/>)

WASHINGTON — President **Obama is putting his chips on guns.** It wasn’t an issue he campaigned on — actually, it was almost the opposite of that. It did more to grab him than he did to grab it. But a month after the unfathomable tragedy at Sandy Hook, **the president has positioned himself to take on a fight with long odds as his biggest domestic-policy initiative** this side of the never-ending fiscal fights. The valuable run-up to the inauguration — traditionally a White House’s best chance to put forward a bold new policy initiative — is being dominated by the polarizing debate over **gun control.** The coming **fight has broad implications on virtually every other Washington priority** in 2013 and beyond. Vice President Joe **Biden’s guns task force is strongly signaling recommending a robust menu of policy options,** spanning executive actions and legislative initiatives. **Each piece is sure to require the full force of presidential leadership** to turn into action. “The public demands we speak to it,” Biden said last week, referencing the emotions that followed a tragedy involving young children. It may yet be a solid bet that this moment is different than past shootings. Powerful allies including New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg and former Rep. Gabrielle Giffords are lending their considerable political weight to the efforts, prodding action along. Already, the fact that Washington hasn’t lost interest bodes well for a major legislative push that includes more background checks and a renewed assault weapons ban. But **the gun lobby has been explicit that it won’t be giving in. The fight will consume valuable political oxygen,** perhaps all of what’s available to a reelected president whose party controls only half of Capitol Hill. **That means other ambitious subject areas — immigration reform, energy and environmental policy, a major infrastructure initiative — will have to wait.** Moreover, the coming **brinkmanship over spending and budget issues could further poison the chances of action,** potentially **grinding Washington to an effective halt.** President George W. Bush found out the hard way that **political capital doesn’t last long into a second term,** even if the president tries to spend it with a friendly Congress. Bush’s push for Social Security reform not only went nowhere, it helped sow the seeds of the Democratic takeover of Congress in 2006. This fight over guns has the potential to be more than that for Obama, though. After a campaign devoid of much inspiration, a passionate debate that gets to the heart of the nation’s culture may be what the recently reelected president needs. **The fight will mobilize and energize those on both sides — even if it tires everyone out before discussions begin in other areas.**

### Gun control push will undermine immigration --- whether he succeeds or not

**Rauch 1/20** --- guest scholar at Brookings (Jonathan, “Tackle immigration first, Mr. President,” <http://www.nydailynews.com/opinion/tackle-immigration-mr-president-article-1.1242944?localLinksEnabled=false>)

Asked a few years ago whether George W. **Bush** had **made** any consequential mistakes in his second term, a senior official of Bush’s administration had to think for a moment. After all, Bush and his people were not known for regrets or introspection. Yes, he finally said, there had been **one serious mistake: putting Social Security reform ahead of immigration.** In 2005, the newly reelected President had two domestic policy goals. Immigration reform, a long-time objective of the former Texas governor, looked to the center. Social Security private accounts, prized by conservatives as a game-changing reform of the New Deal welfare state, looked right. Bush chose Social Security. The Democrats folded their arms and said no. Even many Republicans balked. **By the time the resulting wild goose chase had run its course, Bush’s second-term political capital, unreplaceable at that point in his presidency, was depleted.** Worse, the immigration debate had changed. In early 2005, not only Bush but many Democrats and such prominent Republicans as Sen. John McCain were ready to deal. More quickly than anyone expected, the Republican base moved right and the window closed. And so what should have been a historic policy achievement, and a political watershed for Republicans, never happened. Imagine how different Republicans might look to Hispanic voters today if a Republican President and Congress had led immigration reform. Bush probably still rues that misstep. And now President Obama looks set to repeat it. **Once again, a reelected but polarizing President begins his second term with political stars aligned for immigration reform.** Democrats need to do it, because their liberal and Hispanic base demands it. Republicans also need to do it, because they are desperate to shed their hard-won reputation for hostility to immigrants and Latinos. Obama needs to do it; he has been campaigning on it since 2008, when he said he would

“move that forward as quickly as possible.”¶ Not least important, the country sorely needs immigration reform. The current system has become not only a political thorn in the side of both parties but a drag on growth and innovation. Recent evidence shows that immigration, even low-skilled immigration, is a net economic and social plus.¶ Meanwhile, the current federal policy takes too little account of skill and talent, and admits fewer workers than the economy needs for the jobs it actually has. America’s current policy is to educate the next foreign-born generation of engineers and entrepreneurs and then expel most of them.¶ And the policy is inhumane as well as inefficient. Millions of otherwise law-abiding and productive people are driven underground, including many who would pay a reasonable fine or penalty to get right with the law; thousands of same-sex partners and spouses are vindictively shut out of the country.¶ These are not problems over which Washington has merely indirect influence, as it does with most social problems. They are problems that Congress could actually solve.¶ You say we should secure the borders before reforming immigration law? Though you would never know it from some of the political rhetoric, border control has been accomplished, at least as completely as it ever can be.¶ As Edward Alden of the Council on Foreign Relations noted in a Cato Journal article last year, over the last two decades, the government has more than septupled the size of the border patrol, built nearly 700 miles of fencing along the Mexican border, and deployed technologies ranging from cameras to drones.¶ “The U.S. borders are far harder to cross illegally than at any time in American history, and the number of people entering illegally has dropped sharply,” Alden writes. Border security is not perfect and never will be, but enough has been achieved so that even “security first” advocates should be willing to move on to legal reform.¶ **Immigration reform, then, offers the highest bang for the buck of any reform agenda now before Congress.** For Democrats, it also offers to cement the electoral loyalty of the growing Hispanic population for decades to come.¶ **So what does Obama do first? Gun control.**¶ **If ever there was a political sticky wicket, this is it.** “Gun Agenda Faces an Uphill Battle,” headlined the Washington Post the other day. You can say that again. On the merits, in a magic-wand world, it makes sense to tighten some gun regulations, especially by closing the so-called “gun show loophole,” which allows non-dealers to buy firearms without background checks.¶ But let’s not kid ourselves: In a country with perhaps 250 million firearms already in private hands, even the deftest regulatory improvements will bring only marginal reductions in violence. No one likes to hear this, but it is true: the mass murder at Sandy Hook Elementary School was an atrocity of the first magnitude, and even one such atrocity is too many — but mass shootings in schools are very rare, and way, way down the list of causes of violent deaths. Moreover, there is little the federal government can do to prevent them.¶ No doubt, Obama was distraught by those murders. We all were. But this was a case when his more characteristic cold-blooded realism would have served him better.¶ **None of what makes immigration so urgent and accomplishable is true of gun control. There is no bipartisan desire to get it done. In fact, not even Democrats are united. Republicans already smell blood: a chance to grind Obama down by stalling and obstructing in the usual way and to re-energize what has been, until now, a demoralized conservative base.** The National Rifle Association will provide plenty of assistance with that project, fattening its coffers along the way.¶ Now, Obama is more popular today than Bush was in 2005, and he won a stronger reelection victory; nor is gun regulation as quixotic as was Bush’s effort to reform Social Security with only one party’s support. Obama may yet succeed where Bush failed.¶ **Suppose he does succeed, though. What with the upcoming two (or is it three? four?) budgetary crises, the bandwidth for immigration was always narrow. It will be narrowed still further by diverting legislative time and energy toward guns. Gun control gives liberals a new crusade, but in doing so it opens an attention-distracting, resource-depleting two-front war.**¶ Meanwhile, the window of opportunity for immigration might stay open for a while, but it might not, especially if Obama is weakened and conservatives regroup.¶ **And if he loses on guns? Bush thought he could afford to lose on Social Security and move on to immigration.** He was wrong. In fact, **he never recovered.** His political strength and strategic credibility were shaken, and he spent the rest of his second term playing defense. Also, of course, the immigration-reform window closed. Republican moderates were marginalized by conservatives who had no interest in any reform that Democrats might accept.

## Gun control first

Chris Weigant, 1/23/2013 (staff writer, “Handicapping Obama's Second Term Agenda,”

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/chris-weigant/obama-second-term\\_b\\_2537802.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/chris-weigant/obama-second-term_b_2537802.html)

Budget battles are going to happen no matter what else does -- that’s another safe bet. What is more interesting, though, is handicapping which of Obama’s agenda items will actually see some action. **There are three major initiatives that Obama is currently pushing: action on global warming, comprehensive immigration reform, and gun control.** Obama did mention other issues in his speech, but these are the big three for now. Gay marriage, for instance, is in the hands of the Supreme Court right now, and no matter how they rule it’s hard to see any legislative action (good or bad) happening on it immediately afterwards.¶ **Gun control will likely be the first of these debated in**

**Congress.** Vice President Biden laid out a wide array of possible actions Congress could take on the issue, all of which Obama then backed. While the Newtown massacre did indeed shift public opinion dramatically on the overall issue, the biggest initiative is not likely to become law. An assault rifle ban is very important to some Democrats, but the way I read it is that this was included to have something to “trade away” in the negotiations. If Obama gets most of the other gun control initiatives -- closing loopholes on background checks, much better tracking of weapons, and all the other “small bore” (sorry about that pun) ideas -- then he will at least be able to say he accomplished something at the end of the day. Perhaps this is pessimistic, but the mechanics of banning “assault weapons” become very



tricky, when you have to actually define what they are in legal language. And such a ban may not get universal Democratic backing anyway, so I fully expect this will be shelved at some point in exchange for support for all the other initiatives. Without such a ban, the prospects for other meaningful gun control legislation get a lot better, though, and I think that a bill will eventually pass.

## XO solves

### Unilateral action solves

**Rich Web News 13** ("Obama's new rule eases path to residency for immigrants with US relatives", 1/3m <http://www.allvoices.com/contributed-news/13727441-obama-new-immigration-rule-makes-residency-easier-for-immigrants-with-us-relatives>, CMR)

President **Obama continues to reiterate his deep commitment to** fixing the broken **immigration** system **by signing an executive order** that makes it easier for illegal immigrants to obtain permanent residency if they have immediate relatives who are US citizens, according to the final rule posted in the Federal Register on Wednesday. Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano announced the change yesterday through department release of the final rule to support family unity during the visa waiver process. It allows certain individuals to apply for a provisional unlawful presence waiver before they depart the United States to attend immigrant visa interviews in their countries of origin. "This final rule facilitates the **legal immigration** process and reduces the amount of time that US citizens are separated from their immediate relatives who are in the process of obtaining an immigrant visa," said Napolitano. According to the release, under current law, immediate relatives of US citizens, who are not eligible to adjust status in the United States to become lawful permanent residents, must leave the US and obtain an immigrant visa abroad. Individuals who have accrued more than six months of unlawful presence while in the United States must obtain a waiver to overcome the unlawful presence inadmissibility bar before they can return to the United States after departing to obtain an immigrant visa. It also states that immediate relatives cannot file a waiver application until after they have appeared for an immigrant visa interview abroad and the State Department has determined that they are inadmissible. The US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) will publish a new form, Form I-601A, Application for a Provisional Unlawful Presence Waiver, for individuals to use when applying for a provisional unlawful presence waiver under the new process. "The law is designed to avoid extreme hardship to US citizens, which is precisely what this rule achieves," USCIS Director Mayorkas said. "The change will have a significant impact on American families by greatly reducing the time family members are separated from those they rely upon." Furthermore it says that, under the new provisional waiver process, the immediate relatives must still depart the United States for the consular immigrant visa process; however, they can apply for a provisional waiver before they depart for their immigrant visa interview abroad. The new procedures could reduce a family's time apart to one week in some cases, officials said. Individuals who file the Form I-601A must notify the Department of State's National Visa Center that they are or will be seeking a provisional waiver from USCIS. Details on the process changes are available at

<http://www.regulations.gov/>. Immigration reform **advocates greeted the Obama administration policy shift as a welcome step toward** an eventual **overhaul of** federal **immigration** laws. "The change will have a significant impact on American families by greatly reducing the time family members are separated from those they rely upon," said Alejandro Mayorkas, director of US Citizenship and Immigration Services, as reported by the L.A. Times. "We're hopeful that all of this portends a bigger improvement to the immigration system," said Lisa Koop, a managing attorney with the Chicago-based National Immigrant Justice Center. Opinion: In his next four years, President **Obama will keep pushing Congress** to reach a consensus on fixing the broken immigration laws for the 21st century, **but if Congress dodges the issue again, we can expect more executive orders like this in the future even though it means bypassing Congress.**

### It's guaranteed – empirics prove

**Examiner 1/2/13** ("Examiner Editorial: A year of 'fiscal cliff' crises coming up", <http://washingtonexaminer.com/coming-up-a-year-of-sslqfiscal-cliff-crises/article/2517381#.UOcFEXdXtkY>,

If his first term is any indication, **Obama will retaliate against congressional resistance by acting alone, as he already has** by using executive power to make policy in education, welfare, labor law, the environment and **immigration**. He will test legal limits with new **administrative changes, executive orders, memoranda and creative regulatory rulings**. This will further alienate Congress and prompt still more lawsuits against his administration, like the one currently underway to unseat "recess" appointees whom he installed without confirmation last year when the Senate was not in recess.

### Multiple tools solve

**Uribe 1/22** (Sarahi, "Immigration reform: Obama needs to close gap between rhetoric and reality", 2013, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2013/jan/22/immigration-reform-obama-rhetoric-reality>,

In his second term, **Obama could implement a number of administrative policies** even as Congress takes up **federal immigration reform**. **The president** last year **proved** **he could use his executive powers** when **he suspended the deportations** of undocumented youth and allowed them to apply for work permits under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. A sign of his **renewed commitment** to immigration reform **would be** the **expansion** of this program to cover undocumented adults. **Obama could** also **administratively terminate the "secure communities" program**, a controversial deportation policy that became emblematic of the president's broken promise to legalize undocumented immigrants.

## PC not key

### **PC's not key**

**Nakamura, '12** (David, "Advocates fear gun control agenda will divert Obama from immigration reform, December 22, [www.washingtonpost.com/politics/advocates-fear-gun-control-agenda-will-divert-obama-from-immigration-reform/2012/12/22/2725d3d0-4acc-11e2-b709-667035ff9029\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/advocates-fear-gun-control-agenda-will-divert-obama-from-immigration-reform/2012/12/22/2725d3d0-4acc-11e2-b709-667035ff9029_story.html))

"As we line up a path to gun control and the response to Connecticut, **everybody expects Congress**, just like the rest of the American people, **will be able to take on more than one thing**," said Clarissa Martinez de Castro, director of civic engagement and immigration for the National Council of La Raza. "There is a **real premium** for Republicans moving forward **on immigration**. It's **less about their position with Democrats** than with **making inroads with** a section of **the electorate** that they will not see the inside of the White House without. **That's their biggest motivation.**"

## PC bad – poison the well

### Obama's backing off immigration now – presidential push makes it not pass

#### Koppelman 1-29

[Alex, The New Yorker, "WILL OBAMA SAVE IMMIGRATION REFORM OR KILL IT?", <http://www.newyorker.com/online/blogs/newsdesk/2013/01/will-obama-save-immigration-reform-or-kill-it.html>]

There's one other thing that's different, though: now, thanks in large part to the Hispanic vote, Barack Obama is President. That will make working for a bill harder for the Republicans who want to see something passed. **It's one thing to give up on some of the same principles** the G.O.P.'s base fought so hard for just a few years ago, **but doing so in partnership with Obama is something else entirely. The President's endorsement—his very presence—can suddenly make almost any proposal toxic for a great many Republicans, and anyone who works with him may have some explaining to do** come primary season. As a result, before Obama had so much as landed in Las Vegas to deliver his speech, **even those Republicans who are in favor of reform were criticizing him for what he would say** in it. "The President has an important decision to make... when he gives his speech," Senator Marco Rubio, the Florida Republican, said during an appearance he made on Rush Limbaugh's radio show on Tuesday. "He can either decide that he wants to be part of a solution or he can decide he wants to be part of a political issue and try to trigger a bidding war. I'm not gonna be part of a bidding war to see who can come up with the most lenient path forward.... if he's gone to Las Vegas to give a speech and try to trigger a bidding war, then, no, it doesn't bode well. There won't be a solution." **It's not often that you see a politician building the explanation for why he might come to oppose his initiative just one day after he announced it**, but that is exactly what Rubio, who was part of the group of eight senators who released their ideas for reform, seemed to be doing. This may be bluster on Rubio's part, an attempt to provide himself some cover in case he does decide to run for President in 2016 and needs to explain to Republican primary voters why he essentially sided with Obama. Or it might not be: what Rubio was referring to are some very real differences between the senators' proposal and Obama's on the question of border security, and whether it has to be a precursor to citizenship for illegal immigrants. By all indications, though, and despite Rubio's preemptive fighting stance, **it seems that Obama might be ready to compromise in order to get something done, and not just on policy. The White House knows that the President's involvement could harden the opposition, and it appears to be working to minimize that effect.** His critics will note the campaign-esque appearance of his big speech, delivered in a swing state to a cheering crowd, and in passionate tones. They won't be wrong to do so, but that's form, not substance, and on substance he's given up serious ground. **Reform has been a priority of Obama's ever since the 2008 campaign, but he's not taking the lead—he let those eight senators do that, and then he largely adopted their proposal instead** of putting out a detailed one of his own. **Simply diminishing the number of Obama's fingerprints that are on this initiative does not ensure that it will pass**, of course. **Even if it does pass, it's hardly a guarantee of good policy, as we saw all too clearly when the President stepped back during the fight over the stimulus and let Congress dictate terms on purely political grounds. But if immigration reform is to be done, this may be the only way to do it.**

### Congress will do immigration alone – Obama's involvement is a kiss of death

**Weingarten, 1-16-13** (Elizabeth, New America Foundation, "President Obama's Next Steps on Immigration" <http://intheworld.newamerica.net/blog/2013/01/president-obamas-next-steps-immigration>)

Tamar Jacoby, the president of ImmigrationWorks USA, **hopes** President **Obama doesn't introduce a comprehensive immigration reform bill in the next few months**, as The New York Times reported he would. Why? **"If this is seen [in Congress] as President Obama's project alone, you won't get enough Republicans voting to pass it,"** explained Jacoby, also a New America Schwartz Fellow. But to Jacoby's relief, **a group of senators from both sides of the aisle are also seizing the reins on immigration reform.** The senators, including Republican Sen. Marco Rubio, are meeting behind-the-scenes to draft a comprehensive bill that will likely share many of President Obama's policy tenets. The story behind this crew: Senator Chuck Schumer (D-NY) and Senator Lindsay Graham (R-SC) started talking about a bipartisan bill early in President Obama's first term. But talks stalled after issues like the tanking economy took legislative precedence. The senators resumed discussions after this year's election. To Jacoby, it's critical the group

succeed because of the divisive atmosphere in Congress today. **"In the olden days, a President from one party could propose a bill, and you could get enough members from another party to pass it,"** Jacoby said. **"It doesn't work that way anymore"** – not for now, anyway." Regardless of party affiliation, any successful legislation must share a few key sweet spots, Jacoby said: A path to citizenship or legal status for the 11 million illegal immigrants currently living in the country, an easier way for high-skilled workers to enter and stay in the country, and better immigration enforcement both on the border and in the workplace. But legislators often leave out what Jacoby thinks are two of the most important pieces of the puzzle: a way for unskilled workers to enter the U.S. legally, and a better integration strategy once immigrants are here. The economy needs those unskilled workers, but they have no legal pathway to enter the U.S. And once immigrants are inside the U.S. – we do a poor job of teaching them English and how to become an American, says Jacoby. Of course, various members of Congress have agitated for comprehensive immigration reform for years. What makes 2013 any riper for change? As anyone who cast a vote or read a newspaper during the 2012 election season knows - the Latino vote propelled the issue to the forefront of public discourse and debate. Though Latinos alone didn't elect President Obama and defeat Gov. Mitt Romney, both parties finally recognized that it was a huge and growing voting bloc. But immigration reform isn't just about shoring up the Latino vote or providing a pathway to legalization, Jacoby cautions. "That's one of the biggest misconceptions – this isn't a favor we're doing for Latinos. This is for us – for all Americans. It's about the U.S. economy and U.S. competitiveness." **Her advice for President Obama: Keep up the pressure to advance legislation, but don't take over the process.** **"That could potentially be the kiss of death,"** she said.

## No impact – watered down

### **Doesn't solve – the GOP will water it down**

**Yglesias, 1-15-13** (Matthew, Slate, "How the GOP Can Roll Obama on Immigration")

[http://www.slate.com/blogs/moneybox/2013/01/15/immigration\\_reform\\_will\\_obama\\_get\\_rolled.htm](http://www.slate.com/blogs/moneybox/2013/01/15/immigration_reform_will_obama_get_rolled.htm)

Of the major policy issues under discussion in Washington, "immigration reform" stands out for having unusually undefined content. For the major immigration-advocacy groups, the goal is clear, a comprehensive bill that includes a path to citizenship for the overwhelming majority of unauthorized migrants already living in the United States. But many other aspects of immigration law are in the mix as part of a proposed deal, and it seems to me that **there's a fair chance that a nimble Republican Party could essentially roll the Democratic coalition** and pass an "immigration reform" bill that doesn't offer the path Latino advocacy groups are looking for. Elise Foley has the key line from her briefing on the administration's thinking about immigration, namely that **a piecemeal approach "could result in passage of the less politically complicated pieces**, such as an enforcement mechanism and high-skilled worker visas, **while leaving out more contentious items** such as a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants." And indeed it could. **But how can they stop it?** The last House GOP effort to split the high-tech visas question from the path to citizenship question was an absurd partisan ploy. **If Republicans want to get serious about it they should be able to make it work. The centerpiece would be something on increased immigration of skilled workers.** That's something the tech industry wants very much, it's a great idea on the merits, and few influential people have any real beef with it. High tech visas will easily generate revenue to pay for some stepped-up enforcement. **Then instead of adding on a poison pill** so Democrats will block the bill, **you need to add a sweetener.** Not the broad path to citizenship, but something small like the DREAM Act. **Now you've got a package that falls massively short** of what Latino groups are looking for, **but that** I think **Democrats will have a hard time actually blocking.** After all, **why would they block it?** It packages three things—more skilled immigration, more enforcement, and help for DREAMers—they say they want. Blocking it because it doesn't also do the broad amnesty that liberals want and conservatives hate would require the kind of fanaticism that is the exact opposite of Obama's approach to politics.

### **Comprehensive reform fails – passage forces compromises that prevent solvency**

**Morrison 12-9** – Bruce Morrison, a former U.S. Representative from Connecticut, was the chairman of the House immigration subcommittee and the author of the Immigration Act of 1990. December 9th, 2012, "One Bill of Compromises Isn't the Answer"

[www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2012/12/09/understanding-immigration-reform/one-immigration-bill-of-compromises-isnt-the-answer](http://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2012/12/09/understanding-immigration-reform/one-immigration-bill-of-compromises-isnt-the-answer)

To many, **"comprehensive immigration reform" means "fix it and forget it."** But **doing it all in one bill reprises what got us in the current mess in the first place.** After major reform bills in 1986 and 1990, the failing employment verification scheme and the clogged green card process were allowed to go unattended. The **"enforcement only" 1996 law only froze the mess in place.** Save the 'punishment' for those that do not comply with a system that works, not those ensnared in the current system that does not. **A huge compromise of all competing immigration fixes larded into one bill will involve compromises that do not serve the nation's interests.** Instead we need to assemble the votes to do the two things that must be done — a broad earned legalization program for the 11 million now illegally resident in the country in conjunction with the assurance that this problem will not happen again. That assurance will come from a universal, electronic, identity-authenticating screening of all workers to ensure that they are authorized to work in the U.S. Because almost all who make unauthorized entries and overstays do so to seek and accept employment, no other tool will get the result we need to make legalization politically and philosophically justified — that we have fixed the source of the problem. And this also means using the employment relationship to roll-in legalization while rolling out universal verification. The key point is that prevention of illegal presence is the goal. **Save the "punishment" for those that do not comply with a system that works, not those ensnared in the current system that does not.** Our legal immigration system needs lots of fixing, like the increase of STEM green cards passed by the House last week and much more. But these fixes, including all future flows beyond the current one million annual immigrants and the millions who will be legalized, will get much easier to negotiate when the legalization-prevention barrier is removed.



## Best-case is weak reform

Reuters 1/4/13 ("Fiscal Fallout Bruises Obama's Second-Term Agenda",

<http://www.foxbusiness.com/government/2013/01/04/fiscal-fallout-bruises-obama-second-term-agenda/>,

But Kessler said he was **skeptical** that Obama and Congress can find common ground on a comprehensive immigration measure that provides a **long-term solution** for the country's 12 million illegal immigrants. ¶ "Will something get done on immigration? Probably. But a major deal that addresses all undocumented immigrants in a comprehensive way? We're **much less confident** than we were two weeks ago," Kessler said. ¶ "The question now is, do they even know how to make deals with each other?" he said.