

# Group of senators reaches immigration deal on Dreamers, wall

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A group of senators reached a bipartisan agreement Wednesday aimed at balancing Democrats' fight to offer citizenship to young "Dreamer" immigrants with President Donald Trump's demands for billions to build his coveted border wall with Mexico.

Though the compromise was announced by 16 senators with centrist views on the issue and was winning support from many Democrats, it faced an uncertain fate. Leaders were trying to schedule votes on that plan and three other immigration proposals for Thursday, which they hoped would bring the chamber's showdown over the hot-button issue to a close.

While not specifically mentioning the bipartisan pact, Trump urged lawmakers to oppose any plan that doesn't meet his more stringent demands, which include curbs on legal immigration and the abolition of a visa lottery. The Senate's No. 2 Republican, John Cornyn of Texas, warned that lawmakers need to address Trump's entire proposal, saying, "We need to take the president seriously."

There were also qualms among Democrats. The party's No. 2 Senate leader, Richard Durbin of Illinois, said some Democrats had "serious issues" with parts of the plan. Those concerns focused on its spending for Trump's wall and its bar against



AP Photo/J. Scott Applewhite

**Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Chuck Grassley, R-Iowa, walks through a basement passageway at the Capitol amid debates in the Senate on immigration, in Washington, Wednesday. President Donald Trump is thanking Grassley for introducing legislation similar to the immigration framework pushed by the White House.**

Dreamers sponsoring their parents for legal residency.

"We're not there yet," Durbin said of the 60 votes the proposal would need for approval.

So far, no other proposals from either side seem able to do that. Republicans control the chamber 51-49, though Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., has missed the last several weeks while battling cancer.

The bipartisan measure's sponsors included eight GOP

senators. That meant just three more Republicans would be needed for it to prevail if it is backed by all 47 Democrats and the two independents who usually support them.

The compromise emerged as senators spent a third day of debate largely as they spent the first two — with the chamber floor mostly empty. Other than an initial roll call allowing formal debate to begin, there have been no other votes while party leaders talk behind the scenes

about scheduling votes on specific proposals.

The centrist proposal was produced by a group led by Sens. Susan Collins, R-Maine, and Joe Manchin, D-W.Va., that spent weeks seeking middle ground.

It would grant a 10- to 12-year route to citizenship for 1.8 million Dreamers, participants said.

That's the same number Trump has suggested helping with his own wider-ranging but more restrictive proposal. Dreamers are young immigrants who were brought to the U.S. illegally as children and still have no permanent protection from deportation.

The plan would provide \$25 billion over a decade, \$2.5 billion annually, for a wall and other border security measures, the same total Trump has requested. It would bar Dreamers from sponsoring their parents for citizenship, far narrower than Trump's proposal to prevent all legal immigrants from bringing parents and siblings to the U.S.

The moderates' measure does not alter a lottery that distributes about 55,000 visas annually to people from diverse countries. Trump has proposed ending it and redistributing its visas to other immigrants, including some who are admitted based on job skills, not family ties.

"The diversity lottery is kind of toxic politically because of some of the things said by the president," said Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C.,

a reference to a vulgar description Trump used for African countries during a discussion of immigration.

The White House issued a written statement by Trump urging senators to back his bill and "oppose any legislation that fails to fulfill" his demands. But the statement did not say Trump would veto a bill that fell short of them.

A GOP measure tracking Trump's proposal and backed by McConnell has been introduced and was expected to receive a vote. Few expect it to attract 60 votes, but Sen. Mike Rounds, R-S.D., said he believed the bipartisan proposal could.

If that happens, Rounds said, "We'll allow the president to determine whether or not it moves in the direction that he wants."

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., indirectly embraced the bipartisan plan, saying, "Each side has had to give a great deal, but we are closer than we have ever been to passing something in the Senate to help the Dreamers."

Also in play is a more modest plan by McCain and Sen. Chris Coons, D-Del. It would let many Dreamers qualify for permanent residency and direct federal agencies to more effectively control the border by 2020. But it doesn't offer a special citizenship pathway for Dreamers, raise border security funds or make sweeping changes in legal immigration rules.

# SHOOTING: Cruz was expelled last school year because he got into a fight

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appeared to be treating the wounded on sidewalks.

"It is a horrific situation," said Robert Runcie, superintendent of the school district in Parkland, about an hour's drive north of Miami. "It is a horrible day for us."

The suspect was taken into custody without a fight in a residential neighborhood about a mile away. He had multiple magazines of ammunition, authorities said.

"It's catastrophic. There really are no words," Broward County Sheriff Scott Israel told reporters.

The attacker used the fire alarm "so the kids would come pouring out of the classrooms into the hall," Sen. Bill Nelson told CNN.

"And there the carnage began," said Nelson, who said he was briefed by the FBI.

The Florida Democrat said he did not know if the gunman used the smoke grenades, but he assumed that's why he had a gas mask on.

Most of the fatalities were inside the building, though some victims were found outside. The dead included a football coach, the sheriff said.

More than a dozen other people were wounded and taken to hospitals, doctors said.

Victoria Olvera, a junior at the school, said Cruz was expelled last school year because he got into a fight with his ex-girlfriend's new boyfriend. She said he had been abusive to his girlfriend.

"I think everyone had in their minds if anybody was going to do it, it was going to be him," she said.

Dakota Mutchler, another junior, said he used to be friends with Cruz. But he cut off the friendship as Cruz's behavior "started progressively getting a little more weird." Cruz posted on Instagram about killing animals and threatened one of Mutchler's friends, she said.

He remembered that Cruz had a pellet gun and did target practice in his backyard.

Student Daniel Huerfano said he recognized Cruz from an Instagram photo in which Cruz had posed



Mike Stocker/South Florida Sun-Sentinel via AP

**Students are evacuated by police from Marjorie Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Fla., on Wednesday after a shooter opened fire on the campus.**



AP Photo/Joel Auerbach

**Parents wait for news after reports of a shooting at Marjorie Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Fla., on Wednesday.**

with a gun in front of his face.

Cruz "was that weird kid that you see ... like a loner," he said.

Freshman Max Charles was in class when he heard five gunshots. "We were in the corner, away from the windows," he said. "The teacher locked the door and turned off the light. I thought maybe I

could die or something."

As he was leaving the building, he saw four dead students and one dead teacher. He said he was relieved when he finally found his mother.

"I was happy that I was alive," Max said. "She was crying when she saw me."

About an hour after the attack, Michael Nembhard was sitting in his garage on a cul-de-sac when he saw a young man in a burgundy shirt walking down the street. In an instant, a police cruiser pulled up, and officers jumped out with guns drawn.

"All I heard was 'Get on the ground! Get on the ground!'" Nembhard said. He said the man did as he was told.

The day started normally at the school, which had a morning fire drill. Students were in class around 2:30 p.m. when another alarm sounded.

Junior Noah Parness said he and the other students calmly went outside to their fire-drill areas when he suddenly heard popping sounds.

"We saw a bunch of teachers running down the stairway, and then everybody shifted and broke into a sprint," Parness said. "I hopped a fence."

Beth Feingold said her daughter, Britanni, sent a text that said, "We're on code red. I'm fine," but sent another text shortly afterward saying, "Mom, I'm so scared." She

was later able to escape.

Students heard loud bangs as the shooter fired. Many of them hid under desks or in closets and barricaded doors.

Television footage showed students leaving in a single-file line with their hands over their heads as officers urged them to evacuate quickly.

The scene was reminiscent of the Newtown attack, which shocked even a country numbed by the regularity of school shootings. The Dec. 14, 2012, assault at Sandy Hook Elementary School killed 26 people — 20 first-graders and six staff members.

The 20-year-old Connecticut gunman, who also fatally shot his mother in her bed, then killed himself.

When Caesar Figueroa got to the Florida school to check on his 16-year-old daughter, he saw helicopters and police officers wielding guns.

"It was crazy and my daughter wasn't answering her phone." She finally texted him that she was inside a closet with friends.

Len Murray's 17-year-old son, a junior at the school, sent his parents a chilling text: "Mom and Dad, there have been shots fired on campus at school. There are police sirens outside. I'm in the auditorium and the doors are locked."

A few minutes later, he texted again, "I'm fine."

Murray said he raced to the school only to be stopped by authorities under a highway overpass within view of the school buildings. He said he told his son to save his battery and stop texting. The boy's mother told him to turn off his ringer.

Murray said he's had just one thought running through his mind since his son's text: "All I keep thinking about is when I dropped him off this morning. I usually say, 'I love you,' and I didn't this morning. He's 17, he's at that age. And I didn't say it this morning, and I'm just kicking myself right now over and over and over."

The school was to be closed for the rest of the week.

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