

# ‘Dreamers’ left in limbo as Senate rejects immigration bills

Four separate proposals from both Republicans and Democrats fail to secure a majority

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Senate left hundreds of thousands of “Dreamer” immigrants in limbo Thursday, rejecting rival plans that would have spared them from deportation and strengthened the nation’s border security. Senators dealt President Donald Trump an especially galling defeat as more than a quarter of fellow Republicans abandoned him on an issue that helped propel him to the White House.

Also defeated was a plan by a bipartisan group of senators who offered a compromise that would have shielded the young immigrants and financed Trump’s demands for money to build his coveted border wall with Mexico, though more gradually than he wants. Eight Republicans joined most Democrats in backing that plan, but it fell short after the White House threatened a veto and GOP leaders opposed it.

The day’s votes, in which four separate proposals were defeated, illustrated anew Congress’ steep challenge in striking a deal on an issue that’s proven intractable for years and on which each party’s most fervent supporters refuse to budge. The outcome suggested there may be no permanent solution soon to help the Dreamers, who were brought to the U.S. as children, despite their sky-high support in public polling.

The Senate votes left the young immigrants facing a March 5 deadline that Trump has given Congress for restoring the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, or DACA, that he annulled last year. Federal courts have blocked him temporarily from dismantling the Obama-era initiative, but without congressional action the immigrants will face growing risks of deportation as their protections expire.

“Dreamers” are immigrants who were brought to the U.S. as children and now risk deportation because they lack permanent authorization to stay. DACA gives them the ability to live and work in the U.S. for two-year periods that can be renewed.

“It looks like demagogues on the left and the right win again on immigration,” said Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., who helped craft the bipartisan package but also backed Trump’s plan. He added, “The only way forward is for President Trump to grab the reins and lead us to a solution.”

That scenario wasn’t in sight Thursday.

The White House trashed the bipartisan proposal as “dangerous policy that will harm the nation,” denouncing a provision directing the government to prioritize enforcement efforts against immigrants who arrive illegally — beginning in July. Trump proved unwilling to fold on his demands for a tougher bill, reflecting the hard-line immigration stance that fueled his presidential run.

After the Senate rejected all four proposals on Thursday, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., blamed Democrats for failing to



From left, Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, Sen. Jeff Flake, R-Ariz., Sen. Joe Manchin, D-W.Va., and Sen. Jeanne Shaheen, D-N.H., finish a news conference on the bipartisan immigration deal they reached during a news conference at the Capitol in Washington on Thursday.

AP Photo/J. Scott Applewhite

“It looks like demagogues on the right and left win again on immigration.”  
— Lindsay Graham, Republican Senator from South Carolina

accept what he said was a “generous” offer from Trump.

“They turned away from a golden opportunity to solve the issue,” said McConnell. He expressed openness to considering a future compromise but said, “For that to happen, Democrats will need to take a second look” at Trump’s demands.

Trump had dangled a chance for citizenship for 1.8 million young immigrants, meeting a top Democratic demand. But that plan also included \$25 billion to build his border wall with Mexico and enact other border security measures, tighter curbs on relatives whom legal immigrants could sponsor for citizenship and an end to a visa lottery that encourages immigration from diverse nations.

No. 2 Senate GOP leader John Cornyn of Texas said after the votes that lawmakers might consider temporarily protecting Dreamers from deportation in a government-wide spending measure Congress will consider next month.

He said that approach “to me is not great, but that’s kind of where we are.”

Democrats said Trump was the major hindrance to a broader deal.

“This vote is proof that President Trump’s plan will never become law,” said Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer of New York. “If he would stop torpedoing bipartisan efforts, a good bill would pass.”

The Senate derailed Trump’s proposal by voting 60-39 against it — 21 votes shy of the 60 it needed to survive.

The White House reacted angrily Thursday night, releasing a statement accusing “Schumer Democrats” of not being serious about DACA, immigration reform or homeland security.

And yet, 14 Republicans — more than 1 in 4 — joined 46 Democrats in opposition.

The “no” votes included some of the chamber’s most conservative Republicans, many of whom were uncom-

fortable with offering citizenship to immigrants here illegally.

Just three Democrats backed Trump’s proposal, all of them facing dicey November re-election in states he carried easily in 2016: Indiana’s Joe Donnelly, Heidi Heitkamp in North Dakota and West Virginia’s Joe Manchin.

The vote on the bipartisan plan was 54-45, six short of the required 60. Eight Republicans who helped craft that compromise supported it, and three Democrats voted “no” including Sen. Kamala Harris, D-Calif., who’s viewed as a 2020 presidential hopeful.

That proposal offered the citizenship pathway for Dreamers and \$25 billion for border security, but doled it out over 10 years.

Trump’s bill would have prevented legal immigrants from sponsoring parents and siblings for citizenship and would have ended a visa lottery aimed at allowing more diverse immigrants into the U.S. The compromise bill would have left the lottery system intact but barred Dreamers who obtain citizenship from sponsoring their parents.

The bipartisan measure’s sponsors included eight GOP senators. It was produced by a group led by Republican Sen. Susan Collins of Maine and Democrat Manchin.

Also rejected was a modest plan by Sens. John McCain, R-Ariz., and Chris Coons, D-Del. It would have let many Dreamers qualify for permanent residency and directed federal agencies to more effectively control the border by 2020.

But it didn’t offer a special citizenship pathway, raise border security funds or make sweeping changes in legal immigration rules.

A proposal by Sen. Pat Toomey, R-Pa., was killed that would have blocked federal grants to “sanctuary cities,” communities that don’t cooperate with federal efforts to enforce immigration laws.

## BRIEFLY

### Bannon interviewed in Mueller’s Russia investigation

WASHINGTON (AP) — Steve Bannon, the combative former chief strategist for President Donald Trump, was interrogated for 20 hours over two days this week as part of special counsel Robert Mueller’s Russia investigation, according to a person familiar with the process.

The person, who declined to be named because they were not authorized to publicly discuss the investigation, said Bannon answered every question that was put to him by Mueller’s team. That’s in contrast to a Thursday interview with the House intelligence committee, where Bannon declined to answer some of lawmakers’ questions, despite a subpoena.

While the exact questions for Bannon are unknown, Mueller is investigating whether there was any coordination between Trump’s campaign and Russians who meddled in the 2016 election, and also whether there have been any efforts to obstruct the ongoing FBI probe into those contacts. The House panel is investigating the meddling and whether Trump’s campaign was involved.

Because Bannon was one of Trump’s top advisers, both Mueller and the lawmakers were expected to question him about key events during his time in the White House, including Trump’s firings of former national security adviser Michael Flynn and former FBI Director James Comey.

### UK blames Russian military for ‘malicious’ cyberattack

LONDON (AP) — Britain and the United States blamed the Russian government on Thursday for a cyberattack that hit businesses across Europe last year, with London accusing Moscow of “weaponizing information” in a new kind of warfare.

Foreign Minister Tariq Ahmad said “the U.K. government judges that the Russian government, specifically the Russian military, was responsible for the destructive NotPetya cyberattack of June 2017.”

The fast-spreading outbreak of data-scrambling software centered on Ukraine, which is embroiled in a conflict with Moscow-backed separatists in the country’s east. It spread to companies that do business

with Ukraine, including U.S. pharmaceutical company Merck, Danish shipping firm A.P. Moller-Maersk and FedEx subsidiary TNT.

The White House joined with British leaders, saying the Russian military had “launched the most destructive and costly cyber-attack in history.” President Donald Trump’s administration said the move was part of the Kremlin’s attempt “to destabilize Ukraine and demonstrates ever more clearly Russia’s involvement in the ongoing conflict.”

“This was also a reckless and indiscriminate cyberattack that will be met with international consequences,” said White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders.

British Defense Secretary Gavin Williamson accused Russia of “undermining democracy, wrecking livelihoods by targeting critical infrastructure, and weaponizing information” with malicious cyberattacks.

“We must be primed and ready to tackle these stark and intensifying threats,” Williamson said.

### South African limbo ends with new president, Cyril Ramaphosa

CAPE TOWN, South Africa (AP) — Cyril Ramaphosa became South Africa’s president with a message of clean government and inclusiveness on Thursday, stirring the hopes of many South Africans that he can reverse a corrosive period of decline and division under his predecessor, Jacob Zuma.

Ramaphosa, a lead negotiator in the transition from apartheid to democracy in the early 1990s, was elected by jubilant ruling party legislators anxious to shed political limbo and get the leadership of the country back on track. In an indication of the challenges facing Ramaphosa, the two main opposition parties did not participate in the National Assembly vote, arguing it was a sham process because the ruling African National Congress party was tainted by its association with corruption scandals during the Zuma era.

Even so, the 65-year-old Ramaphosa delivered a measured, conciliatory speech to lawmakers in a chamber that had been the scene of heckling and sometimes scuffles during appearances by Zuma, who resigned late Wednesday after protracted discussions with ANC leaders who told him to step down or face a parliamentary motion of no confidence.



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