

# Conservative revolt over immigration sinks farm bill

WASHINGTON (AP) — House Republican leaders suffered an embarrassing setback Friday when conservatives scuttled an ambitious farm bill, part of a high-stakes power play as they once again exert their oversized sway in the House.

In this case, conservatives in the House Freedom Caucus wanted to slow the momentum of bipartisan legislation to help young “Dreamers.” Republican moderates are gaining ground with their immigration effort and conservatives don’t like the deals taking shape. By withholding their votes on the farm bill, they flexed their political muscle to doom both.

Not even a tweet from President Donald Trump supporting the farm bill could save it from the chaos Friday. It was defeated, 213-198. Some 30 Republicans joined with every chamber Democrat in opposition.

The vote was a blow to GOP leaders, exposing the power struggle underway

as leaders jockey to replace Speaker Paul Ryan, who is not seeking re-election. It disrupts GOP efforts to portray party unity ahead of the midterm election and to rack up legislative wins to motivate voters to the polls to keep their majority.

Trump is “disappointed in the result of today’s vote” and “hopes the House can resolve any remaining issues,” said Deputy Press Secretary Lindsay Walters.

The outcome also shelve for now the big, five-year farm bill, a top GOP priority because it combines stricter work and job training requirements for food stamp recipients — long pushed by Ryan as part of his safety net cuts — with a renewal of farm subsidies popular in GOP-leaning farm country.

Rep. Tom Cole, R-Okla., a veteran campaign strategist, said it’s a “mistake” for conservatives to play the farm and immigration bills against each other. “You don’t hold one thing hostage for something that’s totally



AP Photo/J. Scott Applewhite  
**Rep. Dave Brat, R-Va., a member of the conservative House Freedom Caucus, smiles before the vote on the House farm bill that failed to pass, at the Capitol in Washington on Friday.**

different,” he said.

Conservatives, though, have gained clout in the House by withholding their block of some 30 votes to exert their sway on legislation. That strategy is only expected to escalate as they jockey for promotions up the leadership ladder once Ryan retires.

Rep. Jim Jordan, R-Ohio, a leader of the House Freedom Caucus who has expressed an interest in run-

ning for House speaker, said some conservatives had concerns over the farm bill, largely because of its spending, but “my main focus was making sure we do immigration policy right.”

Democrats are strongly opposed to the farm bill, saying the stricter work and job training rules are poorly designed and would drive 2 million people off food stamps. They took a victory lap after the vote.

Minority Whip Steny Hoyer, D-Md. said the dysfunction under the Republican majority in Congress is another reason why voters in November “are going to give us their jobs.”

The farm bill’s rejection scrambled the prospects for what had seemed to be an agreement over the immigration standoff.

House Republicans worked into the night trying to negotiate a resolution and some thought they had reached a deal. It would have allowed rival immigration bills to proceed to the floor by late June.

One bill from hard-liners would reduce legal immigration and open the door to Trump’s border wall with Mexico. A second, being negotiated with the White House, GOP leaders and Democrats, would be aimed at and bolstering border security and helping young “Dreamer” immigrants — those who were brought to the U.S. illegally as children — to remain permanently in

the U.S.

The accord was aimed at heading off a drive by moderates who are just five Republican signatures short on a petition to force votes on a bipartisan immigration bill Democrats would likely support.

The deputy whip, Rep. Patrick McHenry, R-N.C., said it was only when he arrived on the floor Friday that he realized the farm bill would come up short. He said the conservative flank is “trying to extract something” more on immigration.

But Rep. Mark Meadows, R-N.C., the head of the Freedom Caucus, told reporters there was “no deal” on immigration. He downplayed the setback on the farm bill, saying “it’s not a fatal blow. It’s just a reorganizing.”

The scramble will likely drive more Republicans to sign on to the renegade effort to push the compromise immigration bill to a floor vote over the objection of party leaders.

## Trump nominates acting VA secretary Wilkie for job

By ZEKE MILLER, HOPE YEN AND DARLENE SUPERVILLE

Associated Press



AP Photo/Susan Walsh

**President Donald Trump announced Friday that he is nominating Acting Veterans Affairs Secretary Robert Wilkie to permanently lead the Department of Veterans Affairs.**

sought to rebuild morale at a department beset with inner turmoil and rebellion over Trump’s push to expand access to private care. On Thursday, he announced a major \$10 billion contract with Cerner Corp. to overhaul electronic health records for millions of veterans, a 10-year project that aims to improve mental health care and ease access to private providers.

Wilkie’s selection reflects Trump’s desire to have a steady hand leading the government’s second-largest department following the abrupt withdrawal by Jackson, who had never managed a large workforce. The Pentagon is the government’s largest department, with more than 700,000 employees.

Veterans groups expressed support for the nomination.

Gary Augustine, executive director of Disabled American Veterans’ Washington headquarters, said he considered it a “good sign” that Wilkie seemed receptive to hearing from veterans’ service organizations.

WASHINGTON — In a surprise announcement that caught the candidate off-guard, President Donald Trump said Friday he’ll nominate acting Veterans Affairs Secretary Robert Wilkie to permanently lead the beleaguered department.

Trump spilled the news about Wilkie at a White House event on prison reform as he introduced Cabinet members in attendance. When Trump got to Wilkie, he said, “I’ll be informing him in a little while — he doesn’t know this yet — that we’re going to be putting his name up for nomination to be secretary.”

Trump added, “I’m sorry that I ruined the surprise.”

The president had already appeared impressed with Wilkie, saying publicly last month that he’s been doing a “great job” at VA. On Friday, Trump upped his assessment of Wilkie’s job performance to “incredible job.”

Wilkie has led the VA since Trump fired David Shulkin in March amid an ethics scandal and mounting rebellion within the agency. Trump then turned to Ronny Jackson, the Navy doctor who had been his personal physician, but Jackson abruptly withdrew last month amid allegations about his professionalism.

Wilkie, 55, is a former Pentagon undersecretary for personnel and readiness who oversaw a new policy aimed at stemming harassment in the military after an online nude-photo sharing scandal rocked the Marine Corps. The Senate confirmed him unanimously for the post.

At the VA, Wilkie has



## ENERGY COSTS TOO HIGH? TRY LOOKING AT IT IN A DIFFERENT LIGHT.

Want to lower your energy costs? When you update lighting and other equipment, you can see the difference instantly and recoup your investment in no time. Talk to a qualified trade ally to learn about Energy Trust of Oregon cash incentives for all kinds of energy-saving solutions.

+ Get more from your energy. Visit [www.energytrust.org/mybusiness](http://www.energytrust.org/mybusiness) or call us at 1.866.368.7878.

Serving customers of Portland General Electric, Pacific Power, NW Natural and Cascade Natural Gas.



# MULE MANIA

## MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND

**Bring the Whole Family!**

**FREE ADMISSION**

## DAYTON • WA

**COLUMBIA COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS**

[www.mulemaniadayton.com](http://www.mulemaniadayton.com)



**Saturday, May 26**  
**& Sunday, May 27**

- ★ **COMPETITION**  
Variety of Classes: Western Pleasure, Pole Bending, Driving Classes, Chariot Barrel Racing & Balloon Bust
- ★ **PARADE**  
Dayton Days Parade on Main Street, Historic Downtown Dayton on Saturday, 10am
- ★ **CHUCK WAGON DINNERS**  
Chuck Wagon Cook-Off. Dinner Tickets Available for Saturday **Tickets are limited** Buy early!
- ★ **MORE FAMILY MANIA**  
Great Food & Craft Vendors with Authentic Western Merchandise, Saturday & Sunday. Family Fun in the Pavilion on Saturday evening with Music & Beer Garden

**For more information (509) 382-4825**