

Leahy On Thursday Begins Markup Process For Comprehensive Immigration Reform Bill

... Leahy's Amendment To Bar Border Crossing Fees To Be One Of First To Be Considered

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WASHINGTON – On Thursday the Senate Judiciary Committee will begin markup sessions on the Border Security, Economic Opportunity and Immigration Modernization Act, first by debating the sponsors' amendment that provides technical corrections and improvements to the legislation. Chairman Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.) will next recognize members wishing to offer amendments to the so-called "trigger" section of the legislation. The committee will then move to Title I of the bill, which focuses on border enforcement. Thursday's markup will begin at 9:30 a.m., in Room 216 of the Hart Senate Office Building. **The markup sessions also will be webcast live (see link, below).**

The first amendment Leahy will offer Thursday will be his amendment to bar fees for crossing U.S. land borders. Leahy has pointed out the harm that a border fee on the Northern Border would cause to Vermont's economy and to the historic cultural ties that Vermonters have with Quebec. In its budget request for Fiscal Year 2014, the Department of Homeland Security has requested funds to study the idea of charging fees for border crossings.

More than 300 amendments were filed on Tuesday, all of which can be viewed [online](#) under unprecedented transparency standards that Leahy has set for the markup process. The first title of the bill focuses on border security. Additional titles of the legislation address immigrant visas, interior enforcement and improvements to nonimmigrant visa programs. Leahy has also previously said the markup session will resume on May 14, May 16, and future days as needed to complete consideration of the bipartisan legislation before the Memorial Day recess.

"Senators and members of the public have had weeks to review this legislation, ask questions and suggest improvements," Leahy said. "This week, we are engaged in our work by marking up and considering those amendments members wish to offer to this legislation. I hope the committee can complete its work by the end of the month."

The bipartisan immigration bill was first listed on the Judiciary Committee's agenda [two weeks ago](#). It was held over for further review, and the bill will have been available online a total of three weeks by this Thursday's markup. The legislation was also the subject of three hearings in April. The committee has devoted a total of six hearings to the issue of immigration reform this year, including the Senate's first hearing on the topic in February, and the panel held several more hearings on the topic in the last Congress.

Link to live webcast coverage of the Judiciary Committee's markup sessions on the immigration reform bill, on the Judiciary Committee's website: <http://www.judiciary.senate.gov/>

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Press Contact

David Carle: 202-224-3693

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