

CIR PROCEDURAL BACKGROUND (updated 5/20/07)

Senate: A “bargain” comprehensive immigration reform proposal was negotiated last week and will be offered as an amendment to replace the current contents of S. 1348. A “cloture” vote on a “motion to proceed” on S. 1348 has been scheduled for 5:30 pm on Monday, May 21. Debate will begin through the day Monday, but the amendment process cannot start until after the cloture vote. It is expected that an agreement will be reached for each side to offer a limited number of amendments--somewhere between 6 and 12. Debate and votes on amendments will happen through Tuesday and Wednesday, May 22-23, and perhaps part of Thursday, with a vote on final passage of an amended bill coming as early as Thursday or as late as Friday, May 24 or 25.

IF THE SENATE PASSES AN IMMIGRATION BILL NEXT WEEK, action will shift to the House. IF THE SENATE DOES NOT PASS A BILL, the House will not take up any comprehensive immigration legislation this year.

House: The House will complete a series of hearings this week, and following its Memorial Day recess, it will begin “markup” of an immigration bill in the immigration subcommittee chaired by Rep. Zoe Lofgren (D-CA). Rep. Lofgren has made remarks critical of a “point system,” but has not indicated whether she will begin committee markup with the STRIVE Act or with something else she may draft.

Markup will include a variety of amendments and is expected to take several days. Following subcommittee markup, the full Judiciary Committee, chaired by Rep. John Conyers (D-MI), will take up the bill reported by the subcommittee, and will hold its own markup, with additional debate and amendments.

The bill that comes out of the House Judiciary Committee will then go to the Rules Committee, which will determine which and how many amendments will be allowed to be offered during House floor debate.

House floor debate is expected to take place sometime in July.

Following House floor action, any House bill will then go to “conference” with whatever bill was voted out of the Senate. Rep. Conyers and Senator Kennedy (D-MA) will lead the conference deliberations, which could take several days or weeks. Whatever compromise bill is reported out of conference, reconciling House and Senate differences, will then have to go back to the House and Senate floors for final passage (no amendments allowed at that stage) and then, if passed, be sent to the President to sign.