

## **IMMIGRATION BILL BEFORE CONFEREES**

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### **Body**

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Seven Senators and 29 Representatives plan to meet Thursday in an effort to begin drafting a comprehensive **immigration bill** passed in different forms by the two houses of Congress.

The first meeting of the conference committee comes 12 weeks after the House passed the **bill**, 216 to 211. The Senate approved its version of the legislation by a vote of 76 to 18 in May 1983.

The Senate and House versions would both prohibit employment of illegal aliens and offer legal status to many illegal aliens already in the country. They differ on the penalties for employers who knowingly hire illegal aliens and on the terms of the amnesty, which are more restrictive in the Senate **bill**.

The Reagan Administration strongly supports the Senate **bill**, but has described some of the House amendments as unacceptable. Administration officials contend that the House version would be too costly because the Federal Government might have to reimburse states for the costs of providing welfare and social services to aliens who gained legal status.

Hispanic leaders, who believe that the employer sanctions would increase discrimination against Hispanic workers, stepped up lobbying against the **bill** this week. They met Tuesday with the House majority leader, Representative Jim Wright, Democrat of Texas, who voted for the **bill** when it passed on June 20.

'The Prospects Are Bleak'

Mr. Wright said today, "The prospects are bleak for passage of any **immigration** legislation this year."

Hispanic said Congress could conceivably finish work on the **bill before** adjournment.

Following is a summary of major issues facing the conference:

**Employer Sanctions:** The Senate and House **bills** would both require employers to ask all job applicants for documents to verify that they were citizens or aliens authorized to work in the United States. Both **bills** contain an exemption for employers with three or fewer employees.

Under the Senate **bill**, after a one- year transition period, the Government could assess a civil penalty of \$1,000 against an employer for each illegal alien hired. If there was a second offense, the employer would be subject to a

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\$2,000 penalty for each illegal alien, and for a "pattern or practice" of violations, the employer could be fined \$1,000 and imprisoned six months.

The House bill has no criminal penalties. After a six-month transition period, an employer would receive a citation or warning for the first offense. For a second offense, the employer would be subject to a civil penalty of \$1,000 for each illegal alien hired. In any subsequent offense, the employer would be subject to a civil penalty of \$2,000 for each illegal alien hired.

Amnesty: The House bill offers legal status to illegal aliens who entered the United States before Jan. 1, 1982, and have lived here continuously since that date. The comparable date in the Senate bill is Jan. 1, 1980.

The House bill provides that illegal aliens would first have to become "lawful temporary residents." After one year, the aliens could seek permanent resident status if they were studying the English language and the history and government of the United States.

The Senate bill offers immediate permanent resident status to illegal aliens who arrived before Jan. 1, 1977. It offers temporary status to those who arrived from Jan. 1, 1977, to Dec. 31, 1979, and after three years in that status, they could become permanent residents.

Legalization Costs: The House bill says that the Federal Government "shall provide reimbursement to each state" for 100 percent of the costs of cash and medical assistance to aliens who gain legal status. Congress could later limit outlays if it wished. The Senate bill would establish a Federal grant for assistance to the states, but does not specify the amount.

Foreign Workers: Both bills would make it easier for employers to bring aliens into the country as temporary foreign workers, tied to a specific place of employment. The House bill would, in addition, create a special program for farmers who need help harvesting perishable fruit and vegetables.

Discrimination: The House bill would prohibit employers from discriminating against legal aliens in hiring or recruiting workers.

The Senate bill has no comparable provisions, but would require the General Accounting Office to determine whether employer sanctions led to a "pattern of discrimination."

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