

SENATORS PUSH BILL ON ALIENS

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Body

WASHINGTON (AP) -- The Senate moved slowly forward Thursday with plans to overhaul the immigration system, defeating a proposal to give extra credit in the competition for visas to those who speak English. "By all means, make classes available so they can learn English, but do not exclude people because they do not speak English," Sen. Paul Simon, D-Ill., said before the Senate rejected the plan, 56-43, after an emotionally charged debate. The **bill** would place an annual cap of 600,000 on immigration in each of the next three years, the first such limit in decades. That represents 106,000 more visas than were issued in 1988, but critics say the measure ultimately would exclude all but the closest relatives of American citizens and permanent residents of the United States. The Senate approved a similar **bill** in 1988, but it died in the House. Sponsors are expressing optimism about their chances there this year. The measure is not related to the problem of illegal immigration. Critics scored a victory Wednesday when the Senate attached an amendment guaranteeing a minimum number of visas to extended family members of those who already are American citizens. More reshaping was expected as lawmakers worked their way through numerous amendments. As it emerged from the Senate Judiciary Committee, the **bill** would have reserved 480,000 visas for all types of family immigration and 120,000 for those entering on a basis other than family ties. That category includes 54,000 visas subject to a point system giving credit for those who have special skills needed by American industry but who do not have employers ready to sponsor them.

The Senate Judiciary Committee voted 12-2 to delete the provision that would provide a major advantage under the point system to individuals who speak English. But its sponsor, Sen. Alan K. Simpson, R-Wyo., appealed on the floor for a reversal that would restore extra credit for English speakers. He urged lawmakers not to be swayed by sentimental appeals that portray immigrants as the heart and soul of the American dream even though they speak no English. "The heart and soul disappears when you can't get work," he said. "English is the language of success," he said. But Simon quoted a news clipping that said 13 of the 16 valedictorians in Boston this year were born in foreign countries and the majority apparently did not have English for a mother tongue. Simon read a list of ethnic-sounding **senators'** names and reminded them that their own relatives had arrived in America without knowing English. Simpson expressed frustration that the sentiment-tinged debate appeared to be going against him. "You have snorted and ripped and rolled around in it and just given birth to a mouse," he said.

Graphic

Photo; PHOTO...Sam Leone/Post-Dispatch...Walls Tumbling Down...The walls at the Stag Brewery in Belleville tumbling down Thursday as M.J.R. Properties of Illinois began demolition. M.J.R., a subsidiary of Roberts Construction of St. Louis, is stripping the brewery and selling assets, including the beer storage tanks, to other breweries and industries. Tom Roberts, manager of M.J.R., said several of the buildings at the brewery will be leveled. M.J.R. plans to convert the remaining structures for use as warehouse space. Roberts said the project will take from six to nine months. The G. Heileman Brewing Co. Inc. closed the historic brewery last year.

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