

# ***What's behind Obama's bold move on immigration; President Obama's plan to defer deportation for millions of illegal immigrations tests Republicans. Do they go ballistic and hurt themselves? Or can they deny funding for Obama's plan without shutting down the government?***

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## **Body**

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President Obama is set to take sweeping executive action aimed at protecting some 5 million undocumented immigrants from deportation.

The move will satisfy a promise Mr. Obama made to immigrant and Latino groups long clamoring for relief on deportations. But it will also enflame already-high partisan tensions in Washington and color the rest of Mr. **Obama's** presidency - as well as the 2016 presidential race.

Obama will make his announcement Thursday in a televised address to the nation at 8 p.m. ET, the president announced in a video posted on WhiteHouse.gov. On Friday, he heads to Nevada - a political battleground state with a big Latino population - to give a speech promoting the move.

"Everybody agrees that our **immigration** system is broken," Obama said in the video. "Unfortunately, Washington has allowed the problem to fester for too long."

He said he will lay out measures that he can take with his "lawful authority as president" to improve the **immigration** system, while working with Congress to "get a bipartisan and comprehensive bill that can solve the entire problem."

Obama has stated in the past that he would "rip up" any executive action as soon as Congress passed legislation he was willing to sign.

But the reality is far less hopeful. Republican leaders in Congress have made clear that any broad executive action on **immigration** would poison their relationship with Obama, and hinder their ability to work together. They call **Obama's** planned move "executive amnesty."

Obama, for his part, may well have concluded that he wasn't going to get much done anyway with Congress during his final two years in office, and so he might as well act on his own. The Republicans pounded the Democrats in the Nov. 4 midterms, taking control of the Senate and expanding their House majority come January.

**Obama's immigration** move presents a big test for Republican leaders on Capitol Hill. Will their members go nuclear and shut down the government by refusing to fund the government in time for the Dec. 11 deadline? Or will they finesse the situation, finding a way to defund the president's **moves on immigration** without taking action that does further damage to the GOP brand?

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House Republicans reportedly crafted two plans Tuesday aimed at countering Obama on immigration without shutting down the government. One plan calls for passing a broad spending bill, then rescinding funds needed to implement Obama's immigration move. The other would take the funds out of the spending bill, and make it stand-alone legislation.

"We went down the government shutdown route a year ago. It didn't work, and I think a lot of people that recall that don't think it's wise to repeat that exercise," Rep. Tom Cole (R) of Oklahoma told The New York Times. "We've got a lot more than just a sledgehammer in the toolbox, and so let's use some of these other weapons that we have."

Notably, though, House Speaker John Boehner (R) of Ohio has not ruled out the possibility of another shutdown. The last shutdown was in October 2013; public blame fell on the Republicans.

Obama and the Democrats see his latest move on immigration as driven by a desire to do the right thing for millions of people in the country illegally and unable to get right with the law. Many have relatives in the United States who are either American citizens or have another form of legal status, including so-called "Dreamers" - people who were brought into the US illegally as children and are beneficiaries of Obama's 2012 move to defer deportation.

The executive action Obama will announce on Thursday aims to protect some 5 million undocumented immigrants. Criteria will include how long they have been in the US and family connections in the country.

Republicans see an effort by Obama to goad them into overreacting, and hurting their party's image further with Latino voters.

"Obama doesn't want to be seen as a lame-duck president," says Republican strategist Ford O'Connell. "He wants to frame this as Republicans being obstructionist, when in fact it's Obama who is going against the will of the American people."

In recent years, Obama's posture toward people in the US illegally has shifted. He used to say he didn't have the power to waive deportations for broad categories beyond the "Dreamers." But in the last year, as his frustration with congressional Republicans has grown and pressure from immigration groups has risen, his rhetoric has grown bolder.

Obama also has a vested interest in being succeeded by a Democrat in 2016, as a way to vindicate his record and protect his legacy. In the next election, the fast-growing Latino community will be as critical a voting bloc as ever.

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