

Senate rejects measure to ease immigration rules

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Body

Washington --- Efforts to pave the way for some illegal immigrants to work their way to citizenship failed in the **Senate** on a procedural vote Tuesday, but supporters of the legislation said they would try again.

The AgJobs Bill, which would allow an estimated 500,000 undocumented farm workers and their families to gain legal status in the United States, fell seven votes short of the 60 needed to force the **Senate** to consider the **measure**.

It was being offered as part of an \$80.7 billion supplemental appropriations bill to finance military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. The **Senate** is expected to approve that bill within days.

Supporters of the bill said the 53-45 vote indicated that a majority of the **Senate** supports the legislation. By contrast, they noted that only 21 senators voted Tuesday for a competing bill, backed by Sen. Saxby Chambliss (R-Ga.), that would streamline the current H-2A "guest worker" visa program for agricultural workers but not allow illegal immigrants to gain citizenship without first returning to their native country and going through normal **immigration** procedures.

The AgJobs Bill offered by Sens. Larry Craig (R-Idaho) and Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.) would have allowed illegal agricultural workers and their families to eventually gain permanent legal residency status if they continued working for six years. Such status could then lead to citizenship.

The other proposal, offered by Chambliss and Sen. Jon Kyl (R-Ariz.), would have allowed agricultural employers to hire workers under a "blue card" system for three to nine years.

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