

The long-awaited Immigration Reform Bill passed its test run with flying colors, with the Senate voting 84-15 in favor of progressing with the necessary legal reforms that would legalize the situation of over 11 million immigrants. "A permanent, common-sense solution to our dysfunctional system is in sight. This bipartisan legislation is the solution our economy needs. It is the solution immigrant families need," Senate Majority Leader, [Harry Reid](#), claimed, acknowledging that "compromise" would be necessary to make crucial amendments to the "imperfect" piece of legislation.

Change Is in the Air

Reid claimed that over the next few weeks, the Senate would concentrate on improving the legislation, yet that the heart of the bill would remain the same: basing the attainment of a [green card or citizenship](#) on accrued rights and skill. **Over 50 amendments have already been filed. These include:**

- An amendment to permit US citizens to seek a green card for a same-sex partner of a different nationality – filed by Senator Patrick Leahy.
- An amendment that would allow long-term workers in the agricultural sector to have a spouse or child live with them during their period of work in the US – filed by Senator Patrick Leahy.
- Calls for stricter requirements for proven English proficiency before an immigrant was granted permanent legal status – filed by Senator Marc Rubio.
- An amendment [requiring](#) Registered Provisional Immigrants to demonstrate that they have paid their back taxes (income and employment) and that they remain current once legal status is achieved – filed by Senator Marc Rubio.

The statistics ring loud and clear: real, comprehensive reform of current immigration laws would only bring benefits to the country. These include a reduction in the [federal deficit](#) by \$2.5 trillion over the next 10 years, increased payments to the social security, and a boom in profits for high-tech companies. Yet many suggested amendments are proving to be fertile ground for contention. The extension of equal rights to [same-sex couples](#), for instance, received strong resistance from Senator Marc Rubio, who said he would revoke his support for the Bill if Leahy's amendment was accepted. As recently as Thursday, June 13, the Bill survived a major challenge, when the Gang of Eight rejected an amendment that would deny the legalization of immigrants until the US Department of Homeland Security "has maintained effective control" of the entire US-Mexico border (which comprises almost 2,000 miles) for six entire months. It is becoming increasingly evident that the Immigration Bill has a long way to go but at the very least, it is the first step forward towards real, positive change for immigrants and the US as a whole.

Breaking News Update:

Monday, June 24: Efforts to legalize the situation of 11 million undocumented immigrants forged ahead when 15 Republicans voted in favor of passing a 'compromise bill' that would tighten border security in exchange for 'amnesty' for the immigrants. Some 67 senators voted in favor of the revised bill, which would double border guard numbers to 40,000. Despite the boost given to the bill, the landslide vote expected to be achieved was sabotaged by the summer storms, which kept several legislators from landing in Washington to give their vote. The Democrats were unable to achieve the 70 votes they had hoped for, since six of the 100 senators were absent. Nevertheless, the bill is garnering enough support from both the Republican and Democratic sides, so much so that experts predict that it stands a good chance of passage

in the House of Representatives. Meanwhile, President Obama is expected to host a meeting with Congressional leaders from both parties, with the immigration bill being the main subject of discussion.