

NYT: Democrats to Try Long-Shot Tactic for House Immigration Vote

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By [ASHLEY PARKER](#)

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WASHINGTON — House Democrats will carry out a long-shot legislative maneuver on Wednesday that is intended to bring a broad immigration bill to the House floor for a vote — or, at the very least, to increase the pressure on Republicans to move forward on some form of overhaul before the end of the year.

The maneuver, known as a discharge petition, would require 218 signatures and allow House Democrats and Republicans who support the immigration legislation to circumvent the Republican majority and bypass the regular committee process.

House Democrats are calling the effort the #DemandAVote petition, and they hope to force Republicans to take up the immigration bill, which largely mirrors the broad measure the Senate passed last year. The bill has 200 co-sponsors, including three Republicans, and it is officially known as the Border Security, Economic Opportunity and Immigration Modernization Act.

Like the bill the Senate passed, the House measure includes a path to citizenship for the 11 million immigrants who are in the country illegally.

Representative Nancy Pelosi of California, the Democratic leader, said Tuesday that Democrats were simply asking for a vote on an issue they believed would pass with bipartisan support.

“Despite the huge benefits for our fiscal health and our nation’s vitality, not to mention the overwhelming support of the American people, House Republicans continue to block a vote on comprehensive immigration reform,” Ms. Pelosi said. “Enough is enough, and Democrats are demanding a vote. It is time for Republicans to stop catering to the most extreme, anti-immigrant wing of their caucus, and allow a vote on the bipartisan immigration reform our nation so urgently needs.”

Senator Charles E. Schumer of New York, one of the Democratic architects of the Senate bill, [had previously floated the idea of a discharge petition](#).

House Democrats have tried to use the maneuver to push other legislative goals like extending unemployment insurance, raising the minimum wage and encouraging equal pay for women. Although the petitions have raised the visibility of those signature Democratic issues, they have not led to a vote on the House floor.

Any discharge petition in the current Congress would require the support of more than a dozen Republicans, an unlikely prospect because it would require them to defy their party's leadership. The last successful discharge petition was in 2002 and helped win passage of a major campaign finance law.

Ms. Pelosi has acknowledged that a discharge petition on immigration will probably not succeed either. "We'll never get to 218 on the discharge petition because the Republicans generally won't sign," she said this month [in an interview on Sirius XM Radio](#). "The outside mobilization is saying all we want is a vote."

The tactic will keep the pressure on House Republicans to offer their own immigration legislation.

A spokesman for the House speaker, John A. Boehner of Ohio, used Ms. Pelosi's own words to sum up the speaker's views on the Democrats' maneuver. "Representative Pelosi has said publicly that this effort is pointless and doomed to failure," said the spokesman, Michael Steel. "We agree."