

Immigration

Democrats, GOP Vow Action

BY ERICA WERNER
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Side by side, leading Democratic and Republican senators pledged Monday to propel far-reaching immigration legislation through the Senate by summer providing a possible path to citizenship for an estimated 11 million people now in the U.S. illegally.

The senators acknowledged pitfalls that have doomed such efforts in the past, but they suggested that November's elections — with Hispanics voting heavily for President Barack Obama and other Democrats — could make this time different.

Passage of the emotionally charged legislation by the Democratic-controlled Senate is far from assured, and a taller hurdle could come later in the House, which is dominated by conservative Republicans who've shown little interest in immigration overhaul. Obama will lay out his own proposals Tuesday, most of which mirror the Senate plans.

Besides the citizenship provision, including new qualifications, the Senate measure would increase border security, allow more temporary workers to stay and crack down on employers who would hire illegal immigrants. The plans are still short on detail, and all the senators conceded that months of tedious and politically treacherous negotiations lie ahead.

But with a re-elected Obama pledging his commitment, the lawmakers argued that six years after the last sustained congressional effort at an immigration overhaul came up short in the Senate, chances for approval this year are much better.

"Other bipartisan groups of senators have stood in the same spot before, trumpeting similar proposals," said Sen. Charles Schumer, D-N.Y. "But we believe this will be the year Congress finally gets it done. The politics on this issue have been turned upside down," Schumer said, arguing that polls show more support than ever for immigration changes and political risk in opposing it.

"Elections. Elections," said Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz. "The Republican Party is losing the support of our Hispanic citizens. And we realize that there are many issues on which we think we are in agreement with our Hispanic citizens, but this is a pre-eminent issue with those citizens."

Immigration reform plan

A bipartisan group of U.S. senators has unveiled the outline of a plan to overhaul U.S. immigration laws, including a path to citizenship for the 11 million illegal immigrants already here.

Key points to the deal

- **Path to citizenship** Illegal immigrants would register with government, pass background check, pay fine and back taxes to get "probationary legal status;" illegals would wait in line behind those pursuing legal routes; must learn English, show U.S. work history to get legal permanent residency, or green card

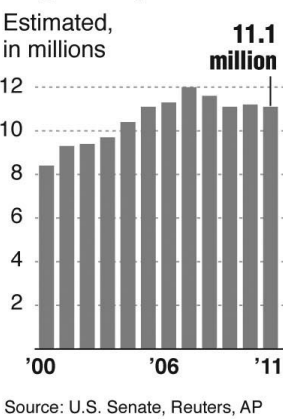
- **Border security** More unmanned aerial vehicles, other surveillance equipment, more border agents; entry-exit system to track people in U.S. on temporary visas; commission to monitor progress of securing border

- **Young illegal immigrants** President Barack Obama gave interim reprieve to youth brought to U.S. by parents; no specifics on how youth or farm workers would be treated by plan

- **High-tech workers** Would expand the number of visas, make green cards available for those who earn U.S. graduate degrees in certain fields

- **Employment verification** System to ensure that employers don't hire illegal immigrants; would require prospective workers to verify legal status and identity through non-forgable federal electronic system

Illegal immigrants in U.S.



Obama got 71 percent of the Latino vote in November compared to 27 percent for Republican Mitt Romney.

The president will endorse the Senate process during an event in Las Vegas Tuesday, administration officials said. He will outline a similar vision for overhauling the nation's immigration laws, drawing on the immigration "blueprint" he first released in 2011.

The blueprint focuses on four key areas: a pathway to citizenship for the 11 million illegal immigrants in the U.S., improved border security, an overhaul of the legal immigration system and making it easier for businesses to verify the legal status of workers.

Seeking to ramp up pressure on lawmakers, the White House has

prepared formal immigration legislation that it could send to Capitol Hill should the Senate process stall, administration officials said. The officials spoke on the condition of anonymity in order to discuss internal strategy.

Like the president's blueprint, the Senate proposals also call for a path to citizenship for illegal immigrants already here. But lawmakers want the creation of that pathway to be contingent upon securing the border and better tracking of people in the U.S. on visas.

The Senate's five-page framework also calls for overhauling the legal immigration system, including awarding green cards to immigrants who obtain certain advanced degrees from American universities, creating an effective

high-tech employment verification system to ensure that employers do not hire illegal immigrants in the future and allowing more low-skill and agricultural workers.

In a sign of the challenges ahead, the proposals immediately got a cool reaction from Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky.

"This effort is too important to be written in a back room and sent to the floor with a take-it-or-leave-it approach," McConnell said. "It needs to be done on a bipartisan basis and include ideas from both sides of the aisle."

Sen. Jeff Sessions, R-Ala., said on the Senate floor, "No one should expect members of the Senate are just going to rubber-stamp what a group has met and decided."

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., applauded the framework and said, "I will do everything in my power to get a bill across the finish line."

Pressures from outside groups from business to organized labor to immigrants themselves will be immense, even as lawmakers warily eye voters for their reaction.

Besides McCain and Schumer, the senators endorsing the new principles Monday were Democrats Dick Durbin of Illinois, Robert Menendez of New Jersey and Michael Bennet of Colorado and Republicans Lindsey Graham of South Carolina, Marco Rubio of Florida and Jeff Flake of Arizona.

Several of them have worked for years on the issue. McCain collaborated with the late Democratic Sen. Edward M. Kennedy on the comprehensive immigration legislation pushed by then-President George W. Bush that failed in 2007.

The group claims a notable newcomer in Rubio, a potential 2016 presidential candidate whose conservative bona fides may help smooth the way for support among conservatives wary of anything that smacks of amnesty. Rubio has been working with the group while also detailing his own similar immigration proposals to selected media, getting a generally positive reaction from conservative media.

"There are 11 million human beings in this country today that are undocumented. That's not something that anyone is happy about; that's not something that anyone wanted to see happen, but that is what happened. And we have an obligation and the need to address the reality of the situation that we face," Rubio said Monday.

Dutch Queen Announces She Is To Abdicate



Beatrix

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP) — Dutch Queen Beatrix announced Monday that she will abdicate on April 30 after 33 years as head of state, clearing the way for her eldest son, Crown Prince Willem-Alexander, to become the nation's first king in more than a century.

The announcement, in a nationally televised speech, signaled an end to the reign of one of Europe's longest-serving monarchs, whose time on the throne was marked by tumultuous shifts in Dutch society and, more recently, by personal

tragedy.

The queen's abdication from the largely ceremonial role had been widely expected, but it is sure to bring an outpouring of sentimental and patriotic feelings among the Dutch, most of whom adore Beatrix. In everyday conversation, many of her subjects refer to her simply by the nickname "Bea."

"Responsibility for our country must now lie in the hands of a new generation," Beatrix said in the speech delivered from her Huis ten Bosch palace just days before she was to turn 75.

"I am deeply grateful for the great faith you have shown in me in the many years that I could be your Queen," she added.

French Say Forces Have Entered Timbuktu

SEVARE, Mali (AP) — Backed by French helicopters and paratroopers, Malian soldiers entered the fabled city of Timbuktu on Monday after al-Qaida-linked militants who ruled the outpost by fear for nearly 10 months fled into the desert, setting fire to a library that held thousands of manuscripts dating to the Middle Ages.

French Col. Thierry Burkhard, chief military spokesman in Paris, said that there had been no combat with the Islamists but that the French and Malian forces did not yet control the town.

Still, there was celebration among the thousands of Timbuktu residents who fled the city rather than live under strict and pitiless Islamic rule and the dire poverty that worsened after the tourist industry was destroyed.

"In the heart of people from northern Mali, it's a relief — freedom finally," said Cheick Sormoye, a Timbuktu resident who fled to Bamako, the capital.

Timbuktu, a city of mud-walled buildings and 50,000 people, was for centuries a seat of Islamic learning and a major trading center along the North African caravan routes that carried slaves, gold and salt. In Europe, legend had it that it was a city of gold. Today, its name is synonymous with many with the ends of the earth.

U.S. Soldier Gets Double-Arm transplant

BALTIMORE (AP) — The first soldier to survive after losing all four limbs in the Iraq war has received a double-arm transplant.

Brendan Marrocco had the operation on Dec. 18 at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, his father said Monday. The 26-year-old Marrocco, who is from New York City, was injured by a roadside bomb in 2009.

He also received bone marrow from the same dead donor who supplied his new arms. That novel approach is aimed at helping his body accept the new limbs with minimal medication to prevent rejection.

The military is sponsoring operations like these to help wounded troops. About 300 have lost arms or hands in the wars.

"He was the first quad amputee to survive" from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and there have been four others since then, said Brendan Marrocco's father, Alex Marrocco. "He was really excited to get new arms."

Arsonist Sentenced To Death For '03 Wildfire

SAN BERNARDINO, Calif. (AP) — An arsonist was sentenced to death on Monday for killing five men who died of heart attacks during a wildfire that ripped through the hills east of Los Angeles a decade ago.

Superior Court Judge Michael Smith had the option of sentencing Rickie Lee Fowler, 31, to the harshest penalty or life in prison without the possibility of parole.

"Today, after nearly ten years, justice has now been secured for the victims and their families, and those whose lives were affected by the actions of Rickie Lee Fowler," said District Attorney Michael Ramos.

Fowler was convicted in August of five counts of first-degree murder and two counts of arson. A jury later recommended a death sentence for Fowler.

Prosecutors said Fowler lit the fire in 2003 out of rage after he was thrown out of a house where his family was staying.

Iran: Monkey Sent On Successful Space Trip

TEHRAN, Iran (AP) — A gray-tufted monkey strapped in a pod resembling an infant's car seat rode an Iranian rocket into space and returned safely, officials said Monday in what was described as a step toward Tehran's goal of a manned space flight.

The mission also touched on concerns that advances in Iran's rocket expertise could be channeled into military use for long-range weapons that might one day carry nuclear warheads. Iran says it does not seek atomic weapons.

Launching a live animal into space — as the U.S. and the Soviet Union did more than a half-century ago in the infancy of their programs — may boost a country's stature. But John Logsdan, a space policy professor emeritus at George Washington University, said Iran's achievement should draw no concern.

"A slight monkey on a suborbital flight is nothing to get too excited about," he said. "They already had the capability to launch warheads in their region."

U.S. State Department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland said the U.S. had no way to confirm the monkey's voyage, but that it was concerned by the reports because "any space launch vehicle capable of placing an object in orbit is directly relevant to the development of long-range ballistic missiles."

Brazil

No Alarm, Only One Exit In Nightclub Fire

BY JULIANA BARBASSA
Associated Press

SANTA MARIA, Brazil — The nightclub Kiss was hot, steamy from the press of beer-fueled bodies dancing close. The Brazilian country band on stage was whipping the young crowd into a frenzy, launching into another fast-paced, accordion-driven tune and lighting flares that spewed silver sparks into the air.

It was another Saturday night in Santa Maria, a university town of about 260,000 on Brazil's southernmost tip.

Then, in the pre-dawn hours of Sunday, it turned into a scene of indescribable horror as sparks lit a fire in the soundproofing material above the stage, churning out black, toxic smoke as flames raced through the former beer warehouse, killing 231 people.

"I was right there, so even though I was far from the door, at least I realized something was wrong," said Rodrigo Rizzi, a first-year nursing student who was next to the stage when the fire broke out and watched the tragedy unfold, horror-stricken and helpless. "Others, who couldn't see the stage, never had a chance. They never saw it coming."

There was no fire alarm, no sprinklers, no fire escape. In violation of state safety codes, fire extinguishers were not spaced every 1,500 square feet, and there was only one exit. As the city buried its young Monday, questions were raised about whether Brazil is up to the task of ensuring the safety in venues for the World Cup next

year, and the Olympics in 2016. Four people were arrested for questioning, including two band members and the nightclub's co-owner.

Rizzi hadn't even planned on going out that night. He was talked into it by friends and knew dozens at the club. He said the first sign of a problem was insulation dripping above the stage.

The flames at that point were barely noticeable, just tiny tongues lapping at the flammable material. The band's singer, Marcelo dos Santos, noticed it and tried to put out the smoldering embers by squirting water from a bottle.

The show kept going. Then, as the ceiling continued to ooze hot molten foam, dos Santos grabbed the drummer's water bottle and aimed it at the fire. That didn't work either, Rizzi said. A security guard handed the band leader a fire extinguisher. He aimed, but nothing came out; the extinguisher didn't work.

At that point, Rizzi said, the singer motioned to the band to get out. Rizzi calmly made his way to the door — the club's only exit — still thinking it was a small fire that would quickly be controlled.

The cavernous building was divided into several sections, including a pub and a VIP lounge — and hundreds of the college students and teenagers crammed in couldn't see the stage. They continued to drink and dance, unaware of the danger spreading above them.

Then, the place became an inferno.

The band members who headed straight for the door lived. One, Danilo Brauner, went back to get his accordion, and never made it out.

The air turned dense and dark with smoke; there was no light, nothing pointing to the single exit. Rizzi found himself clawing through a panicked crowd that surged blindly toward the door.

"I was halfway across the floor, I could see the door, but the air turned black with this thick smoke," he said. "I couldn't breathe. People started to panic and run toward the door. They were falling, screaming, pulling at each other."

The manager, meanwhile, was outside dealing with a drunk and belligerent young man. No one there had any inkling of the desperate scene unfolding just beyond Kiss' black, sound-proof double doors, said taxi driver Edson Schifelbain, who was in his car, waiting for passengers.

A security guard poked his head out and said there was a fight. A fraction of a second later, someone inside yelled "Fire!" The manager opened the doors and it was like opening the gates of hell, Schifelbain said.

Young men and women, mouths and eyes blackened with soot, clothes tattered, tumbled out screaming and crying. Some ran right over his taxi and two other



AM 1450

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WEEKDAYS MONDAY-FRIDAY

Tuesday, January 29

7:40 am L&C Theater Gala
(Lynn Becker, Leila Elder)

8:20 am Squirt Hockey
(Julie Perakslis)

8:45 am Dakota Musuem
(Crystal Nelson)

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PRESS & DAKOTAN

2013 Beautiful Baby Contest



We will be featuring our annual **"Beautiful Baby Contest"** in print and online on **Wednesday, February 27, 2013.** If you or someone you know has a child we would love to include them in our feature!

To enter, simply submit your photo and entry form with a \$10 submission fee by **Monday, February 18.**

First place winners in the following categories will receive a framed winners print and prizes from the following sponsors: Photography by Jerry, LilyCrest and JCPenney.

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- 2) 13-24 Months
- 3) 25 Months-3 Years
- 4) 4-7 Years
- 5) Multiple Births

Beautiful Baby Contest 2013

Category # _____ Age: _____ Date of Birth _____

Child's Name _____

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Address _____ Phone _____

Winners will be selected by the staff of Yankton Media Inc. Employees and family members of Yankton Media Inc. are ineligible to win. *Submission of this form authorizes the publication of child's photo in this contest in print and online at www.yankton.net. Submission fee (\$10) must accompany entry form to be valid.

Submit Entry To:
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Yankton, SD 57078

Entry Deadline:
Mon., Feb. 18, 2013