



The List of Senators Who Will Make or Break the Amnesty Bill

With 55 Democratic Senators, and 4 Republicans from the Gang of Eight, only one additional vote would be necessary to get to the filibuster-proof 60 votes needed to pass the Senate immigration bill, S. 744. Generally, in order to defeat the bill, Democrats and Republicans who voted no in 2007 will need to do so again. We've compiled a list of key senators whose opposition to the massive amnesty bill is absolutely crucial but whose commitment right now is in flux, and whose opinion can still be swayed. Please note that even if your senator isn't on this list, take nothing for granted. Those who solidly opposed amnesty previously, can and will flip, and the reverse is also true. The final list starting with Democrat hopefuls is as follows:

Mark Pryor (D-Ark.) is running for reelection in a red state. He opposed McCain-Kennedy in 2007.

Mary Landrieu (D-La.) is running for reelection in a red-leaning state. She opposed McCain-Kennedy in 2007, won reelection in 2008 and is up for reelection in 2014.

Kay Hagan (D-N.C.) is running for reelection in a purple state but was not around in 2007. North Carolinians vented their wrath at several House Democrats who voted for Obamacare, which could serve as a warning to Hagan on the equally volatile immigration vote.

Max Baucus (D-Mont.) is retiring, but voted against McCain-Kennedy. He also represents a state in which voters approved an anti-illegal immigration referendum with an 80% majority. He regrets voting for Obamacare and is not happy with the Democratic Senate leadership.

Jon Tester (D-Mont.) voted against amnesty in 2007 and could be swayed by fellow Montanan, Max Baucus.

Mark Begich (D-Alaska) is running for reelection in a red state. He was not around in 2007 but favored bringing the DREAM Act to a vote in 2010.

Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio) is up for reelection in 2014 and voted against the 2007 amnesty bill. He supported the DREAM Act in 2007 and 2010 and could be struggling between towing the party line and opposing amnesty to secure his reelection.

Tom Harkin (D-Iowa) is retiring in 2014. Sen. Harkin opposed the 2007 McCain-Kennedy amnesty but supported past efforts to bring the DREAM Act to the Senate floor. All bets are off now that he's on his way out the door.

Claire McCaskill (D-Mo.) is coming off reelection in 2012. She voted against the McCain-Kennedy amnesty and has supported the DREAM Act. Now that she's secured her position through 2018, she may feel she owes the party her vote on amnesty.

John Rockefeller (D-W.Va.) is retiring in 2014. He voted against McCain-Kennedy in 2007 but has previously favored the DREAM Act.

Debbie Stabenow (D-Mich.) voted “no” to amnesty in 2007 but has been a DREAM Act supporter.

In addition to those Democrats who voted “no” in 2007, there are new red/purple state Democrats who were not in office during the McCain/Kennedy bill. They’re facing tremendous pressure from leadership to support this current massive amnesty bill. However, if they vote in favor of S. 744, they will face an uphill battle when seeking re-election. These senators include:

Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.) missed the DREAM Act cloture vote shortly after he was elected in 2010 and will feel the pressure from West Virginians to oppose amnesty.

Joe Donnelly (D-Ind.) is a new Senator elected in 2012, but previously served in the U.S. House of Representatives as a strident opponent of amnesty. During his campaign he said he would “oppose any proposal that amounts to amnesty.”

Heidi Heitkamp (D-N.Dak.) doesn’t have much of a track record on immigration yet as a new Senator. She indicated she was “encouraged” by what she’d read of the Gang of Eight bill before it was introduced, but said border security must be the number one priority in any legislation.

In the Republican camp, the Gang of Eight is probably a lost cause (Flake, Graham, McCain, and Rubio) but there are potentially other Republicans who may join them and need pressure not to. These include:

Susan Collins (R- Maine) up for reelection in 2014 and voted no in 2007. The Republican is often considered a swing vote in the Senate. She opposed bringing the DREAM Act to the floor in 2010 and co-sponsored immigration legislation with Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.) this year.

Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) voted no in 2007, yet he has been soft on amnesty in general. He is a past sponsor of the DREAM Act and voted with Senate Democrats and Gang of Eight Republicans on the Judiciary Committee to send the amnesty bill to the floor.

Dean Heller (R-Nev.) is new to the Senate this year after serving in the House. During his campaign, he strongly opposed amnesty. However, nearly as soon as he was elected to the Senate, he backtracked and told Sen. Rubio he’d support a Gang of Eight plan.

Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska) is one of the swing Republicans who voted against McCain-Kennedy, but is not a certain vote this time. She supported voted for the DREAM Act in 2010.

Mark Kirk (R- Ill.) voted against bringing the DREAM Act to a vote shortly after he was elected to the Senate in 2010. Kirk is typically identified as a moderate and is feeling the pressure from senior Illinois Senator Dick Durbin, and lobbyists at home, to flip in support of amnesty.