

Senate immigration bill to boost House Democrats by 2020

Posted By [Neil Munro](#) On 9:34 AM 11/20/2013 In | [No Comments](#)

The Senate's immigration bill would transfer another eight House seats to Democratic-dominated states before many of the extra immigrants become citizens, according to a new study by the Center on Immigration Studies.

Three seats will shift in 2020 because the census counts everyone — including non-citizen immigrants, guest-workers and illegal immigrants — when it reapportions the House's 435 seats among the 50 states.

Another five seats would be moved by the 2030 census if the bill becomes law, said Steven Camarota, the author of [the study](#) and the research director at the group that pushes for low immigration levels.

"Everybody agrees that the immigrants and their children are voting Democratic two-to-one, but what this analysis suggests is that immigration also helps Democrats by moving seats to Democratic states," Camarota told The Daily Caller.

The analysis also shows that Americans in low-immigration states have fewer representatives per citizen, and fewer electoral votes in presidential elections, than citizens in states which accept large numbers of legal and illegal immigrants, he said.

"One unavoidable effect of large-scale immigration is that Americans citizens lose representation to states and districts where a large share of the population are not citizens," he said.

If the Senate bill is accepted by the House leaders, it will double the current immigration rate of one million per year, grant amnesty to 11 million illegals, and also double the population of guest-workers to roughly two million. Overall, the bill would bring in three immigrants and one guest-worker for every four Americans who turn 18 during the following decade.

Top GOP leaders have suggested they could accept the Senate's bill if the 11 million immigrants were put on a 13-year track to citizenship. But the study shows that the bill could shift up to 12 seats into Democratic-leaning counties long before many of the new immigrants or guest-workers gains citizenship.

The GOP's current House majority would be lost if just 18 red seats turn blue.

It is not clear if any GOP officials have calculated the Senate bill's impact on apportionment.

For example, Oregon Republican Rep. Greg Walden chairs the National Republican Congressional Committee, which is intended to help elect Republicans to the House. But he's recently suggested that he supports passage of bills that would increase immigration, perhaps including an amnesty.

Walden's office declined to comment.

If the Senate bill is soon approved, it would add roughly seven million immigrants by 2020 to the current inflow, Camarota estimated.

"New immigrants tend to go where there are people already located from their country," said Doug Johnson, a fellow with Rose Institute and the president of National Demographics, based in Claremont, Calif.

Those factors suggest that three seats would be shifted by the Senate bill in 2020.

"Indiana, Oregon, and Virginia [would] each lose a seat in the House, while New York will gain a seat and California will gain two seats," says Camarota's report, titled "Shifting the Balance."

The Senate bill would also add another 14 million people during the following decade. That influx would transfer five more seats to Democratic-dominated states in 2030, said the report.

"Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, North Carolina, and Ohio [would likely] each lose a seat in the House,

while California will gain three seats and New York and Florida will each gain a seat," the report predicted.

A major change in immigration policy would make a difference in apportionment calculations, said Kimball Brace, president of Election Data Services Inc. The difference would be smaller if the bill ups immigration by a small amount, or is delayed until shortly before the 2020 census, he said.

If an immigration increase is approved by 2016, "there's enough time for there to be an impact" in 2020, he told The Daily Caller.

The impact may be larger than expected if there's more illegal immigrants in the country than recognized, he said. "There's really no good estimate on the number of illegal aliens in the country," Brace said.

Outside California, Texas and New York, immigrants distribute themselves throughout many states, making it difficult to predict which second-tier states will lose or gain a seat, said Brace. A population difference of only a few thousand people can decide which of two or three slow-growing states lose a seat, he said.

The Senate bill would also end enforcement efforts by offering an amnesty to all of the 11 million current illegal immigrants. The amnesty would ensure they would be counted again in the 2020 census.

In 2010, those 11 million illegals were counted, and they shifted four seats from states with fewer immigrants toward California, Texas and Florida, said the report.

That's a total of 12 seats likely to be shifted by 2030 to immigrant-heavy states if the Senate's bill become law, versus a shift of less than four seats if the bill is rejected and immigration laws are enforced on the employers that attract the illegal immigrants.

Overall, immigrants — whether they vote or not — are having a huge impact on the GOP's numbers in the House.

For example, the 2010 census formally [moved 12 seats](#) from some states to others, but the data showed that 18 seats were allocated to states containing a large share of the nation's 40 million population of recent or longstanding immigrants, said Camarota.

But only about half of those people were citizens. The other half consisted of 10 million recent non-citizen immigrants, 10 million illegals, and 1.5 million guest-workers, said Camarota.

Those non-citizens amounted to roughly seven percent, or one in 14, of the nation's 300 million population in 2010.

The presence of immigrant populations also meant states that might have lost seats in Census reapportionment picked up seats or held steady, while others that might have gained seats did not.

Because of legal and illegal immigrants and residents counted in the 2000 and 2010 censuses, American citizens in Arkansas, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Virginia, and Wisconsin effectively each lost one seat, he said. Citizens in Ohio, home state of House Speaker John Boehner, lost two seats.

Those seats have been held by or transferred to states with large populations of legal and illegal immigrants. Foreign-born people account for nine seats in California, three in New York, two in Florida and Texas, and one each in New Jersey and Washington, according to the CIS analysis.

When seats are apportioned to the states, the states' legislatures start the contentious process of redistricting.

Redistricting is a brutally partisan exercise, both in states that lose seats and in states that gain seats. But its especially tough in states that loses seats, said Johnson. "It gets ugly for everybody," he said.

For example, Ohio lost two seats in 2010, but tea party-fueled Republicans won a majority in Ohio's state House in the November elections. They used their new power to shield Republican seats, and to ensure that two Democrats lost their seats. That gerrymandering left the state with 12 Republicans and four Democrats in the federal House, even though President Barack Obama won the state — and its 18 electoral votes — by two percentage points.

But those Ohio seats were kept in the Democratic column because they were sent to Democratic-majority states.

California didn't gain extra seats in 2010, partly because some of the state's large population of illegal immigrants went home, and some Californians fled to other states. But the Democrats manipulated a supposedly independent redistricting commission to snag 38 of 53 seats in 2012. That's 72 percent of the seats, which is higher than Obama's 60 percent landslide in the state last November.

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