

N.M.'s Senators won't back spending bill without DACA fix

Written by By Matthew Reichbach NM Political Report
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New Mexico's two U.S. Senators oppose any funding bill that does not include a fix for recipients of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals policy.

The program, known as DACA, has been debated since September when President Donald Trump announced he would end the Obama-era program. Trump also stopped the federal government from processing new applications.

The short-term spending bill proposed by House Republicans lacks immigration provisions.

U.S. Sen. Martin Heinrich, a Democrat, announced on social media he opposed the short-term 30-day spending bill.

In a statement, he added the effort "only spreads chaos once again." Heinrich voted for a short-term spending bill in December, that extended the deadline to this Friday.

"Members on both sides of the aisle have been working to reach agreement and meet our basic responsibilities, including veterans funding, disaster relief, and finally passing the Dream Act, but President Trump and his right-wing supporters in Congress seem intent on steering the country off a funding cliff," Heinrich said.

U.S. Sen. Tom Udall called the bill "irresponsible."

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“We need to stop kicking the can down the road, vote on a bipartisan Dream Act, and work together on a responsible bipartisan budget agreement that adequately funds our national security and the needs of our communities—in New Mexico and across the nation,” the Democrat said. “So President Trump and the Republicans have a choice: they can either come to the table and negotiate in good faith on a responsible funding agreement and protection for DREAMers – or they can cause a government shutdown.”

Trump has blamed a possible shutdown on Democrats, though Republicans hold majorities in both the U.S. House and U.S. Senate.

The White House, meanwhile, is pushing for the passage of the temporary funding measure.

Even some Republicans in the Senate are balking at the bill. Lindsey Graham, R-South Carolina, mentioned the lack of a DACA provision as one reason why he would not vote for the spending bill.

In New Mexico, immigration rights activists praised Udall and Heinrich for their announcement.

“I am incredibly proud of my community for advocating for undocumented families, including mine,” Gabriela Hernandez said. “Both Senator Udall and Heinrich did the right thing today by declaring that they would use their leverage to protect New Mexico’s immigrant youth.”

Hernandez is a potential Dream Act beneficiary and is the executive director of the NM Dream Team.

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