



MIAMI-DADE COUNTY

Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, Mario Diaz-Balart vote with Democrats to oppose GOP-led immigration bill

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WASHINGTON — Two Miami congressional representatives were among only seven Republicans to vote against a GOP-led immigration bill designed to show disapproval of President Barack Obama's recent executive action on the issue.

U.S. Reps. Mario Diaz-Balart and Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, both Miami Republicans, joined Republicans from California, Colorado, Indiana and Texas in opposing the vote to pass a resolution disapproving the president's immigration action taken last month. The bill is considered the first phase of a Republican plan to pass legislation to avert a government shutdown while still punishing the White House for its executive action on immigration.

The final vote was 219-197. Three Democrats joined Republicans in voting for it, and seven Republicans voted with Democrats against it.

In a joint statement after the vote, Diaz-Balart and Ros-Lehtinen stressed the need for comprehensive immigration change.

“The president himself has stated that ‘there’s a limit on what [he] can do,’” Diaz-Balart and Ros-Lehtinen said in their statement. “We continue to believe that the only legal and permanent solution is for Congress to pass legislation that will strengthen our borders, adhere to the rule of law, offer a humane solution to those living in the shadows, modernize our visa system and bolster the economy.”

The bill was introduced by U.S. Rep. Ted Yoho, a Republican from northern Florida. While it won the overwhelming support of Republican lawmakers, even many of its supporters saw it as purely symbolic. The Republicans who opposed it were a mix of those who support a comprehensive overhaul of the nation’s immigration laws and those who don’t and who said Thursday’s symbolic action wasn’t strong enough to combat Obama’s action.

Diaz-Balart had pushed for comprehensive immigration legislation earlier this year and was highly critical of House leadership when they told him the legislation was dead for the year. In a press conference at the time, he called the July decision to forgo comprehensive legislation “disappointing and highly unfortunate” and said it was “highly irresponsible not to deal with the issue.”