
For Latino Democrats, Fight for ‘Dreamers’ Underscores Tense Relationship With John Kelly

By Ed O’Keefe

WASHINGTON - Following a campaign where Donald Trump offended many immigrant communities with his harsh rhetoric and promise of a crackdown along the border with Mexico, members of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus hoped John F. Kelly would be an administration official with whom they could have a good working relationship.

Instead, the former Homeland Security secretary who now serves as White House chief of staff has become the subject of their ire and distrust following months of clashes with the retired four-star general.

“We all thought, we hoped we were going to get somebody who was going to be reasonable, rational, looking at the facts,” said Rep. Nanette Barragán, D-Calif. But instead, she said, “we’ve seen more and more come out about who he really is.”

These tensions with Kelly are surfacing again as Congress is poised for a year-end fight over whether to enact permanent legal protections for hundreds of thousands of young immigrants - known as “dreamers” - who were brought into the country as children.

Kelly is expected to be a key player in the upcoming negotiations, which have become intertwined with the need to pass a spending bill next month to keep the govern-

ment from shutting down. Hispanic Caucus members are among the Democrats pushing most aggressively to withhold needed votes for the funding measure until a deal is solidified on the future of dreamers.

Heading into this debate, Latino lawmakers who once thought Kelly would be an honest broker in the administration now consider him no different from other senior Trump

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Chief of Staff John Kelly listens as President Donald Trump speaks during a meeting on tax policy with business leaders in the Roosevelt Room at the White House on Oct. 31. MUST CREDIT: Washington Post photo by Jabin Botsford