

From: Pisarik, Holly

To: Melina Mann - LLR <melina.mann@llr.sc.gov>

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Subject:

Associated Press: Obama immigration plan blocked by 4-4 tie at Supreme Court

By MARK SHERMAN

<http://bigstory.ap.org/22b44f178c984e549aac5dd4b6192fce>

WASHINGTON (AP) — A tie vote by the Supreme Court is blocking President Barack Obama's immigration plan that sought to shield millions living in the U.S. illegally from deportation.

The justices' one-sentence opinion on Thursday effectively kills the plan for the duration of Obama's presidency.

A tie vote sets no national precedent but leaves in place the ruling by the lower court. In this case, the federal appeals court in New Orleans said the Obama administration lacked the authority to shield up to 4 million immigrants from deportation and make them eligible for work permits without approval from Congress.

Texas led 26 Republican-dominated states in challenging the program Obama announced in November 2014. Congressional Republicans also backed the states' lawsuit.

The Obama administration announced the programs — protections for parents of children who are in the country legally and an expansion of the program that benefits people who were brought to this country as children — in November 2014. Obama decided to move forward after Republicans won control of the Senate in the 2014 midterm elections, and the chances for an immigration overhaul, already remote, were further diminished.

The Senate had passed a broad immigration bill with Democratic and Republican support in 2013, but the measure went nowhere in the GOP-controlled House of Representatives.

The states quickly went to court to block the Obama initiatives.

Their lawsuit was heard by U.S. District Judge Andrew Hanen in Brownsville, Texas. Hanen previously had criticized the administration for lax immigration enforcement. Hanen sided with the states, blocking the programs from taking effect. The 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals also ruled for the states, and the Justice Department rushed an appeal to the high court so that it could be heard this term.

Holly G. Pisarik

Chief Legal Counsel

Office of Governor Nikki R. Haley

O: 803-734-8465 C: 803-322-6255