

The following is an interesting opinion piece from Ed Morrissey at *Hot Air*. Morrissey is probably right: If we, as a party, don't unite against Obama's plan, we won't recapture the majority, in 2010. And, we all know what will happen if we don't prevail, in 2010. By 2012, we'll be gerrymandered out of existence.

Obama: We'll tackle immigration in 2010

By Ed Morrissey

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At first, the White House announcement that **they would push for immigration reform in 2010** seemed very counterintuitive. After all, Barack Obama's health-care reform package has stalled in Congress and split his party along ideological grounds, and unified the Republicans against the White House. Obama also has his cap-and-trade package stuck between the House and Senate, which has split the Democrats on regional as well as ideological grounds and probably won't get through the Senate this year, if at all. Isn't it crazy to follow those with another highly divisive political issue, certain to raise voices and blood pressure in town halls across America?

Sure — crazy like a fox:

President Obama, attending a North American summit with the leaders of Mexico and Canada, said Monday that his administration will pursue a comprehensive overhaul of the U.S. immigration system this year but that no action on legislation will happen before 2010.

Wrapping up the two-day meeting, Obama said that there needs to be a pathway to citizenship for millions of illegal immigrants in the United States, and that the system must be reworked to avoid tensions with Mexico. Without it, he said, Mexicans will keep crossing the border in dangerous ways and employers will continue exploiting workers.

We can create a system in which you have . . . an orderly process for people to come in, but we're also giving an opportunity for those who are already in the United States to be able to achieve a pathway to citizenship so that they don't have to live in the shadows, Obama said during an hour-long news conference at the Cabañas Cultural Center in downtown Guadalajara. Am I going to be able to snap my fingers and get this done? No. This is going to be difficult.

The president said he expects draft legislation and sponsors by the end of the year, but no action until 2010 because of more pressing issues, including health-care reform, energy legislation and financial regulatory changes.

In a way, I have to admire the genius of this strategy. In fact, it might be exactly what Obama and the Democrats need in 2010 to rescue themselves from what looks like a disastrous midterm election, although I doubt it will be enough.

Until now, Obama has played on his own field, in a sense. Imposing government control on the health-care and energy industries always had more risk for Democrats and opportunities for unity

for the GOP. Obama clearly underestimated how badly ObamaCare would split his party, and I'd bet he got surprised by the Senate's decision to table cap-and-trade this summer as well. Still, Obama had to know that these issues would create at least some ideological and regional tensions (especially the latter on cap-and-trade) before launching full-court presses to get both passed quickly this summer.

If Obama takes up immigration reform in 2010, he turns the tables. While the Democrats don't exactly have unity on this issue — there will be some Blue Dog and regional resistance to any amnesty program — it splits the GOP as badly as cap-and-trade splits the Democrats. In 2006 and 2007, Democrats had a much more unified approach to the issue, while Republicans fractured. If Obama can recreate 2006-7 in 2010, he can sap the enthusiasm for Republican election efforts that have built in 2009, solidify his hold on the Hispanic vote, and create enough disarray to hold majorities in both chambers of Congress. Whether a bill actually gets passed will be immaterial, or at least secondary, to the electoral strategy.

Can Republicans keep from splitting on immigration reform? One strategy would be to keep ObamaCare and cap-and-trade from passing until 2010. Obama would either have to abandon one or both of those to get to immigration reform, or he would have to let immigration reform slip to 2011 or beyond. Another strategy, made easier with George Bush out of the way, would be to insist on a borders-first approach that delays the consideration of tougher questions about how to deal with the millions of illegal immigrants already in the country. In 2007, even the reform advocates in the GOP had to agree to that approach in the face of withering criticism not unlike what we see today from the ObamaCare debate. Some Democrats, especially the Blue Dogs worrying about their chances for re-election, will want to follow that same approach, which would make moving anything else significant in 2010 almost impossible.

In the end, the Blue Dogs will not follow where Obama leads, which is why this strategy while intriguing and bold — will probably fail. Most of them represent conservative districts, and most of them had to pledge to oppose amnesty in order to replace Republicans who had represented the districts before 2006. They can't vote for amnesty in the summer and expect to return to Washington in the winter. But even if it stalls, the infighting among Republicans could do enough damage to keep the House in Democratic hands for another session.