Obama Taking No Action on Immigration Reform Until After Elections

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“Because of the Republicans’ extreme politicization of this issue, the president believes it would be harmful to the policy itself and to the long-term prospects for comprehensive immigration reform to announce administrative action before the elections,” a White House official said, asking for anonymity.

Nonetheless, he added that Obama wants reform carried out in a “sustainable” way, and for that reason will take action “before the end of the year.”

The president in this way gave in to the pressure from some Democratic lawmakers who had urged Obama to delay any measures on immigration because of the possible negative effects they could have on the November elections, when the House of Representatives and a third of the Senate will be renewed.

According to the latest surveys, the Democrats, who control the Senate, find themselves in a tight race and could lose their majority in the upper house.

“The president is confident in his authority to act, and he will before the end of the year. But again, nothing will replace Congress acting on comprehensive immigration reform and the president will keep pressing Congress to act,” the official said.

In June, faced with obstruction by Congressional Republicans who control the House of Representatives, Obama said he would take executive action to reform the immigration system

before the end of the year.

Obama then said that with the failure of Congress to act, he would take action to put more resources on the border, improve the way cases are processed, and find a way to resolve the status of the nearly 11 million undocumented immigrants estimated to live in the U.S.

Among the measures being considered by the president is the extension of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA, which protects the undocumented young from deportation, and an increase in the number of residence cards (“green cards”) issued in the country each year.

At the beginning of his second term, Obama pointed to immigration reform as one of his political priorities, and his decision to delay executive action has angered immigration advocacy groups.

“President Obama has broken yet another promise he had made to immigrant families,” Deepak Bhargava, executive director of the Center for Community Change, a member of the Fair Immigration Reform Movement, said in a statement.

“By cowing before squeamish Democratic Senators and GOP bullies he has put politics ahead of the lives of immigrants and urgent needs of America.”