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Pascrell Calls on Republicans to Fund DHS, Uncouple It From Immigration Debate

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Pascrell Calls on Republicans to Fund DHS

The House voted to fund DHS with restrictions on Obama's immigration order. Dems disagree.

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By David Cruz
Correspondent

Congressman Bill Pascrell was not parsing his words today. The North Jersey lawmaker was calling out his Republican colleagues for tying Homeland Security funding to GOP efforts to restrict President Obama's immigration reforms.

"To use the executive order of the president as an excuse to 'we'll show them' to me is very sophomoric. It will not work," he snapped at a morning press conference. "The American people want a clean bill and we could vote on that clean bill tomorrow if we had it in front of us."

Pascrell is talking about amendments added to the Homeland Security funding bill which attempt to rescind some of the president's 2014 executive orders on immigration. Without the bill, funding for the 80,000 DHS employees will run out.

"There's only four days on the congressional calendar before funding for the Department of Homeland Security is set to run out," he said. "I want that to settle in with everyone in this room. We are not playing games here. This is serious stuff."

But House Speaker John Boehner says the game's over. In the House, anyway.

"The House has acted to fund the department and to stop the president's overreach when it comes to immigration and his executive orders," he said last week. "The president said 22 times that he did not have the authority to do what he did. And the Congress can't just sit by and let the president defy the Constitution and defy his own oath of office."

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For Paterson Mayor Jose Torres, the impasse has a very tangible impact on safety in his city, which has been trying to get a new firehouse open.

"After waiting over five years to finish a brand new firehouse, the last one million that needs to be drawn down so that we can get our certificate of occupancy for a brand new firehouse replacing one that was over 100 years old," he said. "We will not be able to finish that project because of the stalemate right now in Congress."

A Texas court ruled in favor of 27 states which claimed that the president overstepped his authority, putting the brakes, at least temporarily, on Obama's executive orders. Now the battleground has shifted back to Congress, where lawmakers appear poised — once again — to play a game of chicken with the president at the intersection of priorities and agendas.

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