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Dems could see immigration silver lining in McCain

Could McCain's nomination mean an immigration deal this year?

Greg Siskind has come up with a [scenario](#) that argues Democrats should be tempted, now that John McCain is the likely Republican nominee, is to rush an immigration bill through this year.

"Do you think the GOP is going to allow their rank-and-file members to attack their nominee day in day out over the immigration issue? If they do, the results could be disastrous as McCain will be going around the country trying to unite a very fractured party that is already pretty suspicious of his conservative bona fides. Can you imagine one Republican after another having to come to the microphone to denounce the McCain-Kennedy bill (and that's what Reid and Pelosi need to call it every chance they get)? And then McCain being dogged by reporters asking about it multiple times each day?"

In his scenario, immigration could also be the tail that wags the dog — a way for Democrats to distract from their own intraparty presidential battle, particularly if the Clinton-Obama race goes all the way to a convention.

"[T]hrowing the immigration 'grenade' and stirring up the immigration storm in the GOP may make the Democrats bickering look pretty tame," he writes, adding that that would put pressure on Republican leaders to cut a deal on Democrats' terms to keep their own fight under wraps. Siskind says bringing back the bill this year "would have virtually no drawbacks" for Democrats.

It's an intriguing scenario, though it doesn't strike me as working out as easily as he puts it. In the first place, McCain has had to shift somewhat, embracing both an enforcement-first position that his own [campaign manager says is now the consensus of the party](#). It would be impossible for McCain to back away from that

now.

Second, it wasn't just Republicans that killed the bill. More than a dozen Democratic senators were happy to have a chance to vote against it, and on the House side, plenty of conservative-leaning Democrats will be begging their leaders not to go Siskind's recommended route.

Still, given that McCain has said he still supports the bill he wrote with Sen. Ted Kennedy — yet also says that bill is dead — Democrats must be at least a little tempted to prove him wrong and bring it back, just to see what he does.

— *Stephen Dinan, national political reporter, The Washington Times*

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