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## Texas Democrat gets praise for immigration efforts

By Bill Swindell, [CongressDaily](#)

As House Democrats begin to focus on who will assume the chairmanship of the Judiciary Immigration Subcommittee, Texas Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee is making a bid stressing her policy expertise on the issue despite a reputation as one of the more hard-charging, vocal members.

Jackson Lee, who is ranking member of the panel, declined to comment on any possible bid. But immigration lawyers who have worked with her on the policy matter are speaking up in her behalf.

Dan Kowalski, an immigration lawyer and editor-in-chief of Bender's Immigration Bulletin, said Jackson Lee's comprehensive immigration bill, which would provide earned access to citizenship for illegal immigrants more quickly than a Senate-passed measure, is the most practical for lawyers who practice immigration law.

"When you look at all the bills that have been filed over the last four of five years from the House side, her efforts have been the most thorough, complete and comprehensive. That's what's needed to happen for us to move ahead," Kowalski said.

Greg Siskind, a Memphis, Tenn., immigration lawyer, said Jackson Lee and her staff have been helpful to work with in trying to procure more visas for foreign physicians and nurses who want to come to the United States and work in underserved areas.

"She has managed to make headway when we didn't think there has any," Siskand said. He noted that as a result of Jackson Lee's efforts, Congress in 2004 passed a law permitting more foreign physicians to work in rural areas, especially in the South. "When we approach them, there is not [a lot] of educating to be done. They work pretty well with Republicans," he added.

Rep. Zoe Lofgren, D-Calif., also might pursue the Judiciary Immigration Subcommittee chairmanship, according to her spokeswoman. Lofgren is ranking member of the Homeland Security Intelligence Subcommittee but is exploring whether to move up to that chairmanship or pursue an open Judiciary subcommittee spot. The two lawmakers were elected in 1994.

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