

## Editorial: Maybe Diaz-Balart can nudge Congress

Staff Reports

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### Immigration reform

'Hopeful' Diaz-Balart has issues to reconcile Diaz-Balart's optimism might nudge Congress

U.S. Rep. Mario Diaz-Balart says this could be the year for immigration reform.

The Miami-based Republican whose district includes eastern Collier County says he is "really, really hopeful" the bipartisan spirit that reached a budget compromise can carry over to immigration, succeeding where so many efforts have failed in the past.

Diaz-Balart understands that finding the right mix of components that Republicans and Democrats can buy into is the challenge, especially in a seemingly perpetual election season.

Those pieces include dealing with future immigrants, a path to citizenship for immigrants now living here unlawfully, beefing up Border Patrol staffing and perhaps even 700 miles of fencing along the U.S.-Mexico border.

Another issue is what do to about allowing U.S. reunions of families already separated by deportations.

Immigration issues become even more timely as the U.S. economy starts to rebound, bringing more interest from business and residential investors.

Maybe Diaz-Balart has it right — the time may be right to get the big job done by doing what's right for fellow human beings.

What a difference certainty could make for everyone involved, including employers who long for help from abroad to grow their businesses.

What do families already here have to do to stay? What access will they have to higher education? What lawbreakers can expect swift expulsion?

A model for national progress may be at the Collier County Sheriff's Office, which is a partner with federal authorities to track illegal immigrants and get dangerous individuals off our streets, and leave the others alone.

Still, beyond that, a clear, comprehensive set of rules is overdue. Diaz-Balart has the credentials to help get us there.

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