

The Need for Comprehensive Immigration Reform

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I. Our immigration system is broken.

A. It is plagued by huge backlogs and processing delays. *(November 2005 Visa Bulletin)*

- 4- to 22 year-wait for family visas
- 5- to 7-year wait for employment visas
- Over 1 year delay for nonimmigrant professionals

B. It does not serve America's needs.

- Not enough workers to make us globally competitive (*Compete America*)
- National security at risk due to dwindling number of scientists (*National Academy of Sciences*)
- Hospitals threatened by acute nursing shortage (*American Hospital Association*)

C. It does not reflect American values.

- Families torn apart *(Catholic Legal Immigration Network)*
- Due process rights violated *(Immigration Policy Center)*

II. There are 4 comprehensive proposals to reform the system.

A. The guest worker program of Pres. Bush provides for temporary legal status but no path to permanent residence.

- Authorized stay of 3 years renewable for another 3 years for both undocumented aliens in the US and workers from abroad
- Right to travel

B. The McCain-Kennedy Bill provides for legal status with path to permanent residence.

- Undocumented allowed 6 years
- Workers from abroad allowed 3 years with 3- year extension
- Employment visas increased from 140,000 to 290,000 per year
- Immediate relatives of US Citizens exempted from 480,000 annual cap
- National strategy created for border security

C. The Cornyn-Kyl Bill provides for temporary legal status with no path to permanent residence.

- Deferred Mandatory Departure status for undocumented workers with penalty for failure to depart within a year
- Workers from abroad allowed to enter and stay for 2 years and then return home; may participate up to 3 times
- Tougher enforcement by providing more investigators, agents, lawyers, judges and detention beds

D. The Hagel Bills provide for a package of reforms dealing with enforcement and legalization.

- Temporary legal status for workers from abroad for 2 years and renewable
- High tech workers to receive H-1B and green card without regard to visa cap.
- Earned adjustment for undocumented who have worked for 3 years and resided for 5 years
- Immediate relatives of US citizens exempted from 480,000 annual cap
- Expanded enforcement.

III. Restrictionist groups oppose comprehensive reform.

A. These groups include:

- Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR) – opposes assimilation of immigrants
- Diversity Alliance – opposes current levels of immigration
- Immigration Law Institute - provides legal assistance to anti-immigrant campaigns

B. Immigration Reform Caucus in the House headed by Rep. Tom Tancredo help push the restrictionist agenda.

- At least 64 members from 24 states

C. They propagate the following myths about immigrants:

- drain on the economy
- take away jobs from Americans
- depress wages of US workers
- contribute little to American society

IV. Immigrant advocates support comprehensive reform as the only way to fix our broken system.

A. They include:

- National Immigration Forum – builds public support for immigrant causes
- American Immigration Lawyers Association –composed of lawyers and are strong advocates for immigrant rights
- National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights – civil rights advocates

B. They cite studies pointing to the benefits of immigration:

- **fiscal benefit as high as \$10 billion per year** *(National Research Council)*
- **social security subsidized by TNTs by about \$7 billion per year** *(National Foundation for American Policy)*
- **labor force sustained by immigrants** *(2005 Economic Report of the President)*

V. Will there be immigration reform soon?

A. Based on recent developments in Congress and statements from the White House, comprehensive reform law would pass before next year's election.

- Senate Judiciary hearings
- Meeting of Senators McCain, Cornyn and Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist
- Bush's national priority
- Widespread public support according to national survey (*Tarrance Group*)

VI. What needs to be done?

- A. Hold forums and conduct petition campaigns
- B. Write op-ed for newspapers
- C. Meet with elected officials
- D. Write letters to Congress and the President
 - Sample letters

Letter to the United States Congress

We seek your support for the Secure America and Orderly Immigration Act of 2005 (S. 1033 / H.R. 2330)

This bipartisan bill in its present form, will decrease, if not eliminate, the tremendous backlog in family immigration; meet the need for foreign workers where they are needed; and address border security issues that we face today.

Filipino American families are among those who are most affected by the backlog in family immigration. Many of us wait between 4 to 22 years before we can be reunited with our parents, children or siblings.

If passed, this bill will significantly reduce the backlog in family immigration by effectively increasing family visas to more realistic levels. Such a law will bring our families together and render our immigration system more consistent with the principle of family reunification.

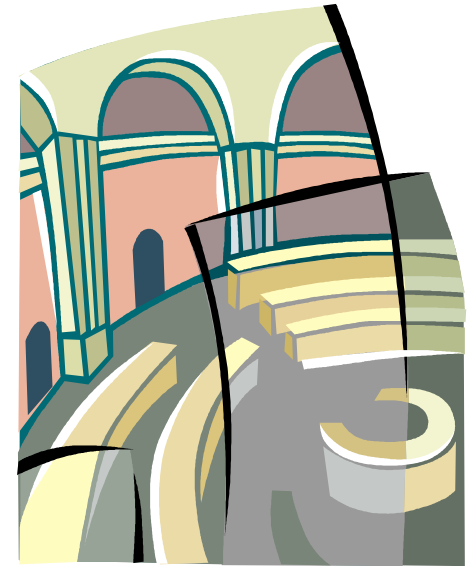
Meanwhile, it cannot be denied that the United States needs foreign workers to render services in various sectors of the economy not only in healthcare and education sectors, but also in homes to care for children, the sick or disabled and the aged.

Thousands of medical facilities nationwide, in particular, need registered nurses and physical therapists, and yet immigration laws are restrictive and do not reflect this reality. The bill responds to this need by increasing the number of employment-based visas and creating a temporary foreign worker program.

We are mindful of the importance of national security and we believe the bill addresses this matter sufficiently by creating a national border security program and by encouraging some 11 million undocumented workers to come forward and legalize their status.

Our immigration system is terribly broken. We cannot fix it by stop gap measures that do nothing more than plug legal loopholes. We need a total overhaul of immigration laws.

We need the Secure America and Orderly Immigration Act of 2005. We urge you to support it.



Letter to President Bush

IMMIGRATION REFORM FOR THE SAFETY, STRENGTH AND PROSPERITY OF AMERICA

We seek your support for the bipartisan Secure America and Orderly Immigration Act of 2005 (S. 1033/H.R. 2330, hereafter, the "Bipartisan Immigration Reform Bill.")

At the onset of your second term as President of the United States of America, you have expressed your commitment to comprehensive immigration reform. You raised immigration law reform to the level of a national priority by acknowledging that changes have to be made if we are to secure our border, reunite families and meet the needs of our economy for essential foreign workers.

The Bipartisan Immigration Reform Bill encompasses the concerns you have identified as important to comprehensive immigration reform. If passed into law, it will bring safety, strength and prosperity to our people.

Emerging from the trauma of 9/11, we need to feel safe now more than ever. The Bipartisan Immigration Reform Bill will enhance national security by mandating, among others, measures that improve information-sharing and coordination on all levels of government, technology and border security initiatives.

It reaffirms and strengthens America as a pro-family nation by reducing backlogs and reuniting families who have been apart for as long as 22 years. In the process, it also removes one of the most common reasons for overstaying and the resulting violation of immigration laws.

It will bring prosperity to American industries by allowing essential foreign workers to enter the country and work where no US workers are available. Temporary foreign workers will have a clear path toward adjusting their status to permanent residency and eventually, citizenship.

The bill will also institute a circular labor migration system that would ease and encourage the reintegration of temporary foreign workers to their home countries. More importantly, approximately 11 million undocumented workers in the US today will have an opportunity to legalize their status under certain conditions.

Congress has notably taken the first and most important step toward fixing our broken immigration system. There appears to be a consensus that the underlying policies in the bill reflect the best intentions of our lawmakers. We urge you to follow through and support this bipartisan initiative to make America safer, stronger and prosperous.