



**STATEMENT OF  
Maya Berry, Executive Director  
ARAB AMERICAN INSTITUTE  
HEARING ON: COMPREHENSIVE IMMIGRATION REFORM LEGISLATION  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY  
UNITED STATES SENATE**

**April 19, 2013**

Chairman Leahy, Ranking Member Grassley and members of the Committee: I am honored to submit this testimony for the record on behalf of the Arab American Institute in response to the introduction of the “Border Security, Economic Opportunity and Immigration Modernization Act,” (S.744) drafted by Senators Bennet, Durbin, Flake, Graham, McCain, Menendez, Rubio, and Schumer.

The Arab American Institute applauds the efforts of the senators who have been working tirelessly to create bi-partisan legislation to address the fundamental problems with our broken immigration system and provide a pathway to citizenship for the nearly 11.5 million undocumented immigrants currently living and working in the United States.

Over the last decade, a number of “national security” initiatives have been added to our already overburdened and inefficient immigration system. The Arab American community believes that real immigration reform must include the termination of enforcement measures that target individuals or communities based on race, religion, or national origin. We are pleased that the legislation includes a section on border security dedicated to preserving and respecting individual civil rights and prohibiting the use of race and ethnicity in federal law enforcement activities. In particular, we are pleased that the bill mandates that additional

resources and training will be devoted to implementing a DHS-wide use of force policy and associated training in appropriate use of force, individual rights, and sensitivity to cultural and environmental impact of federal operations on border communities. We are pleased that a Border Oversight Taskforce will be established to take testimony and conduct hearings in order to review and recommend changes to existing border policies and that racial profiling guidance will be implemented. We are concerned, however, that the bill includes national security exceptions found in Sec. 3305(b)2. Similar national security waiver language has been applied in a number of enforcement measures over the last decade, resulting in real and troubling ramifications for some ethnic and minority communities.

On the issue of family reunification, we are concerned that this bill fails to provide relief to certain family members—particularly siblings and adult married children over age 31. We are heartened by the strong commitment demonstrated in addressing the needs of individuals who, through no fault of their own, are now undocumented and face deportation as young adults. We are pleased that S. 744 provides relief for individuals who entered the U.S. before the age of 16 and who have completed high school in the U.S. by allowing them to apply for Registered Provisional Immigrant (RPI) status through the DREAM Act. We are especially pleased that there is no age cap for the program, which would provide an opportunity for millions of talented individuals to qualify for an expedited process to citizenship.

This comprehensive bi-partisan bill offers some fundamental solutions to our flawed immigration system and we applaud the efforts of the co-sponsors in drafting this bill. We hope this legislation and today's hearing moves us further in the direction of much needed comprehensive immigration reform.



## **American Friends Service Committee**

### **The American Friends Service Committee statement for the Congressional Record pertaining to the Senate Judiciary Committee Hearing Friday, April 19, 2013**

The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) is an almost 100-year old faith-based organization grounded in the Quaker belief in the dignity and worth of every person. AFSC provides direct legal services and engages in organizing with immigrants and allies along with advocacy and movement building throughout the U.S. We directly support immigrant workers and refugees and their communities to organize themselves, to seek out and raise their issues as a way to affirm their aspirations and needs, and to continue to make contributions to this nation.

The AFSC finds the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act of 2013 a positive first step but a far cry from the just and humane reforms for which immigrant communities, faith, labor and advocacy groups have been calling. Instead it reproduces, and even expands, many of the current failed policies that are cruel, costly and inefficient.

We are particularly concerned about provisions relating to border security triggers, which must be met before any undocumented person can apply for legal permanent residency. Tying the ability of individuals to adjust their immigration status to certification of the Comprehensive Southern Border Security Strategy invites endless delays for those seeking permanent residency. Additionally, the bill fails to combat the impunity enjoyed by Border Patrol and federal agents who abuse the human and civil rights of border residents. Since 2010 the Border Patrol has claimed the lives of 20 unarmed civilians. The use of force is all too commonplace and must be addressed in this legislation.

We applaud the creation of a path to citizenship for immigrants living in our communities. Yet the process through which this status is achieved contains many onerous conditionalities that will continue to keep immigrants in the shadows and expose them to the cruelties of a broken immigration system, rendering them vulnerable to exploitation and abuse.

The AFSC implores Congress to adopt compassionate and effective immigration reforms that are grounded in the following principles:

- Develop humane economic policies to reduce forced migration
- Protect the labor rights of ALL workers
- Develop a clear path to permanent legal residency and a clear path to citizenship
- Respect the civil and human rights of immigrants
- Demilitarize the U.S.-Mexico border
- Make family reunification a top priority
- Ensure that immigrants and refugees have access to services

The AFSC urges the Committee to exert visionary leadership and to support new immigration policies that respect the human rights and equal economic opportunity of all in our communities and thanks the Committee for this opportunity to submit a statement.

# Saunders: Immigration Bill “a Giant Step” Toward Fixing Immigration System

by Pablo Ros | April 17, 2013

AFSCME Pres. Lee Saunders today praised the [immigration reform bill](#) introduced by a bipartisan group of U.S. senators, saying it “[takes a giant step](#)” toward fixing our broken immigration system.

“While we will work to improve the bill during the legislative process, it moves us in the right direction,” Saunders said. “We salute President Obama’s leadership and the bipartisan group of senators who have paved the way for comprehensive immigration reform.”

AFSCME has been [at the forefront of the fight for comprehensive immigration reform](#). In the last few months, we organized rallies, lobbied our representatives in Congress and partnered with our allies and friends to make the dream a reality.

The bill, which would lead to the most significant changes in our immigration system in 26 years, contains border security measures that must be met before we can assimilate the 11 million immigrants who currently live in fear of deportation. It would also reorient our immigration priorities with the goal of screening future immigrants based on their job skills and personal assets.

The Department of Homeland Security would be required to spend \$6.5 billion over 10 years in border enforcement and fencing before any immigrants waiting to become citizens may apply for permanent residence cards. The entire pathway to citizenship could take as long as 13 years, except for young immigrants, or Dreamers, who would be allowed to apply for citizenship after five years.

All employers would be required within five years to verify the legal status of new hires through a photo-matching system. And the bill would create two new guest-worker programs, for farmworkers and other low-wage laborers.

The 11 million immigrants who aspire to U.S. citizenship currently live and work in the shadows of our society. They are exploited by unscrupulous employers and denied a voice on the job. Their families live in a perpetual state of uncertainty and fear of deportation.

By reforming our country’s immigration system, we will empower these individuals to fight back against exploitation and poor working conditions.

“We need to come together for these aspiring citizens,” Saunders said. “They are our neighbors. AFSCME members work with them and their family members every day – in schools, in hospitals and around our communities. With our voices, a new generation of American workers will enter the mainstream of American life. The time is now for Congress to pass comprehensive immigration reform.”



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*For Immediate Release*

## **The American Immigration Council Welcomes Bi-Partisan Senate Immigration Bill**

**April 17, 2013**

**Washington D.C.** – The American Immigration Council applauds the “Gang of Eight” Senators who have introduced the "[Border Security, Economic Opportunity and Immigration Modernization Act](#)." The Senators and their staff have been working tirelessly, for months, to create a bi-partisan solution that attempts to fix our broken immigration system. The Senate is to be commended for having the courage to lean into this difficult issue and bring forth a detailed and comprehensive proposal. In addition, labor and business groups should be acknowledged for their role in negotiating, in advance, some of the toughest sticking points to help ensure a smooth path through Congress.

In the coming days and weeks as the bill is analyzed and debated, there will be many who criticize both the policy remedies in the bill, as well as the sheer length of the legislation. It is important to keep in mind, however, that developing a comprehensive solution requires striking a delicate balance between a diverse cross section of stakeholders and impacted constituencies. Furthermore, the dysfunctional system that we have developed over the past two decades is in dire need of deep and precise reforms. While there will be fair criticisms of some of the bill's contents it is important to keep the spirit of the debate productive and to ensure room for compromise.

“The Senate has been working for months and the country has been waiting for years for this kind of broad and deep immigration reform legislation. Introduction of this bill will launch a critical debate on how best to reform our broken immigration system,” said Benjamin Johnson, Executive Director of the American Immigration Council. “These Senators are confronting the critical immigration challenges we face and are due a great deal of credit. There is much more work ahead but our hope is that all members of Congress will set aside old thinking and divisions and do what is right for American families, workers, and businesses.”

We look forward to the House of Representatives engaging constructively in the process and continuing to advance positive reforms, as well as ongoing support from the White House.

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**Statement of  
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American Jewish Committee (AJC)**

**Submitted on behalf of AJC to  
The Senate Judiciary Committee**

**Hearing on  
Comprehensive Immigration Reform Legislation**

**April 19, 2013**

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Since its founding in 1906, AJC has been outspoken in support of fair and generous immigration policies. As American Jews, we recall how our parents and grandparents made their way to this country seeking a better life, and know that we have prospered in and contributed to this country. That same opportunity should be available for others. Comprehensive immigration reform will strengthen America's global competitiveness as well as allow hard-working immigrants an opportunity to succeed in the United States, for themselves and for future generations—and, at the same time, promote respect for the rule of law and protect our national security.

In advocating for fair, effective and humane immigration policies, AJC acts in accord with the American Jewish community's longstanding interest in, and commitment to, a United States immigration and refugee policy that represents our nation's best traditions. According to Jewish tradition, "strangers" are to be welcomed and valued, as we were once "strangers in the land of Egypt." The Torah tells us: "The strangers who sojourn with you shall be to you as the natives among you, and you shall love them as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt" (Leviticus 19:33-34).

AJC applauds the introduction of the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act of 2013 (S.744), bipartisan comprehensive immigration reform legislation introduced on April 17, 2013 by Senator Schumer, and drafted by Senators Schumer, McCain, Menendez, Graham, Durbin, Flake, Bennett and Rubio. AJC looks forward to working with the Senators as this legislation moves through Congress, and to ultimately seeing the President sign into law legislation that will permanently fix America's broken immigration system.

Comprehensive immigration reform offers our country a tremendous opportunity to act in accord with its highest values, ensuring fairness and humanity while also being mindful of our nation's security and economic interests. The Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act includes a path to earned citizenship for the undocumented, reforms to the family and employment visa categories, critical updates to the refugee and asylum program, and a fair and effective enforcement program that will respect the rule of law and protect our national security.

Bringing undocumented immigrants out of the shadows and allowing immigrant families to more easily reunite with their loved ones promotes a strong social fabric in our communities. However, we are concerned that this bill fails to provide relief to certain family members—especially siblings, adult married children over age 31, and LGBTQ families—seeking to reunite with their loved ones. Just as we, as Americans, have been able to build our lives alongside our brothers, sisters and children, we must now preserve that opportunity for prospective new Americans.

The bill's proposed employment visa reforms will make it easier for high- and low-skilled immigrant workers to come to the U.S., as well as establish a viable program for temporary immigrant workers and foreign graduate students in science, technology, engineering and math. These reforms will make it easier for high and low-skilled immigrant workers to come to this country and help to ensure that American businesses have the labor they need to compete in a global economy.

Immigration, however, is not a zero sum game. Family and employment visa categories are equally important to ensuring a strong economy and pluralistic America. Some of the most successful immigrant entrepreneurs in America today, including those who created Intel and Google, arrived with family and refugee visas, not through the employment visa program. In this bill, we must preserve all

legal immigration channels to ensure that the future inventors, scientists, and leaders, including those still too young and yet to be discovered, are able to immigrate to America and become the future of tomorrow.

This bill also includes critical improvements to the refugee and asylum program, such as repealing the one-year filing deadline that caused so much unnecessary hardship for asylum seekers; eliminating provisions that needlessly separate asylees and refugees from close family members; expediting the process for granting asylum to asylum seekers when the evidence clearly demonstrates that they have been or will be persecuted; and permitting qualified stateless individuals to apply for green cards. Other important provisions would make refugee adjudications abroad more fair and efficient, and streamline the process for admitting certain high risk refugee groups, including Jews and other religious minorities fleeing Iran. We commend the Senators for including these essential refugee protection provisions in this legislation.

Finally, we support the inclusion in this legislation of provisions directed at enhancing border security and enforcement, just as we recognize that the very fact of providing an earned path to citizenship for the undocumented in and of itself serves our national security interests. Implementing an effective and fair mandatory employment verification system that includes worker and due process protections, and a nationwide system to track entry and exit visas, will help to ensure that we know who is in the workforce and who is entering and exiting our country, making it safer for everyone.

However, the aforementioned enforcement enhancements should not be allowed to hinder the path to legalization for those currently living in the shadows. This bill includes two stages of enforcement and border security operations, with benchmarks that must be met before eligible individuals would be permitted to adjust their status to become permanent residents and, ultimately, U.S. citizens. AJC firmly believes that there is no reason to link a pathway to earned citizenship for hardworking immigrants already living in the United States to border security benchmarks. The immigrants who will be eligible for the new Registered Provisional Immigrant status will already have met strict requirements to demonstrate their personal and financial contributions to our country, and are not the target of enforcement operations. As such, it is simply illogical to link their access to adjustment of status to enforcement benchmarks.

Jewish tradition teaches us that each person is made *b'tselem elohim*, in the image of G-d. Accordingly, we engage the immigration issue with the goal of fashioning an immigration system that facilitates legal status and family unity in the interest of serving the inherent dignity and rights of every individual, even as it enhances our national security, strengthens our economy, and promotes respect for the rule of law. It is our collective prayer that the legislative process will produce a just immigration system of which our nation of immigrants can be proud.

AJC appreciates the opportunity to submit this statement and welcomes your questions and comments.



**Border Task Force an Important Part of the new CIR bill**  
*Bringing an accountability mechanism to border enforcement is  
the highest priority for those who live and work in border  
regions*

(EL PASO, Texas) – The Border Network for Human Rights (BNHR) applauds the Senate bipartisan efforts in releasing the comprehensive immigration reform bill today-a moment that the border and immigrant communities have long awaited for.

In particular, BNHR applauds the inclusion of language to create DHS Border Oversight Task Force in the proposed legislation. This is an accountability mechanism that BNHR has believed in for many years.

The Task Force is about bringing border communities — that means local law enforcement, academics, elected officials, faith leaders, border residents and others — to the table when we talk about border enforcement. This creates better strategies for keeping all Americans safe, and we have the evidence of it.

This model of community policing has already proven to work. In El Paso, Texas, the safest U.S. city for it's size, border residents regularly sit down with federal and local law enforcement agencies to discuss the concerns of residents and the authority of agencies like Border Patrol. This model of dialogue and community policing shows us that it is no accident that El Paso is consistently rated most safe.

Past immigration debates have ended with little reform to the system, but instead have yielded a massive expansion of unaccountable and irresponsible enforcement against border and immigrant communities.

The proposed plan creates pathway to citizenship for 11 million undocumented immigrants in the country is positive movement forward; but the current proposal is too expensive and seeks to slow the pathway to citizenship down, too many people will inevitably be left behind.

And because the immigration debate always seems to hinge on the border, there are provisions included in the bill that directly impact those who live and work on the border. While there are misguided ideas about the border in the senators' proposal, we may still be looking at a breakthrough on bringing accountability to the border.

“This is a historic moment,” said BNHR Executive Director, Fernando Garcia. “We all know that we need immigration reform, however, we need to make sure we are doing it the right way. We must ensure that our border enforcement strategy is accountable and transparent.”

Other provisions that will improve border policies include strengthening prohibitions on the use of lethal force by border agents, prohibitions against racial profiling, training on oversight

provisions for border agents, an DHS ombudsman on human rights and the creation of DHS border community liaisons in every Border Patrol Sector. El Paso is currently the only Border Patrol sector to have a border community liaison, thanks to years of work by BNHR in engaging in dialogue with the El Paso Border Patrol sector.

However, we cannot ignore provisions in the bill that would further entrench the problem of unaccountable enforcement at the border. Sending the National Guard to the border is further entrenches the problem of militarization in border communities. Plans to spend an additional \$3 billion — on top of the \$11 billion spend on border enforcement in 2012 — are misguided and an irresponsible use of resources. Additionally, the senators' plan to give DHS a new metric — 90% apprehension rate at the border — will also lead to further expansion of the massive militarization of the border.

At the border, we need an enforcement system that works and focuses on real threats - terrorists, drug smugglers and human traffickers - not people looking to work and raise a family in the U.S. This isn't just what we think. According to recent polling commissioned by the Campaign for Accountable, Moral and Balanced Immigration Overhaul of which BNHR is a member, a vast majority of Americans — 84% — believe that we should make stopping drug and weapon trafficking along the border a higher priority for border patrol than stopping illegal immigrants. The American people are right.

The bill is a step in the right direction but leaves much room for improvement, especially on border issues.

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*The Border Network for Human Rights, founded in 1998, is one of the leading human rights advocacy and immigration reform organizations in the U.S. BNHR has over 5,000 members in West Texas and Southern New Mexico.*



## **PRIORITIES IN IMMIGRATION REFORM**

### **SENATE BILL ANALYSIS**

April 18, 2013

Centro de los Derechos del Migrante, Inc. (CDM) is a transnational nonprofit organization with offices in Mexico City, Oaxaca, and Baltimore with the mission of improving the conditions of migrant workers who labor in the United States. Through outreach and legal work on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border, CDM has uncovered critical flaws in U.S. policy that result in abuses of migrant workers. Below, we highlight the organization's key priorities for migrants in immigration reform and analyze the effects of the Senate immigration reform bill on current abuses.

### **Justice in International Labor Recruitment**

Labor contractors who recruit migrant workers for U.S. companies often engage in abusive practices. In a study of over 220 workers on H-2 temporary visas, CDM found that more than 58 percent had paid recruitment fees. In order to pay these high fees, workers often take out loans that make them even more vulnerable to exploitation. In worst-case scenarios, unscrupulous employers and recruiters traffic workers into the U.S. Regulation and oversight of foreign labor recruiters is much needed, as is a system to hold U.S. employers who utilize such recruiters jointly responsible for abuses.

**WHAT THE SENATE BILL WOULD DO:** The Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act (Senate Bill) includes much needed reforms to address abuses in international labor recruitment. The key measures to address recruitment abuse are a required set of disclosures given to workers, a prohibition on employers charging workers recruitment fees, a prohibition on discrimination in recruitment, a foreign labor contractor registry at the DOL and the State Department, extensive data gathering and data publication, and critical enforcement mechanisms.

The Bill would require that important information be disclosed to workers at the time of recruitment. These disclosures are important so that workers know the terms and conditions of their employment and visa before leaving their homes for employment in the U.S. The required disclosures include the following: the identity of the employer and the recruiter; the terms of employment; a copy of the signed contract; the type, length, and terms and conditions of the visa; any costs and expenses associated with the work; any training that will be provided or required; and worker's compensation or insurance coverage in the event of injury or death, among others.

The Bill addresses the economic coercion of workers who pay recruiters high fees, often incurring debt with exorbitant interest rates in order to come to the U.S. Specifically, the Bill prohibits employers,

labor contractors, and agents from charging recruitment fees to workers and requires employers to reimburse all costs associated with their recruitment, including visa fees, processing fees, transportation fees, legal expenses, placement fees, and other costs to a worker for any foreign labor contracting activity. The Bill also requires several disclosures related to fees.

The Bill provides some visa-specific worker protections. With respect to the H-2B program, the Bill would require that employers pay transportation costs, including reasonable subsistence costs during travel, from the place of recruitment to the place of employment and from the place of employment to the place of permanent residence or the subsequent worksite. The Bill would require that employers pay any fees related to hiring the worker and would prohibit deducting such fees from workers' wages. With respect to the newly created W visas, the Bill would also require that employers pay fees related to hiring workers but would not require that workers be reimbursed for travel and transportation costs. The Bill is not comprehensive in its protections of H-2B workers and fails to provide other much-needed improvements to the H-2B program.

### **Freedom from Discrimination**

During the recruitment process, internationally recruited workers are subject to various forms of discrimination. Recruiters and employers limit access to the recruitment stream by national origin, sex, and age. They segregate workers into jobs and visa categories based on racialized and gendered stereotypes. They also retaliate against and blacklist workers who complain about unfair or unlawful treatment.

**WHAT THE SENATE BILL WOULD DO:** Pursuant to the Senate Bill, foreign labor contractors would be prohibited from failing to hire or refusing to hire, discharge, intimidate, threaten, restrain, coerce or blacklist any individual or otherwise discriminate against an individual with respect to compensation, terms, conditions, or privileges of employment, because of such individual's race, color, creed, sex, national origin, religion, age, or disability.

### **Access to Justice and Protection from Employer Retaliation**

Migrant workers face barriers to seeking and obtaining justice in the United States. Migrant workers should receive information on their rights before coming to the U.S. and should have access to legal assistance once they arrive in the U.S. They should be able to remain in the United States to pursue employment related claims before administrative bodies and civil and criminal courts. They should be allowed to reenter the country in pursuit of justice.

Due to threats of deportation and other forms of retaliation, many migrant workers are afraid to voice their concerns out of fear of losing their jobs and visas. Most temporary visas bind a worker to a single employer, so a migrant worker cannot change employers, even in the face of exploitative wages and working conditions. Visas need to be portable, so that workers can leave abusive employers and seek employment elsewhere.

**WHAT THE SENATE BILL WOULD DO:** The Senate Bill would require that, before issuing visas, consular officers provide visa applicants with a know-your-rights pamphlet in a language the applicant understands and review the pamphlet with the visa applicant. The Bill would also expand access to Legal Services Corporation funded legal services to migrants who suffered certain recruitment abuses and to agricultural workers in certain circumstances.

The Bill would prohibit retaliation against internationally recruited workers and their family members based on worker disclosures or complaints about a violation of his/her rights in the recruitment process. The Bill would enable the Attorney General and the Secretary of Homeland Security to grant advance parole to permit workers to remain legally in the U.S. in order to fully and effectively participate in all legal proceedings related to recruitment abuses.

The Bill would create a new W visa category for certain sectors of nonimmigrants. These workers would self-petition for their visas with registered U.S. employers and would be able to change employers while in the U.S.

Also, the Bill would expand U visa qualifying crimes to include the labor crimes of fraud in foreign labor contracting and serious violations involving workplace abuse, exploitation, retaliation, or violation of whistleblower protections. Qualifying migrants who are arrested or detained and who are necessary for the investigation or prosecution of a workplace claim would not be removed from the United States until being interviewed as witnesses; migrants pursuing U visas would be provided with stays of removal. The Bill would increase the number of U visas available to victims of crimes, meaning that U visas would be more available to migrants who suffered certain qualifying labor crimes.

## **Transparency**

Unscrupulous employers and recruiters are currently gaming the employment-based visa system. In a recently released groundbreaking study, CDM uncovered significant fraud in recruitment practices. The recruitment system needs to be made more transparent so that the public and workers can identify the bad actors and fraudulent recruiters. Data should be gathered to monitor international labor recruitment and should be publicly available. More data should be provided on how many U and T visas are issued to migrant workers due to labor and employment-based complaints.

**WHAT THE SENATE BILL WOULD DO:** The Senate Bill would require the Department of Labor (DOL) to create a public registry of foreign labor contractors containing information about the employers, visas, and locations for which they contract workers, as well as a list of foreign labor contractors whose certification has been revoked. All foreign labor contractors besides employers would be required to register and receive a revocable certification from DOL. Employers would be required to notify DOL of the foreign labor contractors they use. The Secretary of Labor would require foreign labor contractors to post a bond to ensure both the fulfillment of the contractor's responsibilities and the wages of the workers.

The Bill would also improve transparency by requiring the Secretary of State to maintain information related to the identities of foreign labor contractors and the employers to whom the foreign labor contractors supply workers. This information would be made available on-line, including on the websites of U.S. embassies in the official language of that country. The Secretary of State is also charged with annually disclosing data in an on-line, public format regarding the gender, country of origin and state, date of birth, wage, level of training and occupation category, disaggregated by job and by visa category of visas processed.

### **Fair Wages and Safe Working Conditions**

Many migrant workers are paid below-market wages and are not compensated for overtime. Migrant workers should be paid a fair wage and should have the ability to switch employers. Many migrant workers are unable to recover workers' compensation after job-related injuries.

**WHAT THE SENATE BILL WOULD DO:** The Senate Bill would require that H-2B workers be paid the greater of the actual wage level paid by the employer to other employees with similar experience and qualifications for such position *or* the prevailing wage level for the occupational classification of the position based on the best information available at the time the application is filed. It is unclear that this wage structure would improve wages for H-2B workers from the 2008 prevailing wage schema that was recently declared invalid by the *CATA* court.

The new W visa would have a wage structure requiring that workers be paid the greater of the level 4 wage set out by the Foreign Labor Certification Data Center Online Wage Library for such occupation in that metropolitan statistical area *or* the mean of the highest two-thirds of wages surveyed for such occupation in that metropolitan statistical area. The effects of this wage structure are unclear at this time.



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**For Immediate Release - April 17, 2013**

## **Gamaliel's Statement to the Senate Gang of 8 concerning S. 744 Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and the Immigration Modernization Act of 2013.**

(WASHINGTON, D.C.) -- Around 2:00 a.m. this morning, Senator Schumer introduced the long-awaited comprehensive immigration bill, S. 744 Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act of 2013. The image of Senator Schumer, flanked by his colleague, Senator Durbin, and in the presence of bleary-eyed floor and committee staff, stands as a reminder to us of the difficult, sometimes tedious, often contentious, but always important work that went into making this bill a reality.

To the Gang of Eight—Senators Schumer, McCain, Menendez, Rubio, Durbin, Graham, Bennet, and Flake—to our partners in D.C. and on the ground, and to our own leaders and clergy, we offer a heartfelt thanks! For the first time in decades, truly transformative immigration legislation is within our grasp.

This bill provides a new path to citizenship for 11 million people who have been living in the shadows. The path is extremely long and the conditions that must be met along the way are difficult; however, new Americans will now be able to work, to learn, to provide food and shelter for their families, and to contribute to their communities with dignity and without fear of deportation.

From the time that the U.S. first established an immigration system, family has been the cornerstone of immigration policy. With release of this bill, the focus shifts from family to employment. While we support provisions that create fair and just employment practices and treatment of workers, we are concerned that this approach could result in negative impact on the economy, our communities, and individuals. We are reminded of the words of songwriter Charlie King, "Our life is more than our work and our work is more than our job."

Remember, thriving immigrant businesses are an important economic engine in cities like Detroit as well as farm communities like the one in West Liberty, Iowa. In West Liberty, immigrants revitalized the dying town and its economy. Immigrants, families and business are often interlinked and this bill should reflect that economic reality. Helping business is good, helping families and business is even better because it builds strong prosperous communities. Reducing immigrant workers to just workers to keep our economy and profit growing is not the reform bill that Gamaliel and all people of faith will settle for.

Over the coming days, we will dig more deeply into the text of the bill and its implications for our country and for new Americans. We will continue to engage our Senators, Representatives, and our communities in conversation about the additional possibilities for reform. We want this bill to be a reflection of the very best of who we are as Americans.

**Statement written by Gamaliel, Executive Director Ana Garcia-Ashley and Civil Rights of Immigrants campaign Chair, Salvador Cerna. *Gamaliel is a faith-based social justice organization that represents 1 million people across the United States, South Africa and the United Kingdom.***

**###**



**STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD OF ELEANOR ACER**

**Director, Refugee Protection Program**

**HUMAN RIGHTS FIRST**

**On**

**“Comprehensive Immigration Reform Legislation”**

**Submitted to the**

**Senate Judiciary Committee**

**April 19, 2013**



## **S. 744, Immigration Reform Legislation, Includes Key Reforms that Would Help Refugees by Making System More Efficient**

The bipartisan Senate immigration bill introduced on April 17, 2013, includes some provisions that could help thousands of refugees. The bill includes key provisions to eliminate the wasteful and unfair filing deadline that bars refugees with well-founded fears of persecution from asylum. The bill also recognizes that immigration reform should include improvements to address the broken and expensive immigration detention system. We welcome the Gang of Eight's (including Senators Charles Schumer, John McCain, Dick Durbin, Lindsey Graham, Robert Menendez, Marco Rubio, Michael Bennet and Jeff Flake) bipartisan approach to immigration reform and their reaffirmation of America's commitment to the protection of persecuted refugees.

The bill contains some key fixes that will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the U.S. asylum system. Prior to introduction of the bill, Human Rights First, as chair of the Asylum Working Group, coordinated a [letter to Congress](#) signed by over 160 organizations in support of improvements to the asylum system in immigration reform, several of which were incorporated into the legislation. In particular, the bill would eliminate an inefficient provision that has barred thousands of genuine refugees from asylum in the United States because they filed more than one year after their arrival in this country. The bill's provisions that will help protect refugees include measures that would:

- Eliminate the bar on asylum applications filed over one year after a refugee's arrival in the United States – this bar wastes governmental resources, unnecessarily diverts cases into the immigration court system, denies asylum to genuine refugees, and prolongs the separation of refugee families (sec. 3401);
- Improve efficiency by allowing some asylum seekers to have their asylum requests adjudicated initially by the asylum office instead of the immigration courts (sec. 3402);
- Increase staffing/reducing delays in immigration court, facilitate access to legal information and to counsel, and provide safeguards on the use of immigration detention – as detailed below; and
- Facilitate the reunification of some refugee families by allowing the children of the spouses of refugees granted asylum or refugee status to be treated as “derivatives” (sec. 3402).

The bill contains other humanitarian provisions, including a measure that would allow the U.S. government to address the plight of stateless individuals in the United States (sec. 3405).

In addition, the bill contains some common sense measures that will improve the efficiency and fairness of the immigration system more broadly, by facilitating access to counsel, increasing staffing and reducing delays in immigration courts and providing some basic safeguards on the use of immigration detention. These provisions include some that would:

- Increase the efficiency of the immigration courts by increasing the number of immigration judges and support staff - which will reduce delays in the overburdened and backlogged immigration court system (sec. 3501);
- Provide tested and efficient legal orientation presentations to all detained immigrants (sec. 3503);
- Facilitate access to counsel and authorize appointment of counsel for unaccompanied children and individuals who are incompetent due to serious mental disabilities (sec. 3502);
- Require establishment of secure alternatives to detention programs that incorporate case management services in each field office – alternatives to detention are more cost-effective than detention (costing 30 cents to \$14 per person per day, compared to \$164 per person per day for detention) and have been demonstrated to be effective in ensuring appearances for court dates and deportation (sec. 3715); and
- Extend the purview of the USCIS Ombudsman's Office to address additional immigration matters, including those relating to immigration detention (sec. 1114); and
- Strengthen accountability for non-compliance with detention standards (sec. 3716).

Not only will these common sense measures improve the efficiency of the immigration system, but they are also consistent with American values, commitment to fairness, and human rights.

Last week, Human Rights First hosted a day-long conference on immigration detention, convening former corrections officials and prosecutors, representatives of faith groups, attorneys, human rights advocates, and conservative leaders including Grover Norquist and Dr. Richard Land, to identify common-sense and rights-respecting reforms – some of which can only be accomplished via legislation.

In its review of the 844 page bill, S. 744 titled the “Border Security, Economic Opportunity and Immigration Modernization Act of 2013,” Human Rights First will be looking to ensure it does not include provisions that might undermine the ability of refugees to receive U.S. protection or adversely impact the human rights of immigrants. As the Senate Judiciary Committee prepares for mark-up of the bill, the organization plans to weigh in on any areas of the bill where amendments may be needed.

Introduction of today's Gang of Eight bill is the first step. We hope that Congressional leaders demonstrate their commitment to refugee protection by supporting needed reforms and preventing any harmful amendments.



## **Submitted to the Senate Judiciary Committee Regarding the Hearing on Comprehensive Immigration Reform Legislation**

**April 19, 2013**

HIAS, the global migration agency of the American Jewish community, welcomes the opportunity to submit written testimony regarding reforming our country's immigration system. Throughout its more than 130-year history, HIAS has advocated for just and compassionate immigration laws that honor America's tradition as a welcoming nation. HIAS is also a national resettlement agency and an international refugee services organization with programs around the world.

HIAS welcomes S. 744, which offers a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants, modernizes the immigration system, strengthens our economy, protects families, and treats American and immigrant workers fairly. In particular, HIAS is grateful to see the pathway to citizenship, inclusion of the DREAM Act for undocumented youth, provisions that prioritize immigrant integration and create a pilot program to promote integration at the state and local level, provisions that keep families together, "alternative to detention" programs, increased resources for immigration courts personnel and more training for judges and their staff, and broader exemptions from the English language requirements for naturalization for elderly immigrants.

As the Judiciary Committee meets to consider immigration reform legislation, HIAS urges Congress not to neglect those who come to this country as humanitarian immigrants. HIAS is proud of the United States' strong history of protecting and welcoming victims of persecution, and the U.S. refugee resettlement program reflects our nation's highest values. Refugees and asylees who are given the opportunity to rebuild their lives in the U.S. contribute to the rich diversity and economic vibrancy of communities across the country. The humanitarian act of saving and resettling refugees not only benefits the refugees themselves, but the communities where they resettle and the country as a whole. HIAS believes that in order to ensure that local communities remain welcoming to refugees we need to update our outdated laws, reverse chronic underfunding, better prepare refugees for life in America, demonstrate the benefits of refugee resettlement, and – for the first time – create clear goals and a comprehensive approach for successful refugee integration.

HIAS is particularly encouraged that there are several humanitarian fixes for refugees and asylum seekers in S. 744. Repealing the one-year filing deadline that causes so much unnecessary hardship, eliminating provisions that needlessly separate asylees and refugees from close family members, expediting the process for granting asylum to asylum seekers in expedited proceedings that clearly show they have been or will be persecuted, permitting qualified stateless individuals to apply for green cards, and modifying the procedures for refugee adjudications abroad will make the refugee and asylum systems more efficient and humane.

The bill would also streamline the process for admitting certain high risk refugee groups, including Jews and other religious minorities fleeing Iran. The Senate bill would preserve Senator Lautenberg's legacy of protecting persecuted religious minorities while creating new opportunities for other persecuted groups – with an emphasis on those seeking religious freedom – to receive protection.

As Jews, we support policies that fulfill the Torah's mandate to 'welcome the stranger,' as we know that effective immigration policies have often made the difference between life and death, between oppression and the opportunity for success. It is crucial that we utilize this opportunity to provide safe haven to the persecuted. HIAS looks forward to working with legislators and immigrant communities to revamp and revitalize our country's current immigration system in a way that honors our American and Jewish values.



# Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service

## Statement of Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service

### Senate Committee on the Judiciary

#### April 19, 2013: “Hearing on Comprehensive Immigration Reform Legislation”

Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS), the national organization established by Lutheran churches in the United States to serve uprooted people, welcomes the introduction of S.744. LIRS is particularly grateful for the way this new Senate bill embodies bipartisan agreement on basic improvements that LIRS has long championed for welcoming newcomers to the United States.

“We’re thrilled that S.744 shows bipartisan agreement on fundamental improvements to America’s immigration process that LIRS has long advocated,” said LIRS President and CEO Linda Hartke. “The majority of Americans are calling for immigration reform that keeps families together and offers a roadmap to earned citizenship – because family unity is vital to our congregations and communities, and because this reform is smart for our economy and our country.”

“It’s no coincidence that 40 Lutheran leaders from across the country were on Capitol Hill this week calling for passage of a bill that creates a fair and humane immigration system,” said Hartke. “Although we’re still analyzing S.744, we are glad that Senate leadership has taken heed of their call for action. Now we’re urging the House of Representatives to show bipartisan leadership like that in the Senate.”

S.744, the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act, aligns with the LIRS Principles for Comprehensive Immigration Reform as follows:

***Principle 1. Provide an earned pathway to lawful permanent residency and eventual citizenship for undocumented immigrants and their families.***

We are overall quite pleased with the creation of a process for undocumented immigrants to eventually earn citizenship in the country they consider home. This pathway towards citizenship must be accessible and fairly adjudicated, and this bill is a positive step towards that outcome.

***Principle 2. Ensure humane and just enforcement of immigration laws by reducing use of immigration detention and expanding community support programs.***

This bill improves access to justice for migrants and refugees navigating our immigration system. LIRS welcomes the increased provision of counsel and legal protections for unaccompanied migrant children and individuals facing deportation and detention. The bill also

recognizes the promise of community based alternatives to detention, which LIRS has begun to cultivate nationwide, as a cost-effective and humane way to promote integration and make our communities stronger.

***Principle 3. Protect families from separation and ensure an adequate supply of visas for families seeking to reunite. LIRS remains committed to family unity for all migrants and refugees.***

We are encouraged by improvements for refugee children in need of protection and children separated from their parents by immigration detention and deportation. Although this bill does improve the options for family unity for many immigrants who have been seeking to reunite with loved ones in the United States for years, LIRS is disappointed by the creation of an age cap on married children hoping to reunite with their U.S. citizen parents and the proposed elimination of immigration channels for brothers and sisters of American citizens.

***Principle 4. Provide adequate resources and protections to ensure the successful integration of refugees, asylees, survivors of torture and trafficking, unaccompanied minors, and other vulnerable migrants.***

We welcome the bill's recognition of how essential integration is for new Americans and their communities. Especially exciting are improvements that would better protect refugees, asylum seekers, stateless individuals, and migrants who are victims of serious crimes. These changes bring America closer to fulfilling humanitarian obligations to those seeking a safe haven and new life, while also improving efficiencies in current immigration processes.

***Principle 5. Ensure the protection of U.S. citizen and migrant workers.***

The bipartisan bill makes changes that would treat workers fairly and recognize the contributions of immigrant workers to this country.

LIRS is nationally recognized for its leadership in advocating on behalf of refugees, asylum seekers, unaccompanied children, immigrants in detention, families fractured by migration and other vulnerable populations, and for serving migrants through over 60 grassroots legal and social service partners across the United States.



OFFICE OF  
IMMIGRATION ISSUES  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)

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## Addressing immigration reform

### A STATEMENT FROM GRADYE PARSONS, STATED CLERK OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

APRIL 18, 2013

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While the press conference for the release of the Gang of 8—a bipartisan group of eight Senators who were appointed to craft a proposal for comprehensive immigration reform—to officially introduce their proposed legislation\* to the American public has been postponed due to the tragedy in Boston on Monday, an outline of the “Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act of 2013” has been released.

The Gang of 8 has negotiated and compromised to come to agreement on this proposed legislation. Their cooperation and hard work to fix our broken immigration system is commendable. We applaud their efforts and join them in the call that this is the time for reform. This is the year for justice and a commonsense immigration plan.

The 17-page memo that was released leaves many questions unanswered, and of those provisions that are explained, many are not perfect. However, it is a start toward the modernization of our immigration laws. The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has set forth elements that should be incorporated into a comprehensive and fair reform. Those elements include a pathway to citizenship for the 11 million people now living and working in the U.S. without authorization, eliminating the backlogs in family and employment-based immigration, maintaining family unity as the foundation of our immigration policy, creating a commonsense workable approach to future flow, and maintenance of our nation’s borders in a way that respects due process and human dignity. These are just a few of the elements endorsed by the General Assembly, others can be viewed at our [website](#).

Some of these goals are shared in the Senators’ memo but the status of others is unclear. In the coming weeks the staff of the office of Immigration Issues will work with our interfaith partners to analyze the legislation. Because staff will be sharing details as they come to light, I invite you to monitor our [website](#).

Now we begin the hard work of mobilizing our communities and working to have our voice heard in Congress. Many Presbyterians will be directly impacted by this legislation and it is up to us to ensure that we improve the bill and that amendments that will undermine the bill’s success are not added. You can help by educating yourself and your community about the need for reform and the plight of our sisters and brothers who suffer most directly the effects of an unjust immigration system.

Join me in the prayer for a reform that recognizes the contributions of the many aspiring citizens who are Americans in every way but on paper. Then join the work to ensure that our prayer is heard by Congress. Our church and country have been built by new immigrants who have worked in partnership with those already here. We want to continue this legacy so that others may be blessed as we have.

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**April 17, 2013**

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E-mail: [cjunia@iwj.org](mailto:cjunia@iwj.org)

**IWJ Welcomes Senate Immigration Bill**  
***Will continue to work for strong worker protections***

**National** – Interfaith Worker Justice (IWJ) welcomes the Senate “Gang of 8” immigration reform bill as an important and historic first step towards real and humane reform.

“Our elected officials have a great opportunity –and responsibility - to overhaul a broken system that tears families apart and leaves workers vulnerable to abuse,” IWJ Executive Director Kim Bobo said. “Passing comprehensive immigration reform and creating a path to citizenship is clearly the way to “welcome the immigrant” and “love our neighbor.”

The proposed “Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act of 2013” (SB 744) offers a roadmap to citizenship that includes thousands of families torn apart by deportation. The proposal also includes a temporary worker program that extends workplace protection to immigrant workers.

“It’s not a perfect bill, but it’s an important first step and we will continue to push for stronger worker protections,” Bobo said. “Now is the time for all of us to put our faith into action, our feet to the street, and advocate policies that reflect our values of compassion and justice.”

IWJ has a network of more than 27 worker centers around the country that serve as drop-in centers for low-wage workers who experience injustice at the workplace. Many of these centers routinely see wage theft cases that involve immigrant workers.

“Immigrant workers who are forced to live the shadows are more vulnerable to abuse. When we allow immigrant workers to be exploited, we lower the standards for all workers,” Bobo said. “Reforming our immigration system is morally imperative and fundamental to restoring justice and equity in the workplace and the community.”

IWJ is a member of the Interfaith Immigrant Coalition, a coalition of 35 national faith-based organizations calling for a reform of our broken immigration system, and the Alliance for Citizenship.

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*Interfaith Worker Justice has been organizing, educating and advocating at the intersection of work and faith since 1996. There are 70 affiliated organizations in the*





FOR RELEASE: April 17, 2013

CONTACT: Stephanie Niedringhaus, 202-347-9797 x224, [sniedringhaus@networklobby.org](mailto:sniedringhaus@networklobby.org)

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## NETWORK Responds to New Immigration Bill

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**Washington DC:** *NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice lobby, today issued the following statement about the new immigration bill:*

We are pleased that the highly anticipated immigration bill has been finally introduced in Congress, and we want to publicly thank the Senate's bipartisan "Gang of Eight," who are responsible (Sens. Charles Schumer, Lindsey Graham, John McCain, Jeff Flake, Dick Durbin, Marco Rubio, Bob Menendez and Michael Bennet.) It is extremely gratifying that they were able to come together to make this happen, especially at a time of such partisan rancor. We are grateful that they were able to remain focused on the task of addressing justice for our eleven million brothers and sisters who presently live in the shadows.

Family unity and diversity remain two key issues for NETWORK, and we intend to review the bill's wording about these issues carefully. We look forward to working with Congress to ensure that the final version includes a reasonable roadmap to citizenship, reunification of families, and the added value of diversity in our nation.

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*NETWORK—a Catholic leader in the global movement for justice and peace—educates, organizes and lobbies for economic and social transformation. Founded in 1971 by 47 Catholic sisters, NETWORK is supported by thousands of groups and individuals committed to working for social and economic justice. For more information, see [www.networklobby.org](http://www.networklobby.org).*





## Reform Movement Welcomes Introduction of Senate Immigration Bill

*Laser: "A path to citizenship for the 11 million undocumented immigrants here today, a renewed commitment to clearing systemic backlogs, a plan for processing future flow of immigrants, and a reasonable approach to enforcement are all cornerstones of the Reform Movement's immigration priorities, and we are pleased to see such policies reflected in today's legislation."*

Contact: Sean Thibault or Sarah Krinsky  
202.387.2800 | [news@rac.org](mailto:news@rac.org)

Washington, D.C., April 17, 2013 - In response to the introduction of the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act of 2013, Rachel Laser, Deputy Director of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, issued the following statement:

"As an historic supporter of comprehensive immigration policies, the Reform Movement enthusiastically welcomes this momentous step toward the long-overdue passage of reform legislation. We applaud the 'Gang of 8' for their tireless work on this crucial issue, and commend their bipartisanship on a topic that so intimately touches the lives of Americans of all ages, races, nationalities, and political parties.

We are encouraged by many of the key provisions in the Senate bill released this morning. A path to citizenship for the 11 million undocumented immigrants here today, a renewed commitment to clearing systemic backlogs, a plan for processing future flow of immigrants, and a reasonable approach to enforcement are all cornerstones of the Reform Movement's immigration priorities, and we are pleased to see such policies reflected in today's legislation.

We understand the nature of compromise and balance, and as such celebrate this bipartisan bill. At the same time, we know we can do better, and call upon our elected representatives to continue to strengthen this bill and to work to ensure justice for our nation's immigrants. That includes justice for all family members, including brothers, sisters, and spouses, of all genders; justice for those who must wait too long to become citizens; and justice for contributing members of our economy and society who are denied basic rights and benefits.

Jewish tradition teaches, 'in a place where there is no humanity, strive to be human' (Pirkei Avot 2:6). Today's bill is an important start toward restoring humanity in our immigration system and throughout our nation. We welcome this legislation, and look forward to continuing to work with Congress on its development in the weeks and months to come."

Read

more: [http://rac.org/Articles/index.cfm?id=23157&pge\\_prg\\_id=16390&pge\\_id=2541#ixzz2QqV5IJI5](http://rac.org/Articles/index.cfm?id=23157&pge_prg_id=16390&pge_id=2541#ixzz2QqV5IJI5)

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**SISTERS OF MERCY ENCOURAGED BY SENATE IMMIGRATION BILL,  
OPPOSE FURTHER BORDER MILITARIZATION**

**April 18, 2013** – While Sisters of Mercy applaud the bi-partisan effort to resolve the broken immigration system with practical solutions, the newly introduced senate immigration bill includes a pathway to citizenship that is dependent on border enforcement triggers and is troubling in that it could continually delay a pathway altogether. Though supportive of many aspects of the bill, the Sisters of Mercy urge elected officials to recognize and affirm that the U.S. border is more secure than ever. The U.S. government has met or surpassed every single border security benchmark within the proposed 2007 Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act. And the Sisters of Mercy remain strong in their stance that Congress should reevaluate continued militarization of the border.

A 180-year history of ministering to and with immigrants in schools, hospitals, parishes and social service centers provides the Sisters of Mercy with an understanding of just how important yesterday's bill is. Just and humane immigration reform is a Critical Concern of Mercy, based on their commitment to serve those who are poor, sick and uneducated. Their response is based on witnessing first-hand the suffering and hardships faced by immigrants, especially undocumented immigrants.

With a presence throughout Latin America and the Philippines, the Sisters of Mercy are keenly aware of the factors that push women, men and children to leave their countries. "We call on the President and Congress to examine the root causes of immigration, says Sister Anne Curtis of the Mercy Institute Leadership Team (ILT) "particularly policies that contribute to poverty and violence and force families to flee their homes in search of economic and physical security," she explained. "We will continue to support positive aspects of the bipartisan immigration bill, while encouraging a more expedited welcome of our immigrant sisters and brothers and sustaining advocacy against further militarization of the border."

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*The Sisters of Mercy – an international community of Roman Catholic women – dedicate their lives to God through vows of poverty, chastity, obedience and service. For more than 180 years,*

*motivated by the Gospel of Jesus and inspired by the spirit of their founder Catherine McAuley, the Sisters of Mercy have responded to the continually changing needs of the times.*

*Through prayer and service, the sisters address the causes and effects of violence, racism, degradation of the Earth and injustice to women and immigrants. The sisters sponsor and serve in more than 200 organizations that work with those in need in the U.S., Central and South America, Jamaica, Guam and the Philippines.*



# Franciscan Action Network

Transforming the World in the Spirit of St. Francis and St. Clare

3025 4<sup>th</sup> Street, N.E. • Washington, DC 20017 • 202-527-7575 • 1-888-364-3388 (toll free) • 202-527-7576 (fax)

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FOR REASE: APRIL 18, 2013

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## FRANCISCAN ACTION NETWORK ENCOURAGED BY NEW IMMIGRATION BILL

Washington, DC: Franciscan Action Network (FAN), a collective Franciscan voice on U.S. public policy, thanks the bi-partisan group of Senators who labored for several months on a new immigration bill titled “Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act of 2013.” The bill offers hope that Congress can reach an agreement that respects the dignity of all immigrants in our country.

We especially welcome the inclusion of a path to citizenship, with a special provision for Dreamers, and several provisions which promote family unity. In our initial and incomplete assessment, FAN has several concerns about the legislation, including stringent and costly border enforcement measures, the very long path to citizenship, and the elimination of the family sibling category. However, we will continue to work with members of Congress toward a final bill that repairs our broken immigration system and sends a message of welcome to aspiring U.S. Americans. We commend the Senators who introduced the bill for their courage and leadership.

Franciscan Action Network was founded in 2007 to create a unified Franciscan voice for justice by working to transform United States public policy related to peacemaking, care for creation, poverty and human rights. See [www.franciscanaction.org](http://www.franciscanaction.org).



**For Immediate Release**

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## **New Immigration Bill Includes Support for Families and Workers, Yet Would Continue Key Failures of Current System**

### ***Quaker Group: Fair Path to Citizenship Must Reflect More Humane Principles***

**Philadelphia, PA (April 17, 2013)** - The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) finds the immigration bill introduced today a modest start on reform, due to provisions that address family unification and workers' rights and create a narrow path to citizenship for some immigrants. But much of the bill reproduces many of the current failed policies – making the overall bill a far cry from the just and humane reforms that immigrant communities, faith, labor and advocacy groups have been calling for.

“The Senate bill makes meaningful improvements for immigrants with temporary protected status, undocumented youth, and agricultural workers by providing a fast track to legal permanent residency. However, it would not end the current cruel, costly and inefficient system of detention and deportation, or the militarization of the border that has devastated communities on both sides of the border,” said Gabriel Camacho, director of AFSC’s Project Voice program in Cambridge MA, and Amy Gottlieb director of AFSC’s immigrants’ rights program in Newark NJ.

The bill not only doubles down on some failed policies. It also elevates them to the status of mandatory measurable triggers, including universal E-Verify, a 90 percent border ‘security’ metric, and a new entry-exit port system. It would waste billions on drones, costly high-tech gadgetry, additional fencing, and personnel.

One part of the bill does offer greater accountability and oversight of border enforcement, a long-standing demand by immigrant communities and their allies, including AFSC. It would establish a task force of border community stakeholders to evaluate and make recommendations regarding immigration policies along the border. Since 2010, the Border Patrol has claimed the lives of 20 unarmed civilians, and no official has been held accountable for these deaths. Federal agents seemingly operate with impunity, systematically violating the human rights and civil liberties of border residents.

The bill also includes the right of due process and worker protections under the mandatory E-Verify provision. However, E-Verify and other employment verification programs remain highly flawed, problematic and costly.

“We are gratified to see that the bill does begin an important conversation about future flows of workers to the U.S., by identifying significant labor and wage standard protections and opportunities to apply for permanent status and supporting family unity,” said Gabriel.

“The bill strives to keep families together by restructuring a fundamentally flawed system with long waiting periods into one that provides new opportunities for people to migrate lawfully. Still, because

of limitations in the bill, there may be many who continue to live in the shadows, subject to the cruelties of a broken system including exploitation and abuse by unscrupulous employers,” Amy said.

The AFSC implores Congress to adopt compassionate and effective immigration reforms that are grounded in the following principles:

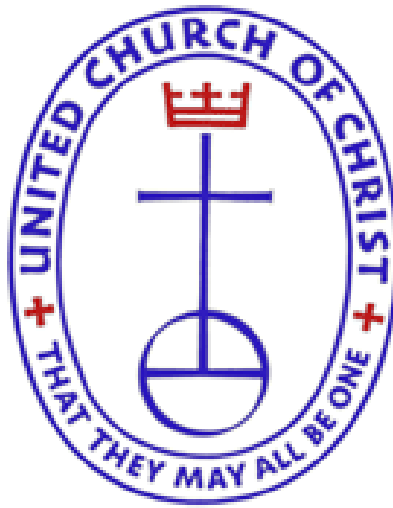
- Develop humane economic policies to reduce forced migration.
- Protect the labor rights of all workers.
- Develop a quick path to legal permanent residency and a clear path to citizenship.
- Respect the civil and human rights of immigrants.
- Demilitarize the U.S.-Mexico border.
- Make family reunification a top priority.
- Ensure that immigrants and refugees have access to services.

AFSC has created [A New Path](#), which lays out policy priorities for humane immigration reform that protects the human rights of all people. These principles are derived from nine decades of work with immigrant communities, whose voices must be heard as we seek meaningful and humane policies.

For more on AFSC’s immigrant rights work, visit <http://afsc.org/project/immigrant-rights> and follow us on Twitter and Facebook.

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*The American Friends Service Committee is a Quaker organization that includes people of various faiths who are committed to social justice, peace and humanitarian service. Its work is based on the belief in the worth of every person and faith in the power of love to overcome violence and injustice.*



The United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries, celebrates the introduction in the Congress of a long awaited immigration bill.

We specially wish to thank the senator members of the "Gang of Eight" for their work and dedication. We look forward to the legislative process and to further congressional action on behalf of the millions of God's children who may finally be able to achieve their dreams and full potential once this bill becomes law.

## **U.S. JESUIT CONFERENCE GREETES BI-PARTISAN IMMIGRATION BILL WITH OPTIMISM AND CAUTION**

April, 17, 2013

Washington—The U.S. Jesuit Conference welcomes today's introduction of a bi-partisan Senate immigration bill. Immigration reform has been a difficult issue to address, and this bill provides hope that an immigration agreement can be reached that respects the human dignity of our undocumented brothers and sisters.

We are especially pleased to see that members of the bi-partisan group of Senators included a pathway to citizenship for those without legal status and special provisions for DREAMers. We join the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in thanking Senators Schumer, McCain, Durbin, Graham, Menendez, Rubio, Bennet, and Flake for their dedicated leadership and courage in introducing this bill. The Jesuit Conference will work with members of Congress to ensure that a final bill includes proper protections and legal relief for all undocumented immigrants.

The Society of Jesus' work with migrants on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border provides us with an important perspective on border security provisions within the bill. Therefore, while we are encouraged by many elements of this bill, we want to ensure proper oversight of immigration enforcement authorities, respect for the due process rights of immigrants, and safe and humane deportation regulations. Additionally, any pathway to citizenship must be realistic and reasonable in light of the social and economic realities faced by immigrants.

Fr. Thomas P. Greene, Secretary for Social and International Ministries at the U.S. Jesuit Conference greeted the Senate bill with approval while cautioning that it will take time to study the bill and clarify its enforcement and eligibility provisions: "We are encouraged by the bill and this first step towards comprehensive immigration reform. However, we need time to assess its provisions and ensure that the pathway to citizenship is indeed accessible to the millions of undocumented immigrants living and working in our midst."



## National Council of Jewish Women

National Council of Jewish Women

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### **NCJW Applauds Release of Bipartisan Immigration Reform Bill**

April 17, 2013 Washington, DC – The National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) congratulates the bipartisan group of 8 US senators who early this morning released the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act of 2013, a comprehensive bill to reform our immigration laws. NCJW CEO Nancy K. Kaufman released the following statement:

“NCJW commends the group of 8 US senators who have introduced a groundbreaking immigration bill after months of deliberation. Although it isn’t perfect, this legislation is an historic step towards addressing our nation’s broken immigration system. It is also an example of much-needed bipartisan cooperation in confronting our nation’s challenges, and for that we congratulate the senators and their staff.

“The bill is a good starting point for the dialogue necessary to overhaul our nation’s broken immigration system with the goal of achieving just, humane and comprehensive reform. We are pleased to see many of its provisions. Its landmark path to citizenship will enable the 11 million undocumented immigrants currently living in the US to emerge from the shadows of our society, and we applaud provisions that expedite citizenship for DREAMers and provide protections for temporary workers.

“However, we are concerned that burdensome fines and requirements for permanent residence and citizenship could prevent many immigrants from participating, and we hope improvements will be made to allow newly legalized immigrants access to critical services including health and nutrition supports. Additionally, NCJW is disappointed by the exclusion of LGBT people from the definition of family – a reminder of ongoing discrimination against this community.

“At this critical juncture, we must remember that immigration reform is about families. Despite provisions to ease applicant backlogs and reduce wait times in the family visa program, we object to proposals that would curtail eligibility and limit the promise of family unity.

“We are heartened at the progress the Senate bill represents, and again congratulate the “Gang of 8” for their perseverance in developing this comprehensive proposal. NCJW pledges to work with members of Congress and coalition partners on this critical issue to achieve just, humane and comprehensive immigration law that reflects our shared values as Americans.”

The [National Council of Jewish Women](#) (NCJW) is a grassroots organization of volunteers and advocates who turn progressive ideals into action. Inspired by Jewish values, NCJW strives for social justice by improving the quality of life for women, children, and families and by safeguarding individual rights and freedoms. Since its founding in 1893, NCJW has worked for immigrant communities in the US and continues to advocate for just and humane immigrant policies.

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## Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service

### S.744 Offers Historic and Bipartisan Progress on Immigration Reform

**WASHINGTON, D.C. April 17, 2013** — Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS) welcomes the introduction of S.744, particularly the way this new Senate bill embodies bipartisan agreement on basic improvements that LIRS has long championed for welcoming newcomers to the United States.

“We’re thrilled that S.744 shows bipartisan agreement on fundamental improvements to America’s immigration process that LIRS has long advocated,” said LIRS President and CEO Linda Hartke. “The majority of Americans are calling for immigration reform that keeps families together and offers a roadmap to earned citizenship – because family unity is vital to our congregations and communities, and because this reform is smart for our economy and our country.”

“It’s no coincidence that 40 Lutheran leaders from across the country were on Capitol Hill this week calling for passage of a bill that creates a [fair and humane immigration system](#),” said Hartke. “Although we’re still analyzing S.744, we are glad that Senate leadership has taken heed of their call for action. Now we’re urging the House of Representatives to show bipartisan leadership like that in the Senate.”

S.744, the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act, aligns with the [LIRS Principles for Comprehensive Immigration Reform](#) as follows:

***Principle 1.*** *Provide an earned pathway to lawful permanent residency and eventual citizenship for undocumented immigrants and their families.* We are overall quite pleased with the creation of a process for undocumented immigrants to eventually earn citizenship in the country they consider home. This pathway towards citizenship must be accessible and fairly adjudicated, and this bill is a positive step towards that outcome.

***Principle 2.*** *Ensure humane and just enforcement of immigration laws by reducing use of immigration detention and expanding community support programs.* This bill improves access to justice for migrants and refugees navigating our immigration system. LIRS welcomes the increased provision of counsel and legal protections for unaccompanied migrant children and individuals facing deportation and detention. The bill also recognizes the promise of community based alternatives to detention, which LIRS has begun to cultivate nationwide, as a cost-effective and humane way to promote integration and make our communities stronger.

***Principle 3.*** *Protect families from separation and ensure an adequate supply of visas for families seeking to reunite.* LIRS remains committed to family unity for all migrants and refugees. We are encouraged by improvements for refugee children in need of protection and children separated from their parents by immigration detention and deportation. Although this bill does improve the options for family unity for many immigrants who have been seeking to reunite with loved ones in the United States for years, LIRS is disappointed by the proposed elimination of immigration channels for brothers and sisters of American citizens.

***Principle 4.*** *Provide adequate resources and protections to ensure the successful integration of refugees, asylees, survivors of torture and trafficking, unaccompanied minors, and other vulnerable migrants.* We welcome the bill’s recognition of how essential integration is for new Americans and their communities. Especially exciting are improvements that would better protect refugees, asylum seekers, stateless individuals, and migrants who are victims of serious crimes. These changes bring America closer to fulfilling humanitarian obligations to those seeking a safe haven and new life, while also improving efficiencies in current immigration processes.

***Principle 5.*** *Ensure the protection of U.S. citizen and migrant workers.* The bipartisan bill makes changes that would treat workers fairly and recognize the contributions of immigrant workers to this country.

[LIRS](#) is nationally recognized for advocating on behalf of refugees, asylum seekers, unaccompanied children, immigrants in detention, families fractured by migration and other vulnerable populations, and for serving migrants through 60 grassroots legal and social service partners across the United States.

## **HIAS WELCOMES "GANG OF EIGHT" IMMIGRATION REFORM LEGISLATION, CELEBRATES PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS TO REFUGEE AND ASYLUM LAWS**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact: Roberta Elliott, [\(212\) 613-1350](tel:2126131350)**

**(New York, NY – April 17, 2013)** – HIAS, the global Jewish nonprofit that protects refugees, welcomes today's introduction of bipartisan legislation in the Senate to reform the U.S. immigration system. Mark Hetfield, HIAS' President and CEO, said, "We are thrilled that this legislation was introduced and especially pleased that there are several humanitarian fixes for refugees and asylum seekers in this new legislation, which offers a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants, modernizes the immigration system, strengthens our economy, protects families, treats American and immigrant workers fairly, and begins to address the broken refugee and asylum systems. While the bill may not be perfect, it is a comprehensive and common sense approach to immigration reform."

Central to the organization's focus on refugee protection, HIAS is grateful to the "Gang of 8" – Senators Schumer (D-NY), McCain (R-AZ), Durbin (D-IL), Graham (R-SC), Menendez (D-NJ), Rubio (R-FL), Bennet (D-CO), and Flake (R-AZ) – for including provisions such as repealing the one-year filing deadline that caused so much unnecessary hardship for asylum seekers, eliminating provisions that needlessly separate asylees and refugees from close family members, expediting the process for granting asylum to asylum seekers in expedited proceedings that clearly show they have been or will be persecuted, and permitting qualified stateless individuals to apply for green cards. Another important provision makes refugee adjudications abroad more fair and efficient.

The bill would also streamline the process for admitting certain high risk refugee groups, including Jews and other religious minorities fleeing Iran. The Senate bill would preserve Senator Lautenberg's legacy of protecting persecuted religious minorities while creating new opportunities for other persecuted groups – with an emphasis on those seeking religious freedom – to receive protection. HIAS is particularly grateful to Senator Lautenberg for his years of unwavering commitment and leadership in protecting Jews and others who face persecution for their beliefs, and thanks the Senator for ensuring that protecting religious minorities from Iran and other countries that restrict religious freedom is a priority for immigration reform.

Other much needed proposed changes include increases in immigration court personnel and more training for judges and other staff, access to counsel for vulnerable populations to improve efficiency of courts, and "alternatives to detention" programs. The bill would also establish a pilot program to promote immigrant integration at state and local levels, which is in line with the recommendations put forth in HIAS' recent report, [\*Resettlement at Risk: Meeting Emerging Challenges to Refugee Resettlement in Local Communities\*](#).

Hetfield added, "As an organization deeply rooted in Jewish values, we support policies that fulfill the Torah's mandate to 'welcome the stranger.' We are grateful for the hard work of these Senators and their staff and their acknowledgement that comprehensive immigration reform presents an opportunity to fix a broken system that adversely affects immigrants in the U.S., including refugees and asylum seekers. We look forward to working with legislators and immigrant communities to ensure that our immigration system is reformed in a way that honors our American and Jewish values."

**HIAS is the global Jewish nonprofit organization that protects refugees – including women and children, and ethnic, religious, and sexual minorities – whose lives are in danger for being who they are. Guided by our Jewish values and history, HIAS works in 15 countries on five continents, helping refugees rebuild their lives in safety and advocating to ensure that all refugees and displaced people are treated with dignity. Visit [HIAS.org](http://HIAS.org) to learn more.**

## **AJC Welcomes Introduction of Comprehensive Immigration Reform Legislation**

April 17, 2013 – Washington – AJC applauds introduction in the U.S. Senate of the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act of 2013 (S.744). This bipartisan, comprehensive immigration reform legislation offers a roadmap to citizenship for 11 million prospective new Americans.

“The sponsoring Senators have recognized the key role of immigrants in bolstering America's economic strength and democratic pluralism,” said Richard Foltin, AJC Director of National and Legislative Affairs. “AJC looks forward to working with Congress as this legislation moves forward, and to ultimately enacting legislation that will permanently fix America’s broken immigration system.”

The proposed bill creates a much-needed path to earned citizenship for undocumented immigrants in the United States, offers critical reforms to the legal immigration process, and includes measures that will strengthen national security.

AJC finds the proposed reforms to the family and employment visa categories encouraging, and looks forward to continuing to improve these legal immigration categories in the bill. “Just as we, as Americans, have been able to build our lives alongside our brothers, sisters and children, we must preserve that opportunity for new Americans today,” said Foltin. But he expressed concern over proposed cuts to the visa categories for siblings and married adult children over the age of 31 who seek to reunite with their families.

“Regardless of their age or marital status, siblings and children are integral to the American family unit,” said Foltin. “Allowing immigrant families to more easily reunite with their loved ones will enhance a strong social fabric in our communities.”

Foltin praised the bill’s provisions for employment visa categories, saying “they will help to ensure that American businesses have access to labor with needed skill sets to compete in a global economy.” The proposed measure would make it easier for high- and low-skilled immigrant workers to come to the U.S., as well as establish a viable program for temporary immigrant workers and foreign graduate students in science, technology, engineering and math.

While endorsing the need for immigration reform legislation to address issues of border security and enforcement, Foltin cautioned that enforcement enhancements should not hinder the path to legalization for those currently living in the shadows. The bill includes two stages of enforcement and border security operations, and benchmarks that must first be met before eligible individuals would be permitted to adjust their status to become permanent residents and, ultimately, U.S. citizens.

“There is no reason to link a pathway to earned citizenship for hardworking immigrants already living in the United States to border security benchmarks,” Foltin said.

Since its founding in 1906, AJC has been outspoken in support of fair and generous immigration policies, characterized by the rule of law. As American Jews, we recall how our parents and grandparents made their way to this country seeking a better life, and know that we have prospered in and contributed to this country. That same opportunity should be available for others.

Comprehensive immigration reform will strengthen America’s global competitiveness and enhance our national security, as well as allow hard-working immigrants an opportunity to succeed in the United States, for themselves and for future generations.

**DATE:** April 17, 2013

**FROM:** Norma Montenegro Flynn

**O:** 202-541-3202

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**BISHOPS' MIGRATION CHAIR WELCOMES INTRODUCTION OF IMMIGRATION PROPOSAL; PLEDGES TO WORK SO FINAL BILL UPHOLDS BASIC RIGHTS, DIGNITY**

*Commends senators for leadership  
Sees opportunity to improve on initial efforts  
Urges respect for migrants' human rights, dignity*

WASHINGTON—The introduction of U.S. Senate bipartisan legislation to reform the U.S. immigration system was welcomed by Archbishop José H. Gomez of Los Angeles, chairman of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) Committee on Migration, April 17. Archbishop Gomez also pledged that the U.S. bishops would carefully examine the legislation and work with Congress to ensure that any final measure respects the basic human rights and dignity of migrants.

"I welcome the introduction of legislation today in the U.S. Senate," Archbishop Gomez said. "The U.S. bishops look forward to carefully examining the legislation and working with Congress to fashion a final bill that respects the basic human rights and dignity of newcomers to our land—migrants, refugees, and other vulnerable populations."

Archbishop Gomez commended the so-called "Gang of Eight" senators for their leadership on the issue. He also said that once it has completed its review of the voluminous bill, the USCCB may seek improvements upon the proposed legislation, consistent with principles for reform laid out for decades by the bishops' conference.

"I commend the Senators who have introduced this bipartisan bill, as they have shown leadership and courage in this effort," he said. "We will look to work constructively with them and other members of Congress to improve upon their proposal, should such improvements prove necessary, so that any final bill creates an immigration system that restores the rule of law in a humane and just manner."

In their 2003 pastoral letter, "Strangers No Longer: Together on the Journey of Hope," the U.S. bishops outlined several goals for immigration reform, which include:

- A path to citizenship for the undocumented that is achievable, set within a reasonable time frame and includes the maximum number of persons;

- The protection and enhancement of the family-based immigration system—based on the union of a husband and a wife and their children—including the reduction of backlogs and the shortening of waiting times;
- A program which allows low-skilled migrant workers to enter and work in the United States legally and safely, includes appropriate wage and worker protections, allows for family unity, and provides workers the option to apply for permanent residency and eventual citizenship;
- The restoration of due process protections for immigrants removed by the 1996 Illegal Immigrant Responsibility and Immigration Reform Act;
- The adoption of policies which address the root causes, or push factors, of irregular migration, such as persecution and the absence of living wage jobs in sending communities.
- The protection of other vulnerable populations, including refugees, asylum-seekers, and unaccompanied children.

Archbishop Gomez withheld comment on the specific details of the new legislation until the USCCB has analyzed its provisions.

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Editors: USCCB has scheduled a telephonic press conference for April 22 at 1 p.m. to respond to the details of the legislation and to release a new survey of Catholics on immigration reform. For more information, contact Norma Montenegro Flynn at [nmontenegro@usccb.org](mailto:nmontenegro@usccb.org).

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Keywords: migrants, immigrants, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, USCCB, Committee on Migration, Congress, Archbishop José Gomez, immigration reform, *Strangers No Longer: Together on the Journey of Hope*, refugees, asylum seekers, unaccompanied children

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## **CWS Statement on the Border Security, Economic Opportunity & Immigration Modernization Act**

CWS applauds the introduction of S.744, the *Border Security, Economic Opportunity and Immigration Modernization Act*, and thanks Senators Bennet (D-CO), Durbin (D-IL), Flake (R-AZ), Graham (R-SC), McCain (R-AZ), Menendez (D-NJ), Rubio (R-FL), and Schumer (D-NY) for their leadership and dedication to shepherding this bill through the process of compromise and bipartisan agreement. The CWS network of 37 protestant denominations and 36 refugee resettlement offices across the country welcomes newcomers by helping them integrate into their new communities. We advocate for immigration reform not only because it is the right thing to do to improve the lives of our immigrant community members, but also because it is the smart thing to do for our economy and country as a whole. There are many provisions in S.744 for which CWS has advocated for years and is pleased to see included. However, there are some provisions we oppose, which we will seek to change as we continue work with the Senate through the legislative process to improve the bill and see that humane immigration reform is enacted.

### CWS supports the path to citizenship, but urges a shorter time frame and expanded eligibility

This legislation would create a process by which individuals who entered the U.S. before January 1, 2012 could apply for "Registered Provisional Immigrant" (RPI) status, paying a \$500 fine and processing fees, which would allow them to work and travel legally. After six years, individuals would have to renew their status, and after 10 years in RPI status individuals could apply for lawful permanent resident (LPR) status if they met eligibility criteria and paid another \$500 fine and processing fees. Then, after three years in LPR status, individuals could apply for U.S. citizenship, paying a final \$1,000 fine and processing fees. Individuals who have been deported for reasons only pertaining to their legal status could apply for parole to re-enter the United States. While it will take the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) approximately one year to put the path to citizenship process in place, CWS is supportive that the bill would put in place a stay-of-removal so that individuals do not have to fear being deported. We are hopeful that, as allowed for in the legislation, DHS will extend the application period from the initial one year to the full two and a half years, so that everyone who might qualify has an opportunity to apply.

CWS is pleased to see that individuals who qualify for the pathway to citizenship could include their spouse and children (under 21) in their application, so that families can go through this process together. We also welcome provisions to allow individuals who have been in the United States with Temporary Protect Status, Deferred Enforced Departure, or another legal status for more than ten years to immediately apply for LPR status and apply for citizenship after three years. Another positive provision is that DREAMers – defined by this bill as individuals of any age who entered the U.S. before they turned 16 – and agricultural workers would have a shortened process, where they could apply for LPR status after only five years in RPI status, and then immediately apply for citizenship, with additional streamlined procedure for recipients of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals.

However, CWS urges the Senate to reduce the length of time that individuals have to wait to fully pursue citizenship, from 13 years to 5-8 years instead. We would like the bill to provide additional options for individuals who entered the U.S. after January 1, 2012, and to allow those going through this process to have access to health care and other services. Because it is important to CWS that the pathway to citizenship be workable, timely, and inclusive, we will work during the amendment process to advocate for meaningful waivers to eligibility criteria, including for individuals whose violations would be considered as misdemeanors, but since they are not U.S. citizens, have been unfairly classified as 'aggravated felonies'.

### CWS supports improvements for refugees, asylum seekers and integration assistance

Many provisions in this legislation would improve the lives of refugees resettled in the U.S. and help those who are fleeing persecution seek asylum. If this legislation is enacted, individuals fleeing persecution would no longer be barred from protection if they apply for asylum more than one year after they enter the United States, and those who have previously been denied solely based on this arbitrary one-year deadline would be able to re-open their case for two years following the enactment of this bill. The legislation would also improve the efficiency of the asylum process and improve due process in the refugee resettlement program. We support these provisions, as well as others that would enable the spouse or child of a refugee to remain reunited with their own child (under 21) when they accompany or follow to join the principle refugee applicant, and allow a refugee's spouse or child (under 21) to continue to apply for refugee status in the unfortunate circumstance that the principle refugee applicant dies while their spouse or child's application is in process.

The Senate bill would improve the efficiency and process of the Iraqi special immigrant visa application process, and allow the Administration to designate groups of humanitarian concern who share common characteristics that identify them as targets of persecution as eligible for resettlement. The bill would allow the administration to grant conditional lawful status to certain stateless persons in the U.S. with an ability to apply

for LPR. Improvements would also be made to help victims of crimes and children separated from their families. If enacted, S.744 would increase due process and legal orientation for immigrants in detention, require DHS to inform individuals of their rights, mandate that contracted facilities comply with DHS regulations, and expand the use of alternatives to detention.

CWS also appreciates the bill's emphasis on the renamed "Office of Citizenship and New Americans" to provide support local, state and federal entities to help immigrants integrate, and the establishment of a public-private partnership through the U.S. Citizenship Foundation to ensure immigrants can attain the knowledge and language skills necessary to fully integrate and build their lives in the United States.

CWS is opposed to the bill's provisions to eliminate and compromise family visa categories

CWS is strongly opposed to the bill's provisions that would eliminate, 18 months after enactment, the ability for U.S. citizens to sponsor their brothers, sisters, and children who are married and over the age of 30. We will seek to restore both of these categories in the amendment process, as well as advocate for U.S. Citizens and greencard holders to be able to reunite with their same-sex partner. While the elimination of the sibling category and the age-limit on married adult children may be balanced somewhat by provisions in the new merit-based system, we remain concerned about the impact that the emphasis on employment, education and English fluency could have on women, the poor, and individuals from non-English-speaking countries who seek to reunite with family members.

This bill, however, does include many positive provisions that facilitate and promote family unity. CWS supports the bill's provisions to recapture unused visas for the following fiscal year, and categorize spouses and children (under 21) of green card holders as "immediate relatives" to reunite families and prevent future backlogs. We also applaud the bill for allowing the parents of U.S. citizens to bring their minor children with them when they immigrate to the U.S.; permitting families to stay together in the U.S. while some family members await greencards; improving the process for stepchildren (under 21), widows, orphans, separated children, and fiancés of greencard holders and their children; and enhancing the ability of family members, including siblings and married adult children over 30, to visit the U.S. for up to 60 days per year. CWS also applauds the increase in per-country caps that will help reduce the longest wait times for family reunification, expedited processing of family backlogs within ten years, and allowing employment-based immigrants to sponsor their family members without counting against numerical limits. The bill would also help prevent the separation of families by allowing immigration judges and DHS to take into account the hardship that an immigrant's U.S. citizen or LPR parent, spouse or child would experience should an individual be deported or barred from entry.

CWS is against the pathway to citizenship being contingent on border security "triggers"

CWS is opposed to the Senate bill's making the pathway to citizenship contingent upon border and interior enforcement 'triggers.' Within six months of enactment, DHS would have to submit border security plans to achieve 90% effectiveness in apprehensions and returns through additional fencing, surveillance, technology including unmanned and unarmed aerial systems, and additional border patrol and customs agents. This plan must be submitted before the individuals can apply for RPI status. Then, before individuals with RPI status can adjust to LPR status, DHS must certify that both plans have been implemented, an employment verification system is being used by all mandated employers, and an electronic entry/exit system is fully operational.

CWS strongly holds that these provisions, as well as the requirement that the visa backlog be cleared, should not be used to delay the pathway to citizenship, especially as full implementation of the e-verify system will be nearly impossible to achieve. As enforcement provisions will not impact individuals who are already in the U.S., deliberately stalling the pathway to citizenship by making it arbitrarily lengthy and contingent on enforcement 'triggers' is nonsensical and makes for poor public policy.

In addition to our opposition to 'triggers,' CWS is opposed to the bill's provisions to send the National Guard to the border and spend an additional \$4.5 billion on border and interior enforcement – in addition to the \$18 billion already spend in Fiscal Year 2012 alone – given the impact this would have on border communities, vulnerable migrants, religious sites, and the environment. However, we are encouraged by the requirement that DHS collect data and put in place regulations to prevent and stop racial profiling, the creation of a DHS Border Oversight Task Force, provisions to stop lethal force by border agents, the designation of a DHS ombudsman on human rights, and the creation of DHS border community liaisons in every Border Patrol Sector.

CWS is committed to working with members of both the Senate and House to improve and enact this legislation that would greatly improve the lives of so many immigrants and community members. We urge all Senators to support a timely process to consider, improve, and enact this bill.





## **Submitted to the Senate Judiciary Committee Regarding the Hearing on Comprehensive Immigration Reform Legislation**

**April 19, 2013**

HIAS, the global migration agency of the American Jewish community, welcomes the opportunity to submit written testimony regarding reforming our country's immigration system. Throughout its more than 130-year history, HIAS has advocated for just and compassionate immigration laws that honor America's tradition as a welcoming nation. HIAS is also a national resettlement agency and an international refugee services organization with programs around the world.

HIAS welcomes S. 744, which offers a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants, modernizes the immigration system, strengthens our economy, protects families, and treats American and immigrant workers fairly. In particular, HIAS is grateful to see the pathway to citizenship, inclusion of the DREAM Act for undocumented youth, provisions that prioritize immigrant integration and create a pilot program to promote integration at the state and local level, provisions that keep families together, "alternative to detention" programs, increased resources for immigration courts personnel and more training for judges and their staff, and broader exemptions from the English language requirements for naturalization for elderly immigrants.

As the Judiciary Committee meets to consider immigration reform legislation, HIAS urges Congress not to neglect those who come to this country as humanitarian immigrants. HIAS is proud of the United States' strong history of protecting and welcoming victims of persecution, and the U.S. refugee resettlement program reflects our nation's highest values. Refugees and asylees who are given the opportunity to rebuild their lives in the U.S. contribute to the rich diversity and economic vibrancy of communities across the country. The humanitarian act of saving and resettling refugees not only benefits the refugees themselves, but the communities where they resettle and the country as a whole. HIAS believes that in order to ensure that local communities remain welcoming to refugees we need to update our outdated laws, reverse chronic underfunding, better prepare refugees for life in America, demonstrate the benefits of refugee resettlement, and – for the first time – create clear goals and a comprehensive approach for successful refugee integration.

HIAS is particularly encouraged that there are several humanitarian fixes for refugees and asylum seekers in S. 744. Repealing the one-year filing deadline that causes so much unnecessary hardship, eliminating provisions that needlessly separate asylees and refugees from close family members, expediting the process for granting asylum to asylum seekers in expedited proceedings that clearly show they have been or will be persecuted, permitting qualified stateless individuals to apply for green cards, and modifying the procedures for refugee adjudications abroad will make the refugee and asylum systems more efficient and humane.

The bill would also streamline the process for admitting certain high risk refugee groups, including Jews and other religious minorities fleeing Iran. The Senate bill would preserve Senator Lautenberg's legacy of protecting persecuted religious minorities while creating new opportunities for other persecuted groups – with an emphasis on those seeking religious freedom – to receive protection.

As Jews, we support policies that fulfill the Torah's mandate to 'welcome the stranger,' as we know that effective immigration policies have often made the difference between life and death, between oppression and the opportunity for success. It is crucial that we utilize this opportunity to provide safe haven to the persecuted. HIAS looks forward to working with legislators and immigrant communities to revamp and revitalize our country's current immigration system in a way that honors our American and Jewish values.





# Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service

## Statement of Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service

### Senate Committee on the Judiciary

#### April 19, 2013: “Hearing on Comprehensive Immigration Reform Legislation”

Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS), the national organization established by Lutheran churches in the United States to serve uprooted people, welcomes the introduction of S.744. LIRS is particularly grateful for the way this new Senate bill embodies bipartisan agreement on basic improvements that LIRS has long championed for welcoming newcomers to the United States.

“We’re thrilled that S.744 shows bipartisan agreement on fundamental improvements to America’s immigration process that LIRS has long advocated,” said LIRS President and CEO Linda Hartke. “The majority of Americans are calling for immigration reform that keeps families together and offers a roadmap to earned citizenship – because family unity is vital to our congregations and communities, and because this reform is smart for our economy and our country.”

“It’s no coincidence that 40 Lutheran leaders from across the country were on Capitol Hill this week calling for passage of a bill that creates a fair and humane immigration system,” said Hartke. “Although we’re still analyzing S.744, we are glad that Senate leadership has taken heed of their call for action. Now we’re urging the House of Representatives to show bipartisan leadership like that in the Senate.”

S.744, the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act, aligns with the LIRS Principles for Comprehensive Immigration Reform as follows:

***Principle 1. Provide an earned pathway to lawful permanent residency and eventual citizenship for undocumented immigrants and their families.***

We are overall quite pleased with the creation of a process for undocumented immigrants to eventually earn citizenship in the country they consider home. This pathway towards citizenship must be accessible and fairly adjudicated, and this bill is a positive step towards that outcome.

***Principle 2. Ensure humane and just enforcement of immigration laws by reducing use of immigration detention and expanding community support programs.***

This bill improves access to justice for migrants and refugees navigating our immigration system. LIRS welcomes the increased provision of counsel and legal protections for unaccompanied migrant children and individuals facing deportation and detention. The bill also

recognizes the promise of community based alternatives to detention, which LIRS has begun to cultivate nationwide, as a cost-effective and humane way to promote integration and make our communities stronger.

***Principle 3. Protect families from separation and ensure an adequate supply of visas for families seeking to reunite. LIRS remains committed to family unity for all migrants and refugees.***

We are encouraged by improvements for refugee children in need of protection and children separated from their parents by immigration detention and deportation. Although this bill does improve the options for family unity for many immigrants who have been seeking to reunite with loved ones in the United States for years, LIRS is disappointed by the creation of an age cap on married children hoping to reunite with their U.S. citizen parents and the proposed elimination of immigration channels for brothers and sisters of American citizens.

***Principle 4. Provide adequate resources and protections to ensure the successful integration of refugees, asylees, survivors of torture and trafficking, unaccompanied minors, and other vulnerable migrants.***

We welcome the bill's recognition of how essential integration is for new Americans and their communities. Especially exciting are improvements that would better protect refugees, asylum seekers, stateless individuals, and migrants who are victims of serious crimes. These changes bring America closer to fulfilling humanitarian obligations to those seeking a safe haven and new life, while also improving efficiencies in current immigration processes.

***Principle 5. Ensure the protection of U.S. citizen and migrant workers.***

The bipartisan bill makes changes that would treat workers fairly and recognize the contributions of immigrant workers to this country.

LIRS is nationally recognized for its leadership in advocating on behalf of refugees, asylum seekers, unaccompanied children, immigrants in detention, families fractured by migration and other vulnerable populations, and for serving migrants through over 60 grassroots legal and social service partners across the United States.



OFFICE OF  
IMMIGRATION ISSUES  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)

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## Addressing immigration reform

### A STATEMENT FROM GRADYE PARSONS, STATED CLERK OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

APRIL 18, 2013

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While the press conference for the release of the Gang of 8—a bipartisan group of eight Senators who were appointed to craft a proposal for comprehensive immigration reform—to officially introduce their proposed legislation\* to the American public has been postponed due to the tragedy in Boston on Monday, an outline of the “Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act of 2013” has been released.

The Gang of 8 has negotiated and compromised to come to agreement on this proposed legislation. Their cooperation and hard work to fix our broken immigration system is commendable. We applaud their efforts and join them in the call that this is the time for reform. This is the year for justice and a commonsense immigration plan.

The 17-page memo that was released leaves many questions unanswered, and of those provisions that are explained, many are not perfect. However, it is a start toward the modernization of our immigration laws. The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has set forth elements that should be incorporated into a comprehensive and fair reform. Those elements include a pathway to citizenship for the 11 million people now living and working in the U.S. without authorization, eliminating the backlogs in family and employment-based immigration, maintaining family unity as the foundation of our immigration policy, creating a commonsense workable approach to future flow, and maintenance of our nation’s borders in a way that respects due process and human dignity. These are just a few of the elements endorsed by the General Assembly, others can be viewed at our [website](#).

Some of these goals are shared in the Senators’ memo but the status of others is unclear. In the coming weeks the staff of the office of Immigration Issues will work with our interfaith partners to analyze the legislation. Because staff will be sharing details as they come to light, I invite you to monitor our [website](#).

Now we begin the hard work of mobilizing our communities and working to have our voice heard in Congress. Many Presbyterians will be directly impacted by this legislation and it is up to us to ensure that we improve the bill and that amendments that will undermine the bill’s success are not added. You can help by educating yourself and your community about the need for reform and the plight of our sisters and brothers who suffer most directly the effects of an unjust immigration system.

Join me in the prayer for a reform that recognizes the contributions of the many aspiring citizens who are Americans in every way but on paper. Then join the work to ensure that our prayer is heard by Congress. Our church and country have been built by new immigrants who have worked in partnership with those already here. We want to continue this legacy so that others may be blessed as we have.

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**April 17, 2013**

Contact: Cathy Junia  
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**IWJ Welcomes Senate Immigration Bill**  
***Will continue to work for strong worker protections***

**National** – Interfaith Worker Justice (IWJ) welcomes the Senate “Gang of 8” immigration reform bill as an important and historic first step towards real and humane reform.

“Our elected officials have a great opportunity –and responsibility - to overhaul a broken system that tears families apart and leaves workers vulnerable to abuse,” IWJ Executive Director Kim Bobo said. “Passing comprehensive immigration reform and creating a path to citizenship is clearly the way to “welcome the immigrant” and “love our neighbor.”

The proposed “Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act of 2013” (SB 744) offers a roadmap to citizenship that includes thousands of families torn apart by deportation. The proposal also includes a temporary worker program that extends workplace protection to immigrant workers.

“It’s not a perfect bill, but it’s an important first step and we will continue to push for stronger worker protections,” Bobo said. “Now is the time for all of us to put our faith into action, our feet to the street, and advocate policies that reflect our values of compassion and justice.”

IWJ has a network of more than 27 worker centers around the country that serve as drop-in centers for low-wage workers who experience injustice at the workplace. Many of these centers routinely see wage theft cases that involve immigrant workers.

“Immigrant workers who are forced to live the shadows are more vulnerable to abuse. When we allow immigrant workers to be exploited, we lower the standards for all workers,” Bobo said. “Reforming our immigration system is morally imperative and fundamental to restoring justice and equity in the workplace and the community.”

IWJ is a member of the Interfaith Immigrant Coalition, a coalition of 35 national faith-based organizations calling for a reform of our broken immigration system, and the Alliance for Citizenship.

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*Interfaith Worker Justice has been organizing, educating and advocating at the intersection of work and faith since 1996. There are 70 affiliated organizations in the*



FOR RELEASE: April 17, 2013

CONTACT: Stephanie Niedringhaus, 202-347-9797 x224, [sniedringhaus@networklobby.org](mailto:sniedringhaus@networklobby.org)

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## NETWORK Responds to New Immigration Bill

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**Washington DC:** *NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice lobby, today issued the following statement about the new immigration bill:*

We are pleased that the highly anticipated immigration bill has been finally introduced in Congress, and we want to publicly thank the Senate's bipartisan "Gang of Eight," who are responsible (Sens. Charles Schumer, Lindsey Graham, John McCain, Jeff Flake, Dick Durbin, Marco Rubio, Bob Menendez and Michael Bennet.) It is extremely gratifying that they were able to come together to make this happen, especially at a time of such partisan rancor. We are grateful that they were able to remain focused on the task of addressing justice for our eleven million brothers and sisters who presently live in the shadows.

Family unity and diversity remain two key issues for NETWORK, and we intend to review the bill's wording about these issues carefully. We look forward to working with Congress to ensure that the final version includes a reasonable roadmap to citizenship, reunification of families, and the added value of diversity in our nation.

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*NETWORK—a Catholic leader in the global movement for justice and peace—educates, organizes and lobbies for economic and social transformation. Founded in 1971 by 47 Catholic sisters, NETWORK is supported by thousands of groups and individuals committed to working for social and economic justice. For more information, see [www.networklobby.org](http://www.networklobby.org).*



## Reform Movement Welcomes Introduction of Senate Immigration Bill

*Laser: "A path to citizenship for the 11 million undocumented immigrants here today, a renewed commitment to clearing systemic backlogs, a plan for processing future flow of immigrants, and a reasonable approach to enforcement are all cornerstones of the Reform Movement's immigration priorities, and we are pleased to see such policies reflected in today's legislation."*

Contact: Sean Thibault or Sarah Krinsky  
202.387.2800 | [news@rac.org](mailto:news@rac.org)

Washington, D.C., April 17, 2013 - In response to the introduction of the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act of 2013, Rachel Laser, Deputy Director of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, issued the following statement:

"As an historic supporter of comprehensive immigration policies, the Reform Movement enthusiastically welcomes this momentous step toward the long-overdue passage of reform legislation. We applaud the 'Gang of 8' for their tireless work on this crucial issue, and commend their bipartisanship on a topic that so intimately touches the lives of Americans of all ages, races, nationalities, and political parties.

We are encouraged by many of the key provisions in the Senate bill released this morning. A path to citizenship for the 11 million undocumented immigrants here today, a renewed commitment to clearing systemic backlogs, a plan for processing future flow of immigrants, and a reasonable approach to enforcement are all cornerstones of the Reform Movement's immigration priorities, and we are pleased to see such policies reflected in today's legislation.

We understand the nature of compromise and balance, and as such celebrate this bipartisan bill. At the same time, we know we can do better, and call upon our elected representatives to continue to strengthen this bill and to work to ensure justice for our nation's immigrants. That includes justice for all family members, including brothers, sisters, and spouses, of all genders; justice for those who must wait too long to become citizens; and justice for contributing members of our economy and society who are denied basic rights and benefits.

Jewish tradition teaches, 'in a place where there is no humanity, strive to be human' (Pirkei Avot 2:6). Today's bill is an important start toward restoring humanity in our immigration system and throughout our nation. We welcome this legislation, and look forward to continuing to work with Congress on its development in the weeks and months to come."

Read

more: [http://rac.org/Articles/index.cfm?id=23157&pge\\_prg\\_id=16390&pge\\_id=2541#ixzz2QqV5IJIS](http://rac.org/Articles/index.cfm?id=23157&pge_prg_id=16390&pge_id=2541#ixzz2QqV5IJIS)

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**SISTERS OF MERCY ENCOURAGED BY SENATE IMMIGRATION BILL,  
OPPOSE FURTHER BORDER MILITARIZATION**

**April 18, 2013** – While Sisters of Mercy applaud the bi-partisan effort to resolve the broken immigration system with practical solutions, the newly introduced senate immigration bill includes a pathway to citizenship that is dependent on border enforcement triggers and is troubling in that it could continually delay a pathway altogether. Though supportive of many aspects of the bill, the Sisters of Mercy urge elected officials to recognize and affirm that the U.S. border is more secure than ever. The U.S. government has met or surpassed every single border security benchmark within the proposed 2007 Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act. And the Sisters of Mercy remain strong in their stance that Congress should reevaluate continued militarization of the border.

A 180-year history of ministering to and with immigrants in schools, hospitals, parishes and social service centers provides the Sisters of Mercy with an understanding of just how important yesterday's bill is. Just and humane immigration reform is a Critical Concern of Mercy, based on their commitment to serve those who are poor, sick and uneducated. Their response is based on witnessing first-hand the suffering and hardships faced by immigrants, especially undocumented immigrants.

With a presence throughout Latin America and the Philippines, the Sisters of Mercy are keenly aware of the factors that push women, men and children to leave their countries. "We call on the President and Congress to examine the root causes of immigration, says Sister Anne Curtis of the Mercy Institute Leadership Team (ILT) "particularly policies that contribute to poverty and violence and force families to flee their homes in search of economic and physical security," she explained. "We will continue to support positive aspects of the bipartisan immigration bill, while encouraging a more expedited welcome of our immigrant sisters and brothers and sustaining advocacy against further militarization of the border."

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*The Sisters of Mercy – an international community of Roman Catholic women – dedicate their lives to God through vows of poverty, chastity, obedience and service. For more than 180 years,*

*motivated by the Gospel of Jesus and inspired by the spirit of their founder Catherine McAuley, the Sisters of Mercy have responded to the continually changing needs of the times.*

*Through prayer and service, the sisters address the causes and effects of violence, racism, degradation of the Earth and injustice to women and immigrants. The sisters sponsor and serve in more than 200 organizations that work with those in need in the U.S., Central and South America, Jamaica, Guam and the Philippines.*



# Franciscan Action Network

Transforming the World in the Spirit of St. Francis and St. Clare

3025 4<sup>th</sup> Street, N.E. • Washington, DC 20017 • 202-527-7575 • 1-888-364-3388 (toll free) • 202-527-7576 (fax)

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FOR REASE: APRIL 18, 2013

CONTACT: Marie Lucey, OSF, 202-527-7562, [lucey@franciscanaction.org](mailto:lucey@franciscanaction.org)

## FRANCISCAN ACTION NETWORK ENCOURAGED BY NEW IMMIGRATION BILL

Washington, DC: Franciscan Action Network (FAN), a collective Franciscan voice on U.S. public policy, thanks the bi-partisan group of Senators who labored for several months on a new immigration bill titled “Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act of 2013.” The bill offers hope that Congress can reach an agreement that respects the dignity of all immigrants in our country.

We especially welcome the inclusion of a path to citizenship, with a special provision for Dreamers, and several provisions which promote family unity. In our initial and incomplete assessment, FAN has several concerns about the legislation, including stringent and costly border enforcement measures, the very long path to citizenship, and the elimination of the family sibling category. However, we will continue to work with members of Congress toward a final bill that repairs our broken immigration system and sends a message of welcome to aspiring U.S. Americans. We commend the Senators who introduced the bill for their courage and leadership.

Franciscan Action Network was founded in 2007 to create a unified Franciscan voice for justice by working to transform United States public policy related to peacemaking, care for creation, poverty and human rights. See [www.franciscanaction.org](http://www.franciscanaction.org).





**For Immediate Release**

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## **New Immigration Bill Includes Support for Families and Workers, Yet Would Continue Key Failures of Current System**

### ***Quaker Group: Fair Path to Citizenship Must Reflect More Humane Principles***

**Philadelphia, PA (April 17, 2013)** - The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) finds the immigration bill introduced today a modest start on reform, due to provisions that address family unification and workers' rights and create a narrow path to citizenship for some immigrants. But much of the bill reproduces many of the current failed policies – making the overall bill a far cry from the just and humane reforms that immigrant communities, faith, labor and advocacy groups have been calling for.

“The Senate bill makes meaningful improvements for immigrants with temporary protected status, undocumented youth, and agricultural workers by providing a fast track to legal permanent residency. However, it would not end the current cruel, costly and inefficient system of detention and deportation, or the militarization of the border that has devastated communities on both sides of the border,” said Gabriel Camacho, director of AFSC’s Project Voice program in Cambridge MA, and Amy Gottlieb director of AFSC’s immigrants’ rights program in Newark NJ.

The bill not only doubles down on some failed policies. It also elevates them to the status of mandatory measurable triggers, including universal E-Verify, a 90 percent border ‘security’ metric, and a new entry-exit port system. It would waste billions on drones, costly high-tech gadgetry, additional fencing, and personnel.

One part of the bill does offer greater accountability and oversight of border enforcement, a long-standing demand by immigrant communities and their allies, including AFSC. It would establish a task force of border community stakeholders to evaluate and make recommendations regarding immigration policies along the border. Since 2010, the Border Patrol has claimed the lives of 20 unarmed civilians, and no official has been held accountable for these deaths. Federal agents seemingly operate with impunity, systematically violating the human rights and civil liberties of border residents.

The bill also includes the right of due process and worker protections under the mandatory E-Verify provision. However, E-Verify and other employment verification programs remain highly flawed, problematic and costly.

“We are gratified to see that the bill does begin an important conversation about future flows of workers to the U.S., by identifying significant labor and wage standard protections and opportunities to apply for permanent status and supporting family unity,” said Gabriel.

“The bill strives to keep families together by restructuring a fundamentally flawed system with long

waiting periods into one that provides new opportunities for people to migrate lawfully. Still, because of limitations in the bill, there may be many who continue to live in the shadows, subject to the cruelties of a broken system including exploitation and abuse by unscrupulous employers,” Amy said.

The AFSC implores Congress to adopt compassionate and effective immigration reforms that are grounded in the following principles:

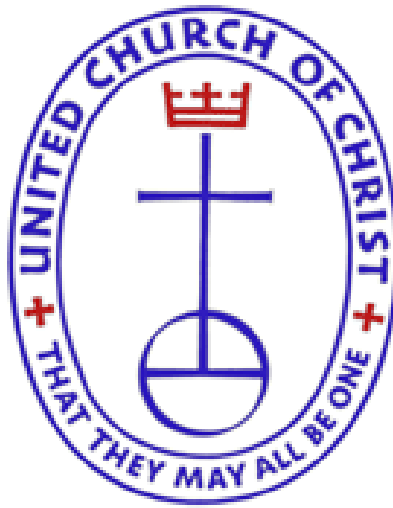
- Develop humane economic policies to reduce forced migration.
- Protect the labor rights of all workers.
- Develop a quick path to legal permanent residency and a clear path to citizenship.
- Respect the civil and human rights of immigrants.
- Demilitarize the U.S.-Mexico border.
- Make family reunification a top priority.
- Ensure that immigrants and refugees have access to services.

AFSC has created [A New Path](#), which lays out policy priorities for humane immigration reform that protects the human rights of all people. These principles are derived from nine decades of work with immigrant communities, whose voices must be heard as we seek meaningful and humane policies.

For more on AFSC’s immigrant rights work, visit <http://afsc.org/project/immigrant-rights> and follow us on Twitter and Facebook.

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*The American Friends Service Committee is a Quaker organization that includes people of various faiths who are committed to social justice, peace and humanitarian service. Its work is based on the belief in the worth of every person and faith in the power of love to overcome violence and injustice.*



The United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries, celebrates the introduction in the Congress of a long awaited immigration bill.

We specially wish to thank the senator members of the "Gang of Eight" for their work and dedication. We look forward to the legislative process and to further congressional action on behalf of the millions of God's children who may finally be able to achieve their dreams and full potential once this bill becomes law.

## **U.S. JESUIT CONFERENCE GREETES BI-PARTISAN IMMIGRATION BILL WITH OPTIMISM AND CAUTION**

April, 17, 2013

Washington—The U.S. Jesuit Conference welcomes today's introduction of a bi-partisan Senate immigration bill. Immigration reform has been a difficult issue to address, and this bill provides hope that an immigration agreement can be reached that respects the human dignity of our undocumented brothers and sisters.

We are especially pleased to see that members of the bi-partisan group of Senators included a pathway to citizenship for those without legal status and special provisions for DREAMers. We join the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in thanking Senators Schumer, McCain, Durbin, Graham, Menendez, Rubio, Bennet, and Flake for their dedicated leadership and courage in introducing this bill. The Jesuit Conference will work with members of Congress to ensure that a final bill includes proper protections and legal relief for all undocumented immigrants.

The Society of Jesus' work with migrants on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border provides us with an important perspective on border security provisions within the bill. Therefore, while we are encouraged by many elements of this bill, we want to ensure proper oversight of immigration enforcement authorities, respect for the due process rights of immigrants, and safe and humane deportation regulations. Additionally, any pathway to citizenship must be realistic and reasonable in light of the social and economic realities faced by immigrants.

Fr. Thomas P. Greene, Secretary for Social and International Ministries at the U.S. Jesuit Conference greeted the Senate bill with approval while cautioning that it will take time to study the bill and clarify its enforcement and eligibility provisions: "We are encouraged by the bill and this first step towards comprehensive immigration reform. However, we need time to assess its provisions and ensure that the pathway to citizenship is indeed accessible to the millions of undocumented immigrants living and working in our midst."



## National Council of Jewish Women

National Council of Jewish Women

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### **NCJW Applauds Release of Bipartisan Immigration Reform Bill**

April 17, 2013 Washington, DC – The National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) congratulates the bipartisan group of 8 US senators who early this morning released the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act of 2013, a comprehensive bill to reform our immigration laws. NCJW CEO Nancy K. Kaufman released the following statement:

“NCJW commends the group of 8 US senators who have introduced a groundbreaking immigration bill after months of deliberation. Although it isn’t perfect, this legislation is an historic step towards addressing our nation’s broken immigration system. It is also an example of much-needed bipartisan cooperation in confronting our nation’s challenges, and for that we congratulate the senators and their staff.

“The bill is a good starting point for the dialogue necessary to overhaul our nation’s broken immigration system with the goal of achieving just, humane and comprehensive reform. We are pleased to see many of its provisions. Its landmark path to citizenship will enable the 11 million undocumented immigrants currently living in the US to emerge from the shadows of our society, and we applaud provisions that expedite citizenship for DREAMers and provide protections for temporary workers.

“However, we are concerned that burdensome fines and requirements for permanent residence and citizenship could prevent many immigrants from participating, and we hope improvements will be made to allow newly legalized immigrants access to critical services including health and nutrition supports. Additionally, NCJW is disappointed by the exclusion of LGBT people from the definition of family – a reminder of ongoing discrimination against this community.

“At this critical juncture, we must remember that immigration reform is about families. Despite provisions to ease applicant backlogs and reduce wait times in the family visa program, we object to proposals that would curtail eligibility and limit the promise of family unity.

“We are heartened at the progress the Senate bill represents, and again congratulate the “Gang of 8” for their perseverance in developing this comprehensive proposal. NCJW pledges to work with members of Congress and coalition partners on this critical issue to achieve just, humane and comprehensive immigration law that reflects our shared values as Americans.”

The [National Council of Jewish Women](#) (NCJW) is a grassroots organization of volunteers and advocates who turn progressive ideals into action. Inspired by Jewish values, NCJW strives for social justice by improving the quality of life for women, children, and families and by safeguarding individual rights and freedoms. Since its founding in 1893, NCJW has worked for immigrant communities in the US and continues to advocate for just and humane immigrant policies.

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## Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service

### S.744 Offers Historic and Bipartisan Progress on Immigration Reform

**WASHINGTON, D.C. April 17, 2013** — Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS) welcomes the introduction of S.744, particularly the way this new Senate bill embodies bipartisan agreement on basic improvements that LIRS has long championed for welcoming newcomers to the United States.

“We’re thrilled that S.744 shows bipartisan agreement on fundamental improvements to America’s immigration process that LIRS has long advocated,” said LIRS President and CEO Linda Hartke. “The majority of Americans are calling for immigration reform that keeps families together and offers a roadmap to earned citizenship – because family unity is vital to our congregations and communities, and because this reform is smart for our economy and our country.”

“It’s no coincidence that 40 Lutheran leaders from across the country were on Capitol Hill this week calling for passage of a bill that creates a [fair and humane immigration system](#),” said Hartke. “Although we’re still analyzing S.744, we are glad that Senate leadership has taken heed of their call for action. Now we’re urging the House of Representatives to show bipartisan leadership like that in the Senate.”

S.744, the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act, aligns with the [LIRS Principles for Comprehensive Immigration Reform](#) as follows:

***Principle 1.*** *Provide an earned pathway to lawful permanent residency and eventual citizenship for undocumented immigrants and their families.* We are overall quite pleased with the creation of a process for undocumented immigrants to eventually earn citizenship in the country they consider home. This pathway towards citizenship must be accessible and fairly adjudicated, and this bill is a positive step towards that outcome.

***Principle 2.*** *Ensure humane and just enforcement of immigration laws by reducing use of immigration detention and expanding community support programs.* This bill improves access to justice for migrants and refugees navigating our immigration system. LIRS welcomes the increased provision of counsel and legal protections for unaccompanied migrant children and individuals facing deportation and detention. The bill also recognizes the promise of community based alternatives to detention, which LIRS has begun to cultivate nationwide, as a cost-effective and humane way to promote integration and make our communities stronger.

***Principle 3.*** *Protect families from separation and ensure an adequate supply of visas for families seeking to reunite.* LIRS remains committed to family unity for all migrants and refugees. We are encouraged by improvements for refugee children in need of protection and children separated from their parents by immigration detention and deportation. Although this bill does improve the options for family unity for many immigrants who have been seeking to reunite with loved ones in the United States for years, LIRS is disappointed by the proposed elimination of immigration channels for brothers and sisters of American citizens.

***Principle 4.*** *Provide adequate resources and protections to ensure the successful integration of refugees, asylees, survivors of torture and trafficking, unaccompanied minors, and other vulnerable migrants.* We welcome the bill’s recognition of how essential integration is for new Americans and their communities. Especially exciting are improvements that would better protect refugees, asylum seekers, stateless individuals, and migrants who are victims of serious crimes. These changes bring America closer to fulfilling humanitarian obligations to those seeking a safe haven and new life, while also improving efficiencies in current immigration processes.

***Principle 5.*** *Ensure the protection of U.S. citizen and migrant workers.* The bipartisan bill makes changes that would treat workers fairly and recognize the contributions of immigrant workers to this country.

[LIRS](#) is nationally recognized for advocating on behalf of refugees, asylum seekers, unaccompanied children, immigrants in detention, families fractured by migration and other vulnerable populations, and for serving migrants through 60 grassroots legal and social service partners across the United States.

## **HIAS WELCOMES "GANG OF EIGHT" IMMIGRATION REFORM LEGISLATION, CELEBRATES PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS TO REFUGEE AND ASYLUM LAWS**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact: Roberta Elliott, [\(212\) 613-1350](tel:2126131350)**

**(New York, NY – April 17, 2013)** – HIAS, the global Jewish nonprofit that protects refugees, welcomes today's introduction of bipartisan legislation in the Senate to reform the U.S. immigration system. Mark Hetfield, HIAS' President and CEO, said, "We are thrilled that this legislation was introduced and especially pleased that there are several humanitarian fixes for refugees and asylum seekers in this new legislation, which offers a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants, modernizes the immigration system, strengthens our economy, protects families, treats American and immigrant workers fairly, and begins to address the broken refugee and asylum systems. While the bill may not be perfect, it is a comprehensive and common sense approach to immigration reform."

Central to the organization's focus on refugee protection, HIAS is grateful to the "Gang of 8" – Senators Schumer (D-NY), McCain (R-AZ), Durbin (D-IL), Graham (R-SC), Menendez (D-NJ), Rubio (R-FL), Bennet (D-CO), and Flake (R-AZ) – for including provisions such as repealing the one-year filing deadline that caused so much unnecessary hardship for asylum seekers, eliminating provisions that needlessly separate asylees and refugees from close family members, expediting the process for granting asylum to asylum seekers in expedited proceedings that clearly show they have been or will be persecuted, and permitting qualified stateless individuals to apply for green cards. Another important provision makes refugee adjudications abroad more fair and efficient.

The bill would also streamline the process for admitting certain high risk refugee groups, including Jews and other religious minorities fleeing Iran. The Senate bill would preserve Senator Lautenberg's legacy of protecting persecuted religious minorities while creating new opportunities for other persecuted groups – with an emphasis on those seeking religious freedom – to receive protection. HIAS is particularly grateful to Senator Lautenberg for his years of unwavering commitment and leadership in protecting Jews and others who face persecution for their beliefs, and thanks the Senator for ensuring that protecting religious minorities from Iran and other countries that restrict religious freedom is a priority for immigration reform.

Other much needed proposed changes include increases in immigration court personnel and more training for judges and other staff, access to counsel for vulnerable populations to improve efficiency of courts, and "alternatives to detention" programs. The bill would also establish a pilot program to promote immigrant integration at state and local levels, which is in line with the recommendations put forth in HIAS' recent report, [\*Resettlement at Risk: Meeting Emerging Challenges to Refugee Resettlement in Local Communities\*](#).

Hetfield added, "As an organization deeply rooted in Jewish values, we support policies that fulfill the Torah's mandate to 'welcome the stranger.' We are grateful for the hard work of these Senators and their staff and their acknowledgement that comprehensive immigration reform presents an opportunity to fix a broken system that adversely affects immigrants in the U.S., including refugees and asylum seekers. We look forward to working with legislators and immigrant communities to ensure that our immigration system is reformed in a way that honors our American and Jewish values."

**HIAS is the global Jewish nonprofit organization that protects refugees – including women and children, and ethnic, religious, and sexual minorities – whose lives are in danger for being who they are. Guided by our Jewish values and history, HIAS works in 15 countries on five continents, helping refugees rebuild their lives in safety and advocating to ensure that all refugees and displaced people are treated with dignity. Visit [HIAS.org](http://HIAS.org) to learn more.**

## **AJC Welcomes Introduction of Comprehensive Immigration Reform Legislation**

April 17, 2013 – Washington – AJC applauds introduction in the U.S. Senate of the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act of 2013 (S.744). This bipartisan, comprehensive immigration reform legislation offers a roadmap to citizenship for 11 million prospective new Americans.

“The sponsoring Senators have recognized the key role of immigrants in bolstering America's economic strength and democratic pluralism,” said Richard Foltin, AJC Director of National and Legislative Affairs. “AJC looks forward to working with Congress as this legislation moves forward, and to ultimately enacting legislation that will permanently fix America’s broken immigration system.”

The proposed bill creates a much-needed path to earned citizenship for undocumented immigrants in the United States, offers critical reforms to the legal immigration process, and includes measures that will strengthen national security.

AJC finds the proposed reforms to the family and employment visa categories encouraging, and looks forward to continuing to improve these legal immigration categories in the bill. “Just as we, as Americans, have been able to build our lives alongside our brothers, sisters and children, we must preserve that opportunity for new Americans today,” said Foltin. But he expressed concern over proposed cuts to the visa categories for siblings and married adult children over the age of 31 who seek to reunite with their families.

“Regardless of their age or marital status, siblings and children are integral to the American family unit,” said Foltin. “Allowing immigrant families to more easily reunite with their loved ones will enhance a strong social fabric in our communities.”

Foltin praised the bill’s provisions for employment visa categories, saying “they will help to ensure that American businesses have access to labor with needed skill sets to compete in a global economy.” The proposed measure would make it easier for high- and low-skilled immigrant workers to come to the U.S., as well as establish a viable program for temporary immigrant workers and foreign graduate students in science, technology, engineering and math.

While endorsing the need for immigration reform legislation to address issues of border security and enforcement, Foltin cautioned that enforcement enhancements should not hinder the path to legalization for those currently living in the shadows. The bill includes two stages of enforcement and border security operations, and benchmarks that must first be met before eligible individuals would be permitted to adjust their status to become permanent residents and, ultimately, U.S. citizens.

“There is no reason to link a pathway to earned citizenship for hardworking immigrants already living in the United States to border security benchmarks,” Foltin said.

Since its founding in 1906, AJC has been outspoken in support of fair and generous immigration policies, characterized by the rule of law. As American Jews, we recall how our parents and grandparents made their way to this country seeking a better life, and know that we have prospered in and contributed to this country. That same opportunity should be available for others.

Comprehensive immigration reform will strengthen America’s global competitiveness and enhance our national security, as well as allow hard-working immigrants an opportunity to succeed in the United States, for themselves and for future generations.



**DATE:** April 17, 2013

**FROM:** Norma Montenegro Flynn

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**BISHOPS' MIGRATION CHAIR WELCOMES INTRODUCTION OF IMMIGRATION PROPOSAL; PLEDGES TO WORK SO FINAL BILL UPHOLDS BASIC RIGHTS, DIGNITY**

*Commends senators for leadership  
Sees opportunity to improve on initial efforts  
Urges respect for migrants' human rights, dignity*

WASHINGTON—The introduction of U.S. Senate bipartisan legislation to reform the U.S. immigration system was welcomed by Archbishop José H. Gomez of Los Angeles, chairman of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) Committee on Migration, April 17. Archbishop Gomez also pledged that the U.S. bishops would carefully examine the legislation and work with Congress to ensure that any final measure respects the basic human rights and dignity of migrants.

"I welcome the introduction of legislation today in the U.S. Senate," Archbishop Gomez said. "The U.S. bishops look forward to carefully examining the legislation and working with Congress to fashion a final bill that respects the basic human rights and dignity of newcomers to our land—migrants, refugees, and other vulnerable populations."

Archbishop Gomez commended the so-called "Gang of Eight" senators for their leadership on the issue. He also said that once it has completed its review of the voluminous bill, the USCCB may seek improvements upon the proposed legislation, consistent with principles for reform laid out for decades by the bishops' conference.

"I commend the Senators who have introduced this bipartisan bill, as they have shown leadership and courage in this effort," he said. "We will look to work constructively with them and other members of Congress to improve upon their proposal, should such improvements prove necessary, so that any final bill creates an immigration system that restores the rule of law in a humane and just manner."

In their 2003 pastoral letter, "Strangers No Longer: Together on the Journey of Hope," the U.S. bishops outlined several goals for immigration reform, which include:

- A path to citizenship for the undocumented that is achievable, set within a reasonable time frame and includes the maximum number of persons;

- The protection and enhancement of the family-based immigration system—based on the union of a husband and a wife and their children—including the reduction of backlogs and the shortening of waiting times;
- A program which allows low-skilled migrant workers to enter and work in the United States legally and safely, includes appropriate wage and worker protections, allows for family unity, and provides workers the option to apply for permanent residency and eventual citizenship;
- The restoration of due process protections for immigrants removed by the 1996 Illegal Immigrant Responsibility and Immigration Reform Act;
- The adoption of policies which address the root causes, or push factors, of irregular migration, such as persecution and the absence of living wage jobs in sending communities.
- The protection of other vulnerable populations, including refugees, asylum-seekers, and unaccompanied children.

Archbishop Gomez withheld comment on the specific details of the new legislation until the USCCB has analyzed its provisions.

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Editors: USCCB has scheduled a telephonic press conference for April 22 at 1 p.m. to respond to the details of the legislation and to release a new survey of Catholics on immigration reform. For more information, contact Norma Montenegro Flynn at [nmontenegro@usccb.org](mailto:nmontenegro@usccb.org).

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Keywords: migrants, immigrants, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, USCCB, Committee on Migration, Congress, Archbishop José Gomez, immigration reform, *Strangers No Longer: Together on the Journey of Hope*, refugees, asylum seekers, unaccompanied children

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## **CWS Statement on the Border Security, Economic Opportunity & Immigration Modernization Act**

CWS applauds the introduction of S.744, the *Border Security, Economic Opportunity and Immigration Modernization Act*, and thanks Senators Bennet (D-CO), Durbin (D-IL), Flake (R-AZ), Graham (R-SC), McCain (R-AZ), Menendez (D-NJ), Rubio (R-FL), and Schumer (D-NY) for their leadership and dedication to shepherding this bill through the process of compromise and bipartisan agreement. The CWS network of 37 protestant denominations and 36 refugee resettlement offices across the country welcomes newcomers by helping them integrate into their new communities. We advocate for immigration reform not only because it is the right thing to do to improve the lives of our immigrant community members, but also because it is the smart thing to do for our economy and country as a whole. There are many provisions in S.744 for which CWS has advocated for years and is pleased to see included. However, there are some provisions we oppose, which we will seek to change as we continue work with the Senate through the legislative process to improve the bill and see that humane immigration reform is enacted.

### CWS supports the path to citizenship, but urges a shorter time frame and expanded eligibility

This legislation would create a process by which individuals who entered the U.S. before January 1, 2012 could apply for "Registered Provisional Immigrant" (RPI) status, paying a \$500 fine and processing fees, which would allow them to work and travel legally. After six years, individuals would have to renew their status, and after 10 years in RPI status individuals could apply for lawful permanent resident (LPR) status if they met eligibility criteria and paid another \$500 fine and processing fees. Then, after three years in LPR status, individuals could apply for U.S. citizenship, paying a final \$1,000 fine and processing fees. Individuals who have been deported for reasons only pertaining to their legal status could apply for parole to re-enter the United States. While it will take the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) approximately one year to put the path to citizenship process in place, CWS is supportive that the bill would put in place a stay-of-removal so that individuals do not have to fear being deported. We are hopeful that, as allowed for in the legislation, DHS will extend the application period from the initial one year to the full two and a half years, so that everyone who might qualify has an opportunity to apply.

CWS is pleased to see that individuals who qualify for the pathway to citizenship could include their spouse and children (under 21) in their application, so that families can go through this process together. We also welcome provisions to allow individuals who have been in the United States with Temporary Protect Status, Deferred Enforced Departure, or another legal status for more than ten years to immediately apply for LPR status and apply for citizenship after three years. Another positive provision is that DREAMers – defined by this bill as individuals of any age who entered the U.S. before they turned 16 – and agricultural workers would have a shortened process, where they could apply for LPR status after only five years in RPI status, and then immediately apply for citizenship, with additional streamlined procedure for recipients of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals.

However, CWS urges the Senate to reduce the length of time that individuals have to wait to fully pursue citizenship, from 13 years to 5-8 years instead. We would like the bill to provide additional options for individuals who entered the U.S. after January 1, 2012, and to allow those going through this process to have access to health care and other services. Because it is important to CWS that the pathway to citizenship be workable, timely, and inclusive, we will work during the amendment process to advocate for meaningful waivers to eligibility criteria, including for individuals whose violations would be considered as misdemeanors, but since they are not U.S. citizens, have been unfairly classified as 'aggravated felonies'.

### CWS supports improvements for refugees, asylum seekers and integration assistance

Many provisions in this legislation would improve the lives of refugees resettled in the U.S. and help those who are fleeing persecution seek asylum. If this legislation is enacted, individuals fleeing persecution would no longer be barred from protection if they apply for asylum more than one year after they enter the United States, and those who have previously been denied solely based on this arbitrary one-year deadline would be able to re-open their case for two years following the enactment of this bill. The legislation would also improve the efficiency of the asylum process and improve due process in the refugee resettlement program. We support these provisions, as well as others that would enable the spouse or child of a refugee to remain reunited with their own child (under 21) when they accompany or follow to join the principle refugee applicant, and allow a refugee's spouse or child (under 21) to continue to apply for refugee status in the unfortunate circumstance that the principle refugee applicant dies while their spouse or child's application is in process.

The Senate bill would improve the efficiency and process of the Iraqi special immigrant visa application process, and allow the Administration to designate groups of humanitarian concern who share common characteristics that identify them as targets of persecution as eligible for resettlement. The bill would allow the administration to grant conditional lawful status to certain stateless persons in the U.S. with an ability to apply

for LPR. Improvements would also be made to help victims of crimes and children separated from their families. If enacted, S.744 would increase due process and legal orientation for immigrants in detention, require DHS to inform individuals of their rights, mandate that contracted facilities comply with DHS regulations, and expand the use of alternatives to detention.

CWS also appreciates the bill's emphasis on the renamed "Office of Citizenship and New Americans" to provide support local, state and federal entities to help immigrants integrate, and the establishment of a public-private partnership through the U.S. Citizenship Foundation to ensure immigrants can attain the knowledge and language skills necessary to fully integrate and build their lives in the United States.

CWS is opposed to the bill's provisions to eliminate and compromise family visa categories

CWS is strongly opposed to the bill's provisions that would eliminate, 18 months after enactment, the ability for U.S. citizens to sponsor their brothers, sisters, and children who are married and over the age of 30. We will seek to restore both of these categories in the amendment process, as well as advocate for U.S. Citizens and greencard holders to be able to reunite with their same-sex partner. While the elimination of the sibling category and the age-limit on married adult children may be balanced somewhat by provisions in the new merit-based system, we remain concerned about the impact that the emphasis on employment, education and English fluency could have on women, the poor, and individuals from non-English-speaking countries who seek to reunite with family members.

This bill, however, does include many positive provisions that facilitate and promote family unity. CWS supports the bill's provisions to recapture unused visas for the following fiscal year, and categorize spouses and children (under 21) of green card holders as "immediate relatives" to reunite families and prevent future backlogs. We also applaud the bill for allowing the parents of U.S. citizens to bring their minor children with them when they immigrate to the U.S.; permitting families to stay together in the U.S. while some family members await greencards; improving the process for stepchildren (under 21), widows, orphans, separated children, and fiancés of greencard holders and their children; and enhancing the ability of family members, including siblings and married adult children over 30, to visit the U.S. for up to 60 days per year. CWS also applauds the increase in per-country caps that will help reduce the longest wait times for family reunification, expedited processing of family backlogs within ten years, and allowing employment-based immigrants to sponsor their family members without counting against numerical limits. The bill would also help prevent the separation of families by allowing immigration judges and DHS to take into account the hardship that an immigrant's U.S. citizen or LPR parent, spouse or child would experience should an individual be deported or barred from entry.

CWS is against the pathway to citizenship being contingent on border security "triggers"

CWS is opposed to the Senate bill's making the pathway to citizenship contingent upon border and interior enforcement 'triggers.' Within six months of enactment, DHS would have to submit border security plans to achieve 90% effectiveness in apprehensions and returns through additional fencing, surveillance, technology including unmanned and unarmed aerial systems, and additional border patrol and customs agents. This plan must be submitted before the individuals can apply for RPI status. Then, before individuals with RPI status can adjust to LPR status, DHS must certify that both plans have been implemented, an employment verification system is being used by all mandated employers, and an electronic entry/exit system is fully operational.

CWS strongly holds that these provisions, as well as the requirement that the visa backlog be cleared, should not be used to delay the pathway to citizenship, especially as full implementation of the e-verify system will be nearly impossible to achieve. As enforcement provisions will not impact individuals who are already in the U.S., deliberately stalling the pathway to citizenship by making it arbitrarily lengthy and contingent on enforcement 'triggers' is nonsensical and makes for poor public policy.

In addition to our opposition to 'triggers,' CWS is opposed to the bill's provisions to send the National Guard to the border and spend an additional \$4.5 billion on border and interior enforcement – in addition to the \$18 billion already spend in Fiscal Year 2012 alone – given the impact this would have on border communities, vulnerable migrants, religious sites, and the environment. However, we are encouraged by the requirement that DHS collect data and put in place regulations to prevent and stop racial profiling, the creation of a DHS Border Oversight Task Force, provisions to stop lethal force by border agents, the designation of a DHS ombudsman on human rights, and the creation of DHS border community liaisons in every Border Patrol Sector.

CWS is committed to working with members of both the Senate and House to improve and enact this legislation that would greatly improve the lives of so many immigrants and community members. We urge all Senators to support a timely process to consider, improve, and enact this bill.



# Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service

## Statement of Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service

### Senate Committee on the Judiciary

#### April 19, 2013: “Hearing on Comprehensive Immigration Reform Legislation”

Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS), the national organization established by Lutheran churches in the United States to serve uprooted people, welcomes the introduction of S.744. LIRS is particularly grateful for the way this new Senate bill embodies bipartisan agreement on basic improvements that LIRS has long championed for welcoming newcomers to the United States.

“We’re thrilled that S.744 shows bipartisan agreement on fundamental improvements to America’s immigration process that LIRS has long advocated,” said LIRS President and CEO Linda Hartke. “The majority of Americans are calling for immigration reform that keeps families together and offers a roadmap to earned citizenship – because family unity is vital to our congregations and communities, and because this reform is smart for our economy and our country.”

“It’s no coincidence that 40 Lutheran leaders from across the country were on Capitol Hill this week calling for passage of a bill that creates a fair and humane immigration system,” said Hartke. “Although we’re still analyzing S.744, we are glad that Senate leadership has taken heed of their call for action. Now we’re urging the House of Representatives to show bipartisan leadership like that in the Senate.”

S.744, the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act, aligns with the LIRS Principles for Comprehensive Immigration Reform as follows:

***Principle 1. Provide an earned pathway to lawful permanent residency and eventual citizenship for undocumented immigrants and their families.***

We are overall quite pleased with the creation of a process for undocumented immigrants to eventually earn citizenship in the country they consider home. This pathway towards citizenship must be accessible and fairly adjudicated, and this bill is a positive step towards that outcome.

***Principle 2. Ensure humane and just enforcement of immigration laws by reducing use of immigration detention and expanding community support programs.***

This bill improves access to justice for migrants and refugees navigating our immigration system. LIRS welcomes the increased provision of counsel and legal protections for unaccompanied migrant children and individuals facing deportation and detention. The bill also recognizes the promise of community based alternatives to detention, which LIRS has begun to cultivate nationwide, as a cost-effective and humane way to promote integration and make our communities stronger.

***Principle 3. Protect families from separation and ensure an adequate supply of visas for families seeking to reunite. LIRS remains committed to family unity for all migrants and refugees.***

We are encouraged by improvements for refugee children in need of protection and children separated from their parents by immigration detention and deportation. Although this bill does improve the options for family unity for many immigrants who have been seeking to reunite with loved ones in the United States for years, LIRS is disappointed by the creation of an age cap on married children hoping to reunite with their U.S. citizen parents and the proposed elimination of immigration channels for brothers and sisters of American citizens.

***Principle 4. Provide adequate resources and protections to ensure the successful integration of refugees, asylees, survivors of torture and trafficking, unaccompanied minors, and other vulnerable migrants.***

We welcome the bill's recognition of how essential integration is for new Americans and their communities. Especially exciting are improvements that would better protect refugees, asylum seekers, stateless individuals, and migrants who are victims of serious crimes. These changes bring America closer to fulfilling humanitarian obligations to those seeking a safe haven and new life, while also improving efficiencies in current immigration processes.

***Principle 5. Ensure the protection of U.S. citizen and migrant workers.***

The bipartisan bill makes changes that would treat workers fairly and recognize the contributions of immigrant workers to this country.

LIRS is nationally recognized for its leadership in advocating on behalf of refugees, asylum seekers, unaccompanied children, immigrants in detention, families fractured by migration and other vulnerable populations, and for serving migrants through over 60 grassroots legal and social service partners across the United States.



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PRESS STATEMENT  
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
Thursday, April 18, 2013

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## **New England's Largest Immigrant Advocacy Coalition Applauds Immigration Reform Introduction in Senate**

*MIRA Coalition praises bipartisan coalition's creation of a path to citizenship and  
vows to work to improve bill*

BOSTON — Yesterday a bipartisan group of U.S. senators known as the "Gang of 8" released a bill that broadly reforms the nation's dysfunctional immigration system, creating a pathway to citizenship for many of the 11 million men, women and children currently living in the country without status. The New Hampshire Alliance of Immigrants and Refugees (NH AIR) praises the senators for working so diligently to craft this bipartisan agreement. As the largest organization representing the rights and opportunities of the foreign-born in New England, MIRA vows to support the senators' efforts to pass legislation this year, while also working with friends and allies to improve the bill so that it can best serve the needs of immigrants and native-born residents alike.

"The introduction of this bill is a tremendous achievement for the immigrant rights movement and for the nation as a whole," said Eva Castillo, NH AIR Project Organizer. "We applaud the senators for dealing with the whole issue. Besides a path to citizenship, they have also included some important visa reforms and asylum reforms, among other measures.

"We will work with our members and our local and national allies to improve some shortcomings in the legislation introduced today," Castillo continued. "The cutoffs for qualification aren't inclusive enough; the 13-year wait to earn citizenship is too long; the elimination of the diversity visa could once again exclude many historically excluded peoples; and the visa reform cuts too deeply into the current family-based system.

"We will also work to improve this bill without losing sight of the urgent need for reform now, at a time when over 1,000 families are torn apart by deportation every day. Through mobilization and coalition-building, the New Americans who shaped the outcome of the last election will also shape their own destiny by making sure Congress passes and the President signs a just bill."

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MIRA works to advocate for the rights and opportunities of immigrants and refugees. In partnership with its members, MIRA advances this mission through education, training, leadership development, organizing, policy analysis and advocacy.

The Muslim Public Affairs Council applauds the introduction of S. 744, the *Border Security, Economic Opportunity and Immigration Modernization Act* and thanks the Gang of Eight senators who worked tirelessly to produce a bill to reform our immigration processes.

Senators Dick Durbin (D-IL), Michael Bennet (D-CO), Charles Schumer (D-NY), Robert Menendez (D-NJ), Jeff Flake (R-AZ), Marco Rubio (R-FL), Lindsey Graham (R-SC) and John McCain (R-AZ) have dedicated their time and efforts to paving the path to a more comprehensive immigration process through a compromising and a bipartisan way.

The historic nature of the bipartisan bill is refreshing as we see our members of Congress working beyond party lines for the greater good of our nation.

Although the initial bill has yet to be discussed and debated, MPAC looks forward to continuing the conversation on improving our immigration system. The American Muslim community contributes to the experiences of a “nation of immigrants,” and as such continue the conversations and engagement with our elected members of Congress to see to a just immigration system.

MPAC remains engaged in the immigration debate and looks forward to a fair and just bill that benefits the progression of our nation.

Founded in 1988, MPAC is an American institution which informs and shapes public opinion and policy by serving as a trusted resource to decision makers in government, media and policy institutions. MPAC is also committed to developing leaders with the purpose of enhancing the political and civic participation of American Muslims.





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## Written Testimony

By

**Arturo Vargas, Executive Director  
National Association of Latino Elected and  
Appointed Officials (NALEO) Educational Fund**

Before

**The United States Senate Committee on the Judiciary**

At a Hearing Entitled

**“Hearing on Comprehensive Immigration Reform Legislation”**

**Washington, D.C.  
April 19, 2013**

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v. 01/13

Chairman Leahy, Ranking Member Grassley, and members of the Committee: thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony on the importance of comprehensive immigration reform to the Latino community and the nation.

The NALEO Educational Fund is the leading non-profit organization that facilitates full Latino participation in the American political process, from citizenship to public service. Our constituency encompasses the more than 6,000 Latino elected and appointed officials nationwide, and includes Republicans, Democrats, and Independents. We fulfill our mission through programs that promote the civic integration of Latino immigrants into American society, provide technical assistance and skills development to the nation's Latino elected and appointed officials, and broaden knowledge of and commitment to Latino political engagement and impact.

The NALEO Educational Fund applauds the work of Senators Bennet, Durbin, Flake, Graham, McCain, Menendez, Rubio, and Schumer, together known as the Gang of Eight, who took an important step in moving immigration reform forward by introducing bipartisan legislation. Our nation has struggled as a result of our broken system for far too long. It is time that we finally have a solution in place that strengthens American families and brings the 11 million undocumented immigrants living in the country today out of the shadows.

We praise the U.S. Senators for acting and introducing S. 744, the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act, which acknowledges the significant contributions that immigrants and their families make by including a pathway to citizenship. Eight out of ten undocumented immigrants come to this country for opportunity and a better life for themselves and loved ones. This provision will help unite families and provide immigrants with the chance to pursue their piece of the American dream. The road to citizenship outlined in this plan remains a work in progress, but we know immigrants stand ready and willing to do their part to ensure the country continues to thrive for years to come.

We commend the U.S. Senators for recognizing that immigration reform should reduce barriers to naturalization and improve the opportunities for all immigrants to become full participants in our society. The Office of Citizenship and New Americans will facilitate this critical process by providing the support local, state and federal entities need to help immigrants fully integrate into our civic and economic life. Additional measures, including the establishment of a public-private partnership through the U.S. Citizenship Foundation, will ensure immigrants are able to attain the knowledge and language skills necessary to effectively fulfill their responsibilities as community members and workers.

While this bill marks significant progress on this issue, we remain concerned by the length of time immigrants must wait to pursue citizenship, limitations on health care access and substantial changes that would alter our nation's family visa structure. We look forward to examining this legislative proposal in greater detail and working with this Committee and other members of the U.S. Senate to address these concerns and build upon this legislation in the coming weeks. We remain hopeful that together we can achieve meaningful immigration reform that is worthy of the American people and the contributions that immigrants and families play in the future growth and success of the nation.

We thank you for your attention and commitment to this issue and its profound implications for our future economic prospects and national unity.



## **NCLR Responds to Introduction of Federal Immigration Reform Legislation**

*Statement by NCLR Executive Director Kate Kendell*

(San Francisco, CA, April 17, 2013)— Today, a bipartisan group of Senators who have been working on a plan to fix the current broken U.S. immigration system released their long-awaited proposal for comprehensive immigration reform legislation. The bill, called the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act, presents a massive overhaul to many aspects of our current approach to immigration. The plan provides a pathway to citizenship for undocumented people, including an expedited process for DREAMers, creates new types of visas, and requires the government to clear the high backlog for family-sponsored visas.

There are nearly 11 million undocumented immigrants in the United States, including at least 267,000 who are also lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT). The legislation introduced by the Senate has a number of provisions that will dramatically improve the system and provide a path forward for undocumented immigrants, including those who are LGBT.

The legislation creates a 13-year pathway to citizenship for undocumented people currently in the U.S. People will be able work while they access this path, which includes a three-year application process and a 10-year waiting period. The legislation includes a streamlined, five-year process for DREAMers.

The legislation also puts an end to the draconian requirement that asylum-seekers must file asylum requests within one year of entering the U.S., which has had a particularly negative impact on LGBT asylum seekers.

While this legislation makes many significant improvements to the system, there are also serious shortcomings with the plan. The bill does not contain the crucial principles of the Uniting American Families Act (UAFSA), which would provide a mechanism for U.S. citizens to sponsor their same-sex foreign partners for citizenship. It also makes several significant cuts to the family sponsorship visa process, including eliminating F4 visas, which allow U.S. citizens to sponsor their siblings for citizenship. While an exception exists that will allow current citizens to continue the process to sponsor their siblings, eliminating this category will make it harder for immigrants to keep their families together, and will have a disproportionate impact on Asian-American and Latino families. Additionally, while the bill provides a pathway to citizenship, the path laid out in this legislation is unnecessarily long and tied to an overly harsh enforcement plan that is unnecessary in light of our current border security. Finally, this proposal creates inexcusable barriers to accessing healthcare. Under this plan, immigrants and their families would be unable to access subsidies and tax credits to purchase healthcare coverage through the Affordable Care Act (ACA) or receive benefits through Medicaid or the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) during the 10-year waiting period. The result is that low-income immigrant families would be unable to get any health coverage for at least 10 years.

NCLR has joined other organizations in a campaign endorsing principles in support of humane

and meaningful immigration reform. Learn more about the principles and the organizations that have signed on so far at [LGBTDREAMersStories.com](http://LGBTDREAMersStories.com).

*Statement by NCLR Executive Director Kate Kendell, Esq.:*

"It is very gratifying to finally see movement toward an overhaul of our broken immigration system. Many elements of immigration reform that are crucial for fixing our immigration system are part of this bipartisan proposal. We are pleased that this proposal includes a pathway to citizenship, strong protections for DREAMers and their families, and important changes to the asylum process. However, several key provisions miss the mark or are missing entirely from the draft bill.

It is unacceptable that low-income immigrants and families will be barred from accessing the benefits of the ACA, Medicaid, and CHIP for 10 years. Access to healthcare is a crucial right, and barring people from affordable care will cost lives. No one should have to wait 10 years to see a doctor.

Further, we believe that family unity must remain at the heart of the immigration system and are disappointed that this bill falls short of protecting that core value. While we are extremely troubled that the current bill excludes UAFA principles, we remain confident that we will be able to add protections for same-sex binational couples to the final version of the bill. We will continue to work closely with equality movement leaders and Senate members to improve the current draft plan, and to protect the ability of citizens to sponsor their same-sex foreign partners, siblings and other family members for citizenship so that immigration remains a way to keep families together and not tear them apart."

For Immediate Release: April 18, 2013  
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## NELP Welcomes Senate Immigration Reform Bill

*Statement of Christine Owens, Executive Director, National Employment Law Project*

Washington, DC—The National Employment Law Project welcomes the Senate’s introduction of bipartisan legislation to reform our nation’s immigration laws. In the coming days, NELP will analyze the details of this complex and far-reaching proposal and its impact on workers’ rights and low-wage labor markets.

The centerpiece of the Senate bill is a pathway to citizenship for most of the 11 million undocumented immigrants currently living in the United States. A pathway to citizenship that enables undocumented immigrants to live and work out of the shadows will enable millions of workers and their families to overcome one of the greatest barriers to their own economic security and prosperity. First-class citizenship will allow these workers to contribute fully to their communities and to our nation’s economic recovery.

Worker protections in the bill must be as strong as possible. Essential worker protections include whistleblower safeguards that protect workers who challenge labor abuses from retaliation, and equal workplace rights and remedies for all workers, regardless of immigration status. Future immigrant workers must have the right to change jobs and employers, and the right to apply for a green card. Such protections will help ensure that our country’s immigration policy supports a robust recovery built on living-wage jobs.

NELP has concerns with other aspects of the Senate proposal, including the mandatory electronic employment verification system, which may encourage employers to further push workers into abusive “off the books” work in the future. We also question the impact of point-based “merit” visa system on low-wage immigrant workers and their families, and will examine closely the new W visa program. Moreover, employment and income requirements for undocumented workers must not provide unrealistic and insurmountable barriers to legal status.

While these and other concerns pose serious questions, the Senate immigration bill is an important and necessary first step to reaching a just and humane immigration policy. Together with our allies, NELP will work to ensure that the final plan protects workers, strengthens our economy, and helps our nation reach its fullest potential.

*The National Employment Law Project is a non-partisan, not-for-profit organization that conducts research, education and advocacy on issues affecting low-wage and unemployed workers. For more about NELP, visit [www.nelp.org](http://www.nelp.org).*



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**Statement from the National Domestic Workers Alliance**  
**Submitted for the Record to the Senate Judiciary Committee Hearing**  
**on Comprehensive Immigration Reform**  
April 19, 2013

The National Domestic Workers Alliance (NDWA) commends the Senate Gang of Eight on the introduction of the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act of 2013. As the Senate Judiciary Committee meets to discuss the bill, NDWA urges the Committee and all members of Congress to consider the needs and contributions of immigrant women, specifically the hundreds of thousands of domestic workers whose labor makes all other work in this country possible. Domestic workers play a central role in our families, in our communities and in our economy, and immigration reform must be inclusive of this vitally important workforce.

Every day, hundreds of thousands of undocumented women go to work in homes across the country, caring for children, parents and grandparents; they clean, wash, teach, support, and cook. Some live in their employers' homes. Others commute long distances to work. Their work allows their employers to meet their own family and career aspirations. And they have migrated to the United States to meet their own aspirations for work and a better life for their families. Seventy-five percent of domestic workers in this country are immigrants, and fifty percent of that number are undocumented.<sup>1</sup>

Domestic workers have faced generations of exclusion from basic labor protections. Isolated in the workplace, they are among the most invisible and vulnerable workers in the workforce today. And as a result of our current immigration laws, many are trapped in undocumented status without a roadmap to citizenship. For more than a decade, our immigration policy has focused almost entirely on enforcement -- detention, deportation and family separation. This has created an unstable environment for domestic workers at home, at work, and in the community. In turn, it's unsustainable for the families they work for and the communities they are a part of.

Domestic workers are survivors of violence, people of faith, artists and community leaders. They are mothers, daughters, grandmothers, neighbors and friends to millions of us, and without them our communities and families would not be whole. Domestic workers support an inclusive road to citizenship for all because citizenship provides the opportunity for 11 million aspiring Americans, including domestic workers, to come out of the shadows toward a brighter future for all of us.

Specifically, as you review the proposed bill, we call on the Senate Judiciary Committee to consider the needs of immigrant women, in particular women workers who care for our children, family members and homes, including:

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<sup>1</sup> National Domestic Workers Alliance, "Home Economics: The Invisible and Unregulated World of Domestic Work," found at <http://www.domesticworkers.org/homeeconomics/>

## **1) A broad and inclusive road to citizenship**

The roadmap to citizenship should avoid prohibitive requirements that would effectively exclude most domestic workers and many other workers who work in low-wage and contingent industries. Most importantly, requiring proof of employment at any point in the process would bar women whose work is done in the informal economy, and women who are full-time caretakers of their own families. The overwhelming majority of domestic workers do not have pay stubs and tax forms to prove they worked for their employers. As many other workers in the informal economy, their employment is cash-based and paperless. In a survey of over 4000 low-wage workers in three largest cities in the US – New York, Chicago and Los Angeles—workers in occupations with high percentages of women did not receive pay stubs with their pay. Although New York, Illinois and California do require employers to provide a pay stub or a wage statement with pay, 98% of surveyed undocumented nannies, 92 % of maids and housecleaners, 77 % of garment workers did not receive any pay stubs.<sup>2</sup> Linking eligibility to proof of employment at any stage on the road to citizenship would exclude hundreds of thousands of domestic workers and millions of other low-income workers in the informal sector. And it would also exclude an estimated 40% of undocumented women who work as stay at home moms, spending their days and nights caring for their own families. Thus, eligibility should be based on physical presence only, and there should be various ways to demonstrate physical presence in the U.S., such as affidavits from community leaders.

The application process should promote integration and opportunity. English language requirements, fines, and fees should not create obstacles for the 11 million people who have been in this country, working and helping to build the economy for all of us. In order to facilitate immigrant integration, any immigration reform should ensure that fees are reasonable and payable over time. High application fees will limit the number of applications a family can afford, resulting in applications only being filed by male heads-of-households. Fee structures should incentivize families to apply for all eligible members of the family, and must be on a sliding scale in order to support the economic self-sufficiency of women, particularly low-wage women workers.

Lastly, the road to citizenship should not be predicated by further enforcement of our borders. Border triggers would bring more unaccountable enforcement policies and would ultimately restrict access to citizenship for 11 million undocumented immigrants. There are alternatives to protect our national safety, uphold the civil and human rights of Americans living in border regions and throughout the country, and ensure responsible spending and accountability in our border enforcement system. Most importantly, border enforcement should not be a veiled attempt to stop immigration reform.

## **2) Caregivers for our community and our economy**

Today, more than half of American workers are women. As more women enter the workforce, more workers are needed to provide care, supports and services in the home. In addition to the ongoing childcare responsibilities of working parents, the baby boom generation is reaching retirement age and people are living longer. 2011 marked the first year of the “age wave,” when the baby boom generation has begun to turn sixty-five at a rate of a person every 8 seconds. By the year 2050, 27 million older adults and people with disabilities will need care workers just to meet their basic daily needs. The overall demand for direct-care workers, who are predominantly women, is projected to increase by 48 percent over the next decade and the population of US-born workers is only growing by about 1%.<sup>3</sup> The

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<sup>2</sup> National Employment Law Project, *Immigration Status and Pay Documentation*, 2008, See [http://nelp.3cdn.net/56610295228b59f19a\\_1km6ibvof.pdf](http://nelp.3cdn.net/56610295228b59f19a_1km6ibvof.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> PHI, Fact Sheet: Occupational Projections for Direct Care Workers 2010-2020, February 2013, Retrieved from: [http://phinational.org/sites/phinational.org/files/phi\\_factsheet1update\\_singles\\_2.pdf](http://phinational.org/sites/phinational.org/files/phi_factsheet1update_singles_2.pdf).



booming demand for care workers will dramatically outpace supply of care workers over the next decade. Any immigration legislation should:

- Include a program for future care workers to enter the country to fill critical needs in the care labor market.
- Provide strong labor protections, including the right to change jobs for better wages and working conditions, the right to organize, protection from retaliation, and fair wages that will not depress wages for US workers in the sector.
- Allow workers to bring their families and have the right to seek citizenship for themselves and their families.
- Require employers of live-in caregivers to provide room and board for these workers, free of charge.

### **3) Opportunities to strengthen families**

Immigration reform offers the opportunity to strengthen American families. Between July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2010, and September 31<sup>st</sup>, 2013, nearly 23 percent of all deportations were issued for parents with U.S. citizen children.<sup>4</sup> Research conducted in 2011 by the Applied Research Center indicates that there are over 5,000 U.S. citizen children in foster care at any given moment, as a result of the deportation or detention of their parents, and an estimated 5.5 million children have at least one parent who is undocumented, and live daily with the fear of family separation.<sup>5</sup> The separation of families and the resulting climate of fear negatively impacts entire communities. The primary roadblock to citizenship is deportation; it is time to focus our resources on the pathway to citizenship. The legislation should:

- Ensure that care providers who are supporting families can immediately stay without fear of deportation
- Ensure that immigrant parents can stay with their children and families without fear of deportation
- Ensure that parents who are in detention or deportation proceedings have the authority to determine the fate of their children
- Offer the right to reunite for parents who have already been deported and separated from their children in the United States
- Shorten wait times for people who have been waiting to be reunited with their families
- Include LGBT families to remain together and reunify, including through provisions outlined in the Uniting American Families Act.

### **4) A stronger American workforce**

Immigration reform offers the opportunity to enter a new phase of economic growth and prosperity for all workers. When conditions are improved for immigrant workers, all workers benefit. Without protections for immigrant workers, employers use threats of retaliation and deportation to silence whistleblowers and get away with abuse, which hurts them and the US workers who work alongside them.

The legislation should:

- Offer access to U-visa for workers in labor disputes or actively working to improve their working conditions.
- Include important worker protections from the POWER Act for immigrant workers who blow the whistle on employer abuse
- Ensure a road to citizenship and legal status that is not dependent on employment or family sponsorship
- Designate workers organizations like unions, workers centers and organizations like the National Domestic Workers Alliance to serve as “navigators” to help immigrants navigate eligibility and application processes for citizenship

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<sup>4</sup> Colorlines, “Nearly 205K Deportations of Parents of U.S. Citizens in Just Over Two Years”

[http://colorlines.com/archives/2012/12/us\\_deports\\_more\\_than\\_200k\\_parents.html](http://colorlines.com/archives/2012/12/us_deports_more_than_200k_parents.html)

<sup>5</sup> Applied Research Center, “Shattered Families: The Perilous Intersection of Child Welfare and Immigration Enforcement,” found at [www.arc.org/shatteredfamilies](http://www.arc.org/shatteredfamilies)



### **5) Safety and security for survivors of violence and trafficking**

Many survivors of violence are forced to stay silent in dangerous situations due to dependence on the sponsorship of an abusive spouse or employer, or fear that service providers, local police, and immigration enforcement agents share information that could lead to deportation. Immigration reform should:

- Expedite current family based sponsorships
- Expand protections and relief for survivors of trafficking
- Offer immediate relief for undocumented women who report, or seek help in cases of violence and abuse
- Strengthen self-petitioning for survivors of violence
- End collaboration between local police and federal immigration enforcement agencies
- Ensure full and immediate access to health care and social services for immigrant women survivors of violence and trafficking

The National Domestic Workers Alliance looks forward to working with the Senate Judiciary Committee and Congress to create, pass and implement fair and inclusive immigration reform that will meet the needs of domestic workers and immigrant women in general, and that will, by extension, benefit the millions of families and communities across this country that depend on our care.

Submitted for the record to the Senate Judiciary Committee

By the National Domestic Workers Alliance

Ai-jen Poo, Director

For information, contact Lisa Moore, [lisa@domesticworkers.org](mailto:lisa@domesticworkers.org)



## **Statement for the Record**

### **Senate Judiciary Committee**

#### **“Hearing on Comprehensive Immigration Reform Legislation”**

**April 18, 2013**

The National Immigration Forum works to uphold America’s tradition as a nation of immigrants. The Forum advocates for the value of immigrants and immigration to the nation, building support for public policies that reunite families, recognize the importance of immigration to our economy and our communities, protect refugees, encourage newcomers to become new Americans and promote equal protection under the law.

The National Immigration Forum applauds the Committee for holding this hearing on the matter of America’s broken immigration system and urges the Committee to take up Senate bill S. 744, the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act. We applaud the bipartisan Senate working group for making progress on much-needed reform of our immigration laws

We believe this time will be different when it comes to passing immigration reform. In the past two years, an alliance of conservative faith, law enforcement and business leadership has come together to forge a new consensus on immigrants and America. These relationships formed through outreach in the evangelical community; the development of state compacts; and regional summits in the Mountain West, Midwest and Southeast.

In early December 2012, over 250 faith, law enforcement and business leaders from across the country, came to Washington, D.C., for a National Strategy Session and Advocacy Day. They told policymakers and the press about the new consensus on immigrants and America. The event generated more than 60 news stories across the country, and participants organized 78 Hill meetings (57 with Republicans). More importantly, faith, law enforcement and business leaders from across the country committed to work together to urge Congress to pass broad immigration reform in 2013. In February, we launched the Bibles, Badges and Business for Immigration Reform Network to achieve that goal.

As the Committee discusses reforming our immigration system, we applaud the work of four of the committee’s members, Senators Richard Durbin, Charles Schumer, Lindsey Graham and Jeff Flake, who helped craft the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act. The bipartisan legislation is a strong start for the



immigration debate this year. People on both sides of the political spectrum have concerns about certain parts of the package. However, that is the nature of compromise: yielding on something we care about to move forward on what all of us care about.

However, now that the legislation is introduced, many will work to improve it as it goes through the regular order in the Senate, first in Committee and then to the Senate floor. This process is right and necessary to ensure that the bill has the broadest possible support. However, this bill is the product of a great deal of discussion and debate and negotiation already. It strikes a careful balance among its most important pillars: interior enforcement and border security, earned legalization and a path to citizenship, needed reforms to our current immigration system, and efforts to deal with the current backlog of immigration.

We urge this Committee, and all Senators, as they consider this bill, to continually remember that the whole of the bill, is much more than just the sum of its parts. Each part of the bill has impacts on the other areas. For example, we are very aware that many have criticized the failure of enforcement after the 1986 legislation was enacted and wish to see strengthened enforcement and border security measures in this bill. However, a singular focus on immigration enforcement will not result in workable solutions to our overall immigration system, and may, if too expensive or difficult to achieve, unduly delay reform and further politicize border security.

The border is more secure now than it has ever been. The “triggers” for border security proposed in the last attempt at comprehensive immigration reform in 2007 have all been met, and the provisions of the current bill reflect targeted, achievable additional measures without over-reaching.

Currently, the entire Southwest border is either “controlled,” “managed,” or “monitored” to some degree according to the Department of Homeland Security. A record 21,370 Border Patrol agents continue to be stationed at the border, a number that does not include the thousands of agents from other federal agencies, including the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI), and other agencies, supplemented by National Guard troops.

As of February 2012, 651 miles of border fencing have been built out of the 652 miles that the Border Patrol feels is operationally necessary. The fence now covers almost the entire length of the border from California to Texas. There is double fencing in many areas.

Customs and Border Protection now has more than 250 Remote Video Surveillance Systems with day and night cameras deployed on the Southwest border. In addition, the agency relies on 39 Mobile Surveillance Systems, which are truck-mounted infrared cameras and radar. CBP has also deployed additional Mobile Surveillance Systems, Remote Video Surveillance Systems, thermal imaging systems, non-intrusive inspection systems, radiation portal monitors, RFID readers and license plate readers to the Southwest border and is the process of acquiring more. CBP currently operates three Predator B unmanned aerial drones from an Arizona base and two from a Texas base, providing surveillance coverage of the entire Southwest border across Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas.

Prior to August 2006, many persons who were apprehended at the border were released pending their immigration hearing. That practice was ended in August 2006, and now nearly all persons crossing the border illegally are detained. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is now funded to hold 33,400 individuals in detention at any given time. Over the course of the government's fiscal year 2011, ICE reported that it detained more than 429,000 individuals, an all-time high and 118,000 more than the 311,000 individuals who were detained in 2007. For fiscal year 2012, ICE reported that it had removed nearly 410,000 persons, also a record. That number is approximately 91,000 more than were removed in 2007.

Border security is about much more than illegal immigration and, in fact, with the recent reductions in apprehensions, the missions of protecting against drugs and other contraband are arguably more of a priority. However, the National Immigration Forum believes that if a border security "trigger" to be part of immigration reform legislation it must meet the following principles:

A trigger must not indefinitely delay reform: The metrics laid out in the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act must stay definable border metrics that are attainable and that do not indefinitely hold up immigration reform. While further enforcement at the border is a worthy goal, our border will never be completely sealed and proposals that insist on a sealed border are nothing more than roadblocks intended to stop immigration reform.

Immigration Reform should not be dependent on future appropriations: In this time of tight budgets and partisanship in Washington, an immigration reform bill should not pass the buck to appropriators who may be unwilling or unable to fund the requirements imposed by the legislation, thereby indefinitely delaying reform. The Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act authorizes new fee-funded accounts to pay for additional border security measures. The fees and fines paid by immigrants applying under the new programs, and employers sponsoring



high-skilled immigrants and others will fund these measures. The amounts in the current bill, while steep enough to be considered severe, are not unattainable for immigrants and their families. However, funding additional, unneeded security measures on the backs of immigrants and employers will render the legalization and work visa programs unusable for many, undercutting the source of funding that some might like to achieve and overall making the entire system less viable.

Border Security is not a political issue: The Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act potentially would create a border commission headed by border community local elected officials and border security experts to make recommendations on how to achieve the 90% border effectiveness rate in high traffic border areas, if the government is unsuccessful in meeting this metric within 5 years. Any border commission that is created should be in an advisory capacity only. While the input of border communities is crucial, immigration reform for our *country* should not be held hostage by individuals with parochial or political interests. Ultimately, the federal government is in charge of securing our borders and the final decisions should lie with it.

The National Immigration Forum looks forward to continuing this positive discussion on how best to move forward with passing broad immigration reform into law this year. We cannot let the status quo continue any longer. The time is now for immigration reform.

**Statement of Heartland Alliance's National Immigrant Justice Center**

**Submitted to the Senate Judiciary Committee  
Hearing on Comprehensive Immigration Reform Legislation**

April 19, 2013

Heartland Alliance's National Immigrant Justice Center (NIJC) applauds the U.S. Senate's Gang of Eight for introducing immigration legislation that offers a roadmap to citizenship for millions of hard-working aspiring Americans living in the United States without immigration status.

Although it's not perfect, the proposed Senate bill S.744, titled the "Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act of 2013," makes significant positive changes to our country's immigration system. It provides appointed counsel for unaccompanied immigrant children and mentally ill individuals in deportation proceedings, strengthens human rights protections for immigrants in detention, and vastly expands access to legal orientation programs for detained immigrants. It also offers a roadmap to citizenship that includes thousands of families torn apart by deportation and repeals the asylum one-year deadline.

"Congress has an historic opportunity to pass an immigration law that relieves the severe pressure our justice system and communities have felt in recent years," said NIJC Executive Director Mary Meg McCarthy. "As an advocacy organization that has provided legal counsel to low-income immigrants for nearly 30 years, NIJC is committed to fighting for additional reforms that promote family unity and protect the due process and human rights of all immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers."

*Heartland Alliance's National Immigrant Justice Center is a Chicago-based nongovernmental organization dedicated to ensuring human rights protections and access to justice for all immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers through a unique combination of direct services, policy reform, impact litigation and public education. For more information visit [www.immigrantjustice.org](http://www.immigrantjustice.org).*

## PLANNED PARENTHOOD FEDERATION OF AMERICA

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** Wednesday, April 17, 2013

**CONTACT:** Planned Parenthood media office, 212.261.4433

### **Planned Parenthood Says Bipartisan Immigration Bill Is an Important First Step *Calls for Additional Efforts to Expand Access to Health Care***

**WASHINGTON**—Planned Parenthood Federation of America released the following statement on the bipartisan immigration bill put forward today by the Senate's "Gang of 8." Planned Parenthood Federation of America is a member of the [Alliance for Citizenship](#), a coalition representing a wide swath of organizations fighting for citizenship for 11 million immigrants and full and equal rights and fairness for all workers.

Statement from Cecile Richards, President, Planned Parenthood Federation of America:

**"The immigration reform bill introduced today is an important first step toward creating a long-overdue path to citizenship. We support the efforts that Congress is undertaking to reform our immigration system, and applaud this important show of bipartisan compromise.**

**"Planned Parenthood is committed to ensuring that all individuals have access to quality preventive health care. We are disappointed that this proposed legislation does not expand healthcare access to immigrants on the path to citizenship. As the nation's leading women's health care provider and advocate, we at Planned Parenthood understand the impact that barriers to health care can have on women and their families. The impact of these disparities is particularly devastating in immigrant communities. With lack of insurance and high out-of-pocket costs cited as major factors limiting immigrant women's access to preventive health care, it is important that we work to ensure health care access for all."**

#### **BACKGROUND**

- Immigrant women face a number of barriers to health care access, and as a result, are [less likely](#) to access preventive health care, such as Pap tests, STD screenings, and birth control than U.S. women.
- Lack of access to health care, including preventive health care, contributes to poorer health outcomes. For example, Asian and Pacific Islander immigrant women have [high rates of cervical cancer](#), and [more than half](#) of all pregnancies among Latina women are unintended.
- Lack of health insurance and high out-of-pocket costs are [cited as major factors](#) limiting immigrant women's access to preventive health care, including reproductive health.
- In 2011, [30 percent](#) of Latinos and [17 percent of Asian and Pacific Islanders](#) were uninsured.
- Low-income immigrant women have especially high rates of uninsurance. [Sixty percent](#) of low-income, non-citizen immigrant women of reproductive age lack health insurance, which is nearly twice the proportion of low-income, U.S.-born women.
- Most Americans [believe](#) that immigrants on the pathway to citizenship should be able to access Medicaid (63 percent) and subsidies to affordably buy insurance on the exchanges (59 percent).

**Translated Statement of Blas Burboa Leyva**  
**Submitted for Hearing on Comprehensive Immigration Reform Legislation**  
**Committee on the Judiciary**  
**United States Senate**  
**April 18, 2013**

**My experience as a temporary worker in the United States**

My name is Blas Burboa Leyva, I am 27 years old and I am from Morelia, Mexico. In order to cover the cost of my law education and to contribute something to my family's finances, in 2005 and 2006 I went to work in Arkansas with the tomato company, Candy Brand, on an H-2A visa.

A friend of mine told me about the opportunity and put me in contact with a person named Rubén who was the recruiter for the company as well as a supervisor in the fields. He charged me almost \$300 dollars to put my name on his list and then I had to pay another \$300 dollars to other recruiters to be able to get an appointment at the consulate in Monterrey. When it was time for my appointment, I traveled from Morelia to Monterrey where I had to pay for my lodging and food for three days. Altogether I had to pay more than \$900 dollars, which my mother loaned me, for the expenses of getting on the recruiter's list, the passport and the visa and the trip to Arkansas in addition to the lodging and food.

When I arrived in Arkansas, things got even worse. In 2005, I worked the first days in the field doing the most difficult work that I had ever done in my life. We worked long hours, usually from 5 in the morning until 5 in the afternoon and other days until the sun went down. Because of how difficult the work was many people vomited and fainted. Sometimes there was no water to drink on the buses when it was really hot. Rubén, the supervisor, treated us like animals even coming to the fields drunk on occasion. On top of that, he threatened my friend and me so that we would pay him \$3,000 dollars. I didn't have a way to defend myself as I saw that he was very close to the company's owners and I was afraid because I saw his son extorting [money from] some other workers with a gun. For doing such a hard job they only paid us \$50 dollars a day.

Fortunately, after nine days in the field I changed over to the packing shed. The work was less exhausting but it was still hard because you had to be standing up all day long. We began work at 6:00 a.m. and sometimes we worked up to 18 hours a day without receiving overtime. Also, the company did not reimburse us for the expenses that we had paid to come. At the end of my contract, which lasted a little more than a month, I returned to Mexico without having made any money.

I came back to work with Candy Brand in their packing shed in 2006 because of the lack of work in Mexico, hoping to make some money this time. Even though I was hired by a different recruiter, I had to pay the same amount of money in expenses to be able to get this opportunity. Like the year before, we worked long hours, seven days a week without receiving overtime or a reimbursement for the expenses incurred to come here.

We, as temporary workers, do not complain to our employers about the abuses we suffer out of fear and ignorance. First of all, we were in a foreign country, we lived in total isolation and there were no resources, like a center to help immigrants, somewhere nearby where you could go and seek help. They also had not given us information about our rights



as temporary workers. In addition, I was afraid that if I complained, they were going to fire me and I did not have anyone to go for help or any money to go back to my country.

I decided not to go back a third time because the work is very hard, abusive and unfair and I was afraid that I wouldn't be able to recover the investment you have to make to go and work in the US. Unfortunately, due to the lack of employment and low salaries in Mexico, many people find themselves forced to take this risk year after year.

When considering a change in the guest worker system I hope that the government takes my experience into account because it is the reality that many of my compatriots face. As we come to work in the most difficult industries in the United States, we risk our lives because we are exposed to violence, exploitation and inhumane treatment. Because of the role we play in your economy, we should at least have the basic rights: to receive a fair salary, to be treated like a human being and not like a disposable worker and to be able to demand our rights or leave an abusive employer without fear of retaliation.

**Statement of Blas Burboa Leyva**  
**Submitted for Hearing on Comprehensive Immigration Reform Legislation**  
**Committee on the Judiciary**  
**United States Senate**  
**April 18, 2013**

**Mi experiencia como trabajador temporal en los Estados Unidos**

Mi nombre es Blas Burboa Leyva, tengo 27 años de edad, y soy de Morelia, México. Para cubrir el costo de mi educación en leyes y aportar algo a la economía familiar, fui a trabajar en 2005 y 2006 con la compañía de tomate en Arkansas, Candy Brand, con la visa H-2A.

Un amigo mío me aviso de la oportunidad y me puso en contacto con una persona de nombre Rubén, que era reclutador para la empresa así como mayordomo en los campos. Me cobró casi 300 dólares para apuntar mi nombre en su lista y luego tuve que pagar otros 300 dólares a otros contratistas para sacar una cita en el consulado de Monterrey. Cuando me tocó la cita, viajé de Morelia a Monterrey donde tuve que pagar mi hospedaje y comida por tres días. En total, me tocó pagar más de 900 dólares, que me prestó mi mama, por los gastos de los apuntes de los contratistas, el pasaporte y la visa, el viaje hasta Arkansas, además del hospedaje y alimentación.

Cuando llegué a Arkansas, las cosas se pusieron peor aún. En 2005, trabajé los primeros días en el campo haciendo la labor más difícil que he hecho en mi vida. Trabajábamos largas horas, regularmente de 5 de la mañana hasta las 5 de la tarde, otros días hasta que caía el sol. Por la dificultad del trabajo, mucha gente vomitaba y se desmayaba. A veces no había agua en los camiones para tomar cuando hacía tanto calor. El mayordomo Rubén nos trataba como animales, yendo en ocasiones en estado de ebriedad a los campos. Además, a mí y a mi amigo nos amenazó para que le pagáramos \$3000 dólares. Yo no tenía modo de defenderme, ya que lo veía muy cerca de los dueños de la empresa y tenía miedo porque vi a su hijo extorsionando a otros trabajadores con una pistola. Por realizar este trabajo tan duro, solo nos pagaban \$50 dólares por día.

Afortunadamente, me cambié a la empacadora después de nueve días en el campo. El trabajo era menos agotador, pero seguía siendo difícil porque tenías que estar todo el día parado. Entrábamos a trabajar a las 6:00 a.m., y en ocasiones trabajábamos hasta 18 horas diarias, sin recibir overtime. La compañía tampoco nos reembolsó por los gastos que hicimos en venir. Al final de mi contrato, que duró poco más que un mes, regresé a México sin haber ganado nada de dinero.

Por falta de trabajo en México, volví a trabajar con Candy Brand en la empacadora en 2006 con la esperanza de ganar algo de dinero esta vez. Aunque conseguí el puesto por medio de otro reclutador, tuve que pagar los mismos gastos para conseguir la oportunidad. Como el año anterior, trabajábamos largas horas, siete días la semana, sin recibir overtime, ni un reembolso por los gastos que incurrimos al venir.

Nosotros, como trabajadores temporales, no reclamábamos a los empleadores acerca de los abusos que sufrimos por temor e ignorancia. En primer lugar, estábamos en un país extranjero, vivíamos en total aislamiento y no existían medios, como un centro de atención al migrante, al alcance donde uno pudiera buscar ayuda. Tampoco no nos habían informado

sobre nuestros derechos como trabajadores temporales. Además, yo tenía miedo de que si reclamaba, me iban a correr y no tenía a quién recurrir ni el dinero para regresar a mi país.

Decidí no regresar por un tercer año porque el trabajo es muy duro, abusivo y poco justo y temía no poder recuperar la inversión que tienes que hacer para ir a trabajar allá. Desafortunadamente, por la falta de empleo y los bajos salarios que sufrimos en México, mucha gente se ve obligada a tomar este riesgo año tras año.

Al considerar cualquier cambio al sistema de trabajadores huéspedes, espero que el gobierno tome en cuenta mi experiencia, que es una realidad que sufren muchos compatriotas míos. Al venir a trabajar a las industrias más difíciles en los Estados Unidos, arriesgamos nuestra vida, ya que estamos expuestos a la violencia, a la explotación y al trato inhumano. Por el papel que representamos en su economía, por lo menos debemos gozar de derechos básicos: a recibir un salario justo, a ser tratado como un humano más que un trabajador desechable y a reclamar nuestros derechos o dejar a un empleador abusivo sin miedo a represalias.

“Hearing on Comprehensive Immigration Reform Legislation”  
Statement for the Record<sup>1</sup>  
April 19, 2013

As the Senate Judiciary Committee meets to consider immigration reform, we, the undersigned women’s rights, immigrant rights and other organizations from across the United States, urge the Committee and all members of Congress to ensure that women’s priorities and lived realities are at the forefront of the immigration debate. We welcome the tremendous momentum around immigration reform and call on the members of the Senate Judiciary to take every necessary measure to ensure that reform is inclusive of women. Any future immigration laws and processes must ensure that women are treated humanely and fairly, and must allow them to fully contribute to our culture, economy, and communities in America. Immigration policy reform is not broad unless it includes women and meets the needs of their families.

Immigrant women make vital contributions to the rich social, cultural, intellectual, and economic fabric of the United States. Immigrant women are the drivers of integration: they encourage their families to learn English, succeed in school and business, pursue naturalization, and fulfill their civic responsibilities. Immigrant women fuel economic growth by starting new businesses<sup>2</sup> and contributing to the workforce in important ways. Immigrant women are key contributors in the informal economy, such as domestic care workers, taking care of other people’s families, the sick, elderly, and children. And immigrant women workers will only play a *greater* role in America’s economy going forward.<sup>3</sup> Despite, their many contributions to our families and communities, issues of concern to women continue to be left out of conversations about immigration reform.

The face of today’s immigrant is increasingly female. Immigrant women comprise 51% of all immigrants in the United States<sup>4</sup> and 100 immigrant women arrive in the United States for every 96 men.<sup>5</sup> Immigrant women come to the United States for many reasons, largely to improve their lives and those of their family. Immigrant women are motivated to provide a better life for their children, to keep their families together, and to reunite with their families.<sup>6</sup> They have already shown promise, ambition, and strength through their journeys and arrivals.

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<sup>1</sup> This statement was coordinated by We Belong Together and the National Coalition for Immigrant Women’s Rights

<sup>2</sup> Pearce S, Clifford E, Tandon R. *Our American Immigrant Entrepreneurs*. Immigration Policy Center. December 2011. Available at <http://www.immigrationpolicy.org/special-reports/our-american-immigrant-entrepreneurs-women>. Accessed April 14, 2013.

<sup>3</sup> Note: In less than 20 years – 75 million Americans will have reached retirement age and the overall demand for direct-care workers, who are predominantly women, is projected to increase by 48 percent over the next decade. PHI, Fact Sheet: *Occupational Projections for Direct Care Workers 2010-2020*, February 2013, Available at [http://phinational.org/sites/phinational.org/files/phi\\_factsheet1update\\_singles\\_2.pdf](http://phinational.org/sites/phinational.org/files/phi_factsheet1update_singles_2.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> United States Census Bureau. *2011 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates. Selected Characteristics of the Native and Foreign-Born Populations*. Available at: <http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/searchresults.xhtml?refresh=t>. Accessed on January 15, 2013.

<sup>5</sup> Migration Policy Institute. *MPI Data Hub: Foreign-Born Males per 100 Foreign-Born Females, for the United States: 1870 to 2011*. Available at <http://www.migrationinformation.org/datahub/charts/final.malesfemales.shtml> Accessed on January 15, 2013.

<sup>6</sup> New American Media. *Women Immigrants: Stewards of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Family*. February 2009. Available at <http://media.namx.org/images/communications/immwomenexecsummary.pdf>. Accessed on January 13, 2013.

Immigration reform must be inclusive of women and their families and responsive to their needs. We will all benefit from common-sense immigration policy that supports and protects families and empowers women to contribute their full selves to our communities, culture, and economy. As you review and debate immigration reform legislation, we urge you to ensure that the national conversation on common-sense immigration reform includes full consideration of the unique needs of women and the impact of policy choices on women and families.

Specifically, we ask that any immigration reform legislation address the following women's priorities and needs:

- **Include a broad, clear, affordable, and efficient roadmap to citizenship that recognizes the contributions of women and women's work.** Immigrant women, including the 60% of women in the informal economy and the 40% of undocumented women who work in the home caring for their children and families, must have a clear roadmap to citizenship equal to that available to men. It is imperative to keep in mind that undocumented women workers are primarily in the informal economy and any roadmap that links citizenship to continuous employment or proof of employment will leave millions of women behind. For example, in a survey of over 4000 low-wage workers in three largest cities in the US – New York, Chicago and Los Angeles—workers in occupations with high percentages of women did not receive pay stubs with their pay. 98% of surveyed undocumented nannies, 92% of maids and housecleaners, and 77% of garment workers did not receive any pay stubs.<sup>7</sup> In isolated and informal workplaces it is unrealistic to expect workers to ask their employers for documentation, especially immigrant workers with such little control over the terms and conditions of their work in the first place. Similarly, women whose work is in their home will be excluded from the roadmap if eligibility is linked to proof of employment. *The pathway to citizenship must be open, affordable, safe, and accessible to all women because all women are contributors to our economy and communities.*
- **Keep families together by creating a stronger, not weaker, family-based system that keeps family at the heart of the immigration process.** Strong families are the backbone of a strong society. For many decades, family was at the heart of our immigration system. Yet backlogs, inefficiencies, and the current debate about eliminating certain family visa categories are jeopardizing family unity and threatening this core American value. There are approximately 4 million people waiting in the backlogged family immigration system. Women are disproportionately affected by these huge backlogs and would be even more disproportionately disadvantaged if certain family visa categories are eliminated. Seventy percent of immigrant women currently attain legal status through a family-based visa—some waiting in line for decades to be reunited with their families.<sup>8</sup> When sufficient legal channels for migration do not exist, families suffer and incentives exist for people to migrate unlawfully. Family migration also supports economic growth, and the backlogs in the family system can hold our economy back. Women who enter through the family immigration system play key roles in the

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<sup>7</sup> National Employment Law Project, *Immigration Status and Pay Documentation*, 2008, Available at [http://nelp.3cdn.net/56610295228b59f19a\\_1km6ibvof.pdf](http://nelp.3cdn.net/56610295228b59f19a_1km6ibvof.pdf).

<sup>8</sup> National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum. *Facts About Family Immigration System and Asian Pacific Islander Women*. January 2011. Available at [http://nciwr.files.wordpress.com/2011/01/napawf\\_familyimmigration\\_factsheet-3.pdf](http://nciwr.files.wordpress.com/2011/01/napawf_familyimmigration_factsheet-3.pdf).

economy, starting businesses at high rates. Immigrant women now represent 40% of immigrant business owners in the United States, often while serving as the primary caregivers within their families.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, family members – in particular grandparents – often provide childcare, allowing younger members of the family to open businesses and participate in the workforce. Any shift away from a family-based immigration system would disproportionately affect women and children. We urge you to protect the important family based system that has been a cornerstone of United States immigration policy for so long and is critical to our future. For these same reasons, LGBT bi-national couples must be allowed to sponsor their partners or children for residency. Immigration reform must protect the right of all families to stay together, regardless of immigration status, family structure, sexual orientation, or marital status, and must provide sufficient family-based channels for migration in the future.

*Immigration reform must be inclusive, eliminate backlogs to keep families together, and honor the love and commitment of all families.*

- **Promote healthy families to strengthen communities.** Any immigration policy reform must enable participants to exercise both the responsibilities and rights of citizenship so that they may fully integrate into American society. Immigrant women and families work hard, pay taxes, and are committed to being in the United States. They should be able to pay their fair share for health care and should be included in our health care and other family economic support systems. Investing in health is common sense—and good fiscal policy. Immigrants are younger and healthier than the American population as a whole and expanded access to health coverage promotes the utilization of preventive care, and ultimately better and less costly health outcomes. If immigrant women are healthy, they are better able to contribute to the success of their children, which benefits the whole family. Protecting women and family's health is a much-needed step that leads to full social, economic, and civic integration. And in fact, a majority of Americans support improving immigrant equity in health care via immigration reform.<sup>10</sup>  
*Immigration reform must advance all immigrant women's access to health care and family economic supports, including comprehensive health coverage and care, so as to promote immigrant women's health, including reproductive health & decision-making, and ability to care for their families.*
- **Recognize women's work in future employment categories and protect women workers on the job.** Currently, only a quarter of all employment visas are given to women as principal holders. Two-thirds of immigrant women in the employment visa category enter as dependents on their spouse's visa, with no ability to work

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<sup>9</sup> Immigration Policy Center. *Our American Immigrant Entrepreneurs: The Women*. December 2011. Available at [http://www.immigrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/docs/Women\\_Immigrant\\_Entrepreneurs\\_120811.pdf](http://www.immigrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/docs/Women_Immigrant_Entrepreneurs_120811.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> A recent survey by the Kaiser Family Foundation found that 63% of Americans agree that immigrants currently without status who will obtain provisional status through immigration reform should be eligible for Medicaid coverage, meeting the program's other income requirements. And 59% believed immigrants with provisional status should be eligible for federal assistance to purchase a health plan if they do not have access to health insurance through their employer. Support for both proposals was higher among Black and Latino respondents. The study also found that many people underestimate the extent to which immigrants are excluded from affordable and quality health care options. Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation. Kaiser Health Tracking Poll: Public Opinion on Health Care Issues. February 2013. Available at <http://www.kff.org/kaiserpolls/upload/8418-F.pdf>. Accessed on April 14, 2013.

themselves.<sup>11</sup> This prevents these women from contributing their skills and qualifications to the country, and makes them more vulnerable to an abusive partner. Immigrant women also face sexual harassment and other exploitative working conditions in the workplace. *Immigration reform must include future flows in critical professions populated by women, allow dependent visa holders to work with full protections and adjust to legal permanent residency, and expand protections for immigrant women workers in asserting labor and civil rights.*

- **Ensure protections for women asylum seekers, and survivors of violence and trafficking.** Our current immigration system exposes many women to violence and fails to protect many others, including asylum seekers and survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, trafficking and other crimes. Women seeking to enter the United States to flee violence in their home country are exposed to violence en route and often upon arrival in the United States. Border deterrence programs further compromise women's well being by separating them from their families, removing them through unsafe areas, and discouraging them from making asylum claims or otherwise accessing protection. Inside the United States, enforcement policies such as Secure Communities, and a lack of labor protections, discourage survivors of violence and crime from coming forward to tell their story and seek assistance. Many women feel they must stay silent in dangerous situations due to dependency on the sponsorship of an abusive spouse or employer, or fear that engaging with service providers, local police or immigration agents could lead to deportation. *Immigration reform must provide sufficient lawful channels for migration, expand protections and relief for asylum seekers and survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and trafficking, increase the number of U-visas, and ensure full and immediate access to health care and social services for immigrant women fleeing violence inside the United States and abroad.*
- **Protect families and ensure due process.** Too many women and children unfairly bear the brunt of enforcement, detention, and deportation. In a recent two-year period, 23% of all deportations were issued for parents of United States citizen children.<sup>12</sup> In a nation that values liberty and justice for all, we cannot continue to put into practice laws that harm children and families, and punish aspiring Americans. Immigration reform must protect parental rights, expand access to legal counsel, and increase alternatives to detention. Immigration reform must also ensure due process that safeguards American values of fairness and justice. *Enforcement, detention, and deportation programs that compromise immigrant women's safety, violate their civil, human, and due process rights, and tear families apart must be replaced by sensible and sufficient legal channels for migration that adequately meet family and labor demands and respect our obligations under international law.*
- **Promote immigrant integration that includes and empowers women.** Approximately

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<sup>11</sup> National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum. *Facts About Family Immigration System and Asian Pacific Islander Women*. January 2011. Available at: [http://nciwr.files.wordpress.com/2011/01/napawf\\_familyimmigration\\_factsheet-3.pdf](http://nciwr.files.wordpress.com/2011/01/napawf_familyimmigration_factsheet-3.pdf).

<sup>12</sup> Colorlines.com. *Primary Data: Deportations of Parents of U.S. Citizen Kids*. December 2012. Available at: [http://colorlines.com/archives/2012/12/deportations\\_of\\_parents\\_of\\_us-born\\_citizens\\_122012.html](http://colorlines.com/archives/2012/12/deportations_of_parents_of_us-born_citizens_122012.html).

10 million immigrant women speak limited English<sup>13</sup> and need help from the federal government to learn our language and laws and ensure they can contribute their skills fully. They also need English to be able to report crimes, leave abusive relationships, and participate in their children's schooling and medical decisions. Onerous English language requirements, without providing immigrant integration assistance, in any reform legislation will exclude millions of women. Additionally, immigrant women need expanded access to legal and other social services that promote equality of opportunity and immigrant integration. *Providing immigrant women and families the tools for full integration now will pay off in their contributions later. Immigration reform must not be so onerous that it excludes millions for generations to come.*

As Americans, we honor and celebrate our unique commitment to protecting families, and giving equal opportunities and respect to women and girls. We look forward to working with the Senate Judiciary Committee and Congress on creating, passing, and implementing a common sense immigration reform that reflects this commitment to equality and opportunity for women.

Sincerely,

*National Organizations*

9to5

AF3IRM

AIDS United

America's Voice Education Fund

American Rights at Work

Americans for Immigrant Justice

American Medical Student Association

Asian American Justice Center, Member of Asian American Center for Advancing Justice

Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum

Asian Pacific Islander Institute on Domestic Violence

ASISTA Immigration Assistance

Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations

Association of Reproductive Health Professionals (ARHP)

Breakthrough

Casa de Esperanza: National Latin@ Network for Healthy Families and Communities

Center for Gender & Refugee Studies

Center for Reproductive Rights

Choice USA

Equal Rights Advocates

Family Values @ Work Consortium

First Focus

Futures Without Violence

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<sup>13</sup> Migration Policy Institute. *Immigrant Women in the United States*. December 2009. Available at <http://www.migrationinformation.org/usfocus/display.cfm?ID=763>.



General Service Foundation  
Institute for Science and Human Values Inc.  
Jobs with Justice  
Labor Council for Latin American Advancement  
MomsRising.org  
Ms. Foundation for Women  
National Alliance to End Sexual Violence  
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum (NAPAWF)  
National Association of Social Workers  
National Center for Transgender Equality  
National Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence  
National Coalition Against Domestic Violence  
National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs  
National Coalition for Immigrant Women's Rights  
National Council of Jewish Women  
National Council of Women's Organizations  
National Dating Abuse Helpline  
National Domestic Violence Hotline  
National Domestic Workers Alliance  
National Employment Law Project  
National Family Planning & Reproductive Health Association  
National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Action Fund  
National Immigrant Justice Center  
National Immigration Law Center  
National Immigration Project of the National Lawyers Guild  
National Korean American Service and Education Consortium  
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health  
National Network to End Domestic Violence  
National Organization for Women  
National Queer Asian Pacific Islander Alliance  
National Resource Center on Domestic Violence  
National Women's Health Network  
National Women's Law Center  
PFLAG National  
Planned Parenthood Federation of America  
Project Inform  
Raising Women's Voices for the Health Care We Need  
Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice  
Reproductive Health Access Project  
Reproductive Health Technologies Project  
Sexuality Information and Education Council of the U.S. (SIECUS)  
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC)  
Unid@s  
The Center for APA Women  
The United Methodist Church, General Board of Church and Society  
Unitarian Universalist Association

Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation  
United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries  
We Belong Together  
Women's Grassroots Congress  
Women of Reform Judaism  
Women's Refugee Commission  
YWCA USA

#### Regional Organizations

Alliance for a Just Society  
I AM CHOICE  
Lutheran Social Services of New England  
Mil Mujeres  
Southeast Immigrant Rights Network

#### Alabama

Somos Tuscaloosa-Tuscaloosa, AL  
Pleasant Grove United Methodist Women-Hanceville, AL

#### Arizona

Coalicion de Derechos Humanos-Tucson, AZ  
Mujeres por un Mundo Mejor-Florence, AZ  
Mujeres por un Mundo Mejor-Tucson, AZ

#### California

9to5 California  
Asian Pacific American Legal Center-Los Angeles, CA  
California Immigrant Policy Center  
California Latinas for Reproductive Justice-Los Angeles, CA  
California Primary Care Association  
Causa Justa : Just Cause-S.F. Bay Area, CA  
Centro Laboral de Graton-Graton, CA  
Centro Legal de la Raza-Oakland, CA  
Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice-Santa Barbara, CA  
East Bay Saturday Dialogues-Richmond, CA  
Forward Together-Oakland, CA  
Fuerza Mundial/International Tribunal of Conscience (Pueblos en Movimiento)-  
Santa Maria, CA  
Immigration Center for Women and Children-San Diego, CA  
Immigration Center for Women/Children-San Francisco, CA  
Law Office of Peggy Bristol Wright-Oakland, CA  
Maitri-San Francisco Bay Area, California  
Mujeres Unidas y Activas-San Francisco, CA  
National Council of Jewish Women California  
National Council of Jewish Women-Sacramento, CA  
Public Counsel Law Center-Los Angeles, CA

San Diego Day Laborers and Household Workers Association-San Diego, CA  
Services, Immigrant Rights and Education Network-San Jose, CA  
Sin Fronteras-Los Angeles, CA  
Women For: Orange County-Irvine, CA

#### Colorado

9to5 Colorado  
Colorado Organization For Latina Opportunity and Reproductive Rights-Denver, CO

#### Connecticut

Brazilian Immigrant Center-Bridgeport, CT  
Connecticut Legal Services Inc.-New Britain, CT  
New Haven Legal Assistance Association, Inc.-New Haven, CT

#### District of Columbia

Department of Anthropology, Georgetown University

#### Florida

Central Florida Jobs with Justice-Orlando, Florida  
Florida Coastal Law School Immigrant Rights Clinic-Jacksonville, FL

#### Georgia

9to5 Atlanta-Atlanta, GA  
Cherokee Family Violence Center-Canton, GA  
Cobb Immigrant Alliance-Austell, GA  
Feminist Women Health Center/ Lifting Latina Voices Initiative-Atlanta, GA  
Georgia Latino Alliance for Human Rights  
Georgia Rural Urban Summit-Decatur, GA  
Hearts On ICE- Savannah, GA  
Women Watch Afrika, Inc.-Decatur, GA

#### Illinois

El Hogar del Nino-Chicago, IL  
HIAS Chicago  
Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights  
Latino Union/Chicago Coalition of Household Workers-Chicago, IL

#### Maryland

GetEQUAL-Riverdale, MD  
Maryland Women's Coalition for Health Care Reform-Bethesda, MD  
PeterCares House-Greenbelt, MD  
Sin Fronteras-Langley, MD

#### Massachusetts

Brazilian Immigrant Center-Boston, MA

Dominican Development Center- Network of Women in Solidarity  
Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition  
Massachusetts Law Reform Institute-Boston, MA  
MataHari: Eye of the Day-Boston, MA

#### Michigan

Washtenaw Interfaith Coalition for Immigrant Rights-Washtenaw County, MI

#### Minnesota

Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota-St. Paul, MN

#### Mississippi

Mississippi Workers Center for Human Rights

#### Missouri

McCrummen Immigration Law Group- North Kansas City, MO  
Sierra Club-St. Louis, MO

#### Nebraska

Sisters of Mercy West Midwest Justice Team-Omaha, NE

#### New Jersey

Casa Esperanza-Plainfield, NJ  
Latino Action Network  
National Council of Jewish Women Concordia Section- Monroe Twp., NJ  
The Reformed Church of Highland Park-Highland Park, NJ

#### New York

African Services Committee  
CODEPINK-Long Island, NY  
The Black Institute- New York, NY  
Immigration Court Observation Project-New York, NY  
Jews for Racial and Economic Justice-New York, NY  
New York Lawyers for the Public Interest-New York, NY  
Northern Manhattan Coalition for Immigrant Rights- New York, NY  
Sakhi for South Asian Women-New York, NY  
Sauti Yetu Center for African Women-Bronx, NY  
SEPA Mujer Inc.- Central Islip, NY  
Violence Intervention Program-New York, NY  
Worker Justice Center of NY-Rochester, NY

#### North Carolina

El Pueblo, Inc.-Raleigh, NC  
N.C. Immigrant Rights Project-Durham, NC

### Ohio

Esperanza Viva Community Center  
Ohio Disability Action Coalition-Cincinnati, OH

### Oregon

Voz Hispana Causa Chavista-Woodburn, OR

### Pennsylvania

Women's Law Project

### Tennessee

Tennessee Immigrant & Refugee Rights Coalition (TIRRC)

### Texas

Catholic Charities Immigrant Legal Services-Dallas, TX  
Domestic Workers in Action-San Antonio, TX  
Fe y Justicia Worker Center-Houston, TX  
Human Rights Initiative of North Texas-Dallas, TX  
Hutto Visitation Program-Austin, TX  
The Islas Muñoz Law Firm, PLLC- El Paso, Texas  
Refugio del Rio Grande-San Benito, TX  
Southwest Workers Union-San Antonio, TX  
Texans United for Families-Austin, TX

### Utah

Perretta Law Office-West Jordan, Utah

### Washington

Casa Latina-Seattle, WA  
Children's Alliance  
OneAmerica  
Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence

### Wisconsin

9to5-Milwaukee, WI



**STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD OF ELEANOR ACER**

**Director, Refugee Protection Program**

**HUMAN RIGHTS FIRST**

**On**

**“Comprehensive Immigration Reform Legislation”**

**Submitted to the**

**Senate Judiciary Committee**

**April 19, 2013**

## **S. 744, Immigration Reform Legislation, Includes Key Reforms that Would Help Refugees by Making System More Efficient**

The bipartisan Senate immigration bill introduced on April 17, 2013, includes some provisions that could help thousands of refugees. The bill includes key provisions to eliminate the wasteful and unfair filing deadline that bars refugees with well-founded fears of persecution from asylum. The bill also recognizes that immigration reform should include improvements to address the broken and expensive immigration detention system. We welcome the Gang of Eight's (including Senators Charles Schumer, John McCain, Dick Durbin, Lindsey Graham, Robert Menendez, Marco Rubio, Michael Bennet and Jeff Flake) bipartisan approach to immigration reform and their reaffirmation of America's commitment to the protection of persecuted refugees.

The bill contains some key fixes that will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the U.S. asylum system. Prior to introduction of the bill, Human Rights First, as chair of the Asylum Working Group, coordinated a [letter to Congress](#) signed by over 160 organizations in support of improvements to the asylum system in immigration reform, several of which were incorporated into the legislation. In particular, the bill would eliminate an inefficient provision that has barred thousands of genuine refugees from asylum in the United States because they filed more than one year after their arrival in this country. The bill's provisions that will help protect refugees include measures that would:

- Eliminate the bar on asylum applications filed over one year after a refugee's arrival in the United States – this bar wastes governmental resources, unnecessarily diverts cases into the immigration court system, denies asylum to genuine refugees, and prolongs the separation of refugee families (sec. 3401);
- Improve efficiency by allowing some asylum seekers to have their asylum requests adjudicated initially by the asylum office instead of the immigration courts (sec. 3402);
- Increase staffing/reducing delays in immigration court, facilitate access to legal information and to counsel, and provide safeguards on the use of immigration detention – as detailed below; and
- Facilitate the reunification of some refugee families by allowing the children of the spouses of refugees granted asylum or refugee status to be treated as “derivatives” (sec. 3402).

The bill contains other humanitarian provisions, including a measure that would allow the U.S. government to address the plight of stateless individuals in the United States (sec. 3405).

In addition, the bill contains some common sense measures that will improve the efficiency and fairness of the immigration system more broadly, by facilitating access to counsel, increasing staffing and reducing delays in immigration courts and providing some basic safeguards on the use of immigration detention. These provisions include some that would:

- Increase the efficiency of the immigration courts by increasing the number of immigration judges and support staff - which will reduce delays in the overburdened and backlogged immigration court system (sec. 3501);
- Provide tested and efficient legal orientation presentations to all detained immigrants (sec. 3503);
- Facilitate access to counsel and authorize appointment of counsel for unaccompanied children and individuals who are incompetent due to serious mental disabilities (sec. 3502);
- Require establishment of secure alternatives to detention programs that incorporate case management services in each field office – alternatives to detention are more cost-effective than detention (costing 30 cents to \$14 per person per day, compared to \$164 per person per day for detention) and have been demonstrated to be effective in ensuring appearances for court dates and deportation (sec. 3715); and
- Extend the purview of the USCIS Ombudsman's Office to address additional immigration matters, including those relating to immigration detention (sec. 1114); and
- Strengthen accountability for non-compliance with detention standards (sec. 3716).

Not only will these common sense measures improve the efficiency of the immigration system, but they are also consistent with American values, commitment to fairness, and human rights.

Last week, Human Rights First hosted a day-long conference on immigration detention, convening former corrections officials and prosecutors, representatives of faith groups, attorneys, human rights advocates, and conservative leaders including Grover Norquist and Dr. Richard Land, to identify common-sense and rights-respecting reforms – some of which can only be accomplished via legislation.

In its review of the 844 page bill, S. 744 titled the “Border Security, Economic Opportunity and Immigration Modernization Act of 2013,” Human Rights First will be looking to ensure it does not include provisions that might undermine the ability of refugees to receive U.S. protection or adversely impact the human rights of immigrants. As the Senate Judiciary Committee prepares for mark-up of the bill, the organization plans to weigh in on any areas of the bill where amendments may be needed.

Introduction of today's Gang of Eight bill is the first step. We hope that Congressional leaders demonstrate their commitment to refugee protection by supporting needed reforms and preventing any harmful amendments.