

1 ^{no one} Almost noone disputes that the current immigration ✓
2 system is outdated and must be reformed to meet the needs
3 of our 21st century economy. Yet, for more than a
4 quarter of a century, Congress, led by both parties, has
5 failed or refused to modernize our immigration system in
6 any meaningful way.

7 Current legal challenges of immigration date back to
8 1990. They remain frozen in a time before most Americans
9 had cell phones or computers and before the exodus of
10 millions of baby boomers out of our labor force and into
11 retirement.

12 By refusing to do its job and update our immigration
13 system to reflect the needs of our modern economy,
14 Congress is ignoring powerful resources and squandering
15 the opportunity to fully harness its full potential.

16 Despite decades of neglect, the fact is that
17 meaningful comprehensive immigration reform is an
18 achievable objective. Bipartisan legislative proposals
19 have been introduced in Congress many times in the past
20 decade and the policy prescriptions for reform are well
21 known and strongly supported.

22 A strong majority of Americans support efforts to
23 reform the immigration system, including proposals to
24 provide permanent status for the undocumented who have
25 been part of our communities for decades. America wants

1 and needs an immigration system that is flexible and
2 smart, one that responds to the demographic realities of
3 the U.S. population, the demands of the U.S. economy, and
4 the needs of American families.

5 A functional immigration system can and should play a
6 supporting role in ensuring fair wage levels and humane
7 working conditions for all workers, Native and foreign-
8 born alike.

9 Importantly, these goals can be achieved while
10 creating a system that operates effectively so that
11 employers can hire needed workers quickly and
12 efficiently, and family members can be united with their
13 loved ones in a timely manner.

✓ 14 The bottom line is this: ~~our~~ ⁿ nation needs forward-
15 looking immigration policies that marshal the power of
16 immigration as an economic tool and embrace the
17 contribution of immigrants to our shared prosperity.

18 AILA urges Congress to put forward and pass
19 meaningful bipartisan solutions that will bring our
20 system into the 21st century. The reward for this kind
21 of leadership will be an immigration system that is even
22 better for American workers, better for American
23 families, and better for the American economy.

24 [The prepared testimony of Mr. Johnson appears in the
25 appendix.]

1 analyze the kind of data that would give us opportunities
2 to understand more about these kinds of issues with
3 regard to immigration.

4 So I think we can and should build an immigration
5 system that is smarter and more flexible and responsive
6 to conditions in our economy, but those conditions cannot
7 be ~~uniformly~~ ^{exclusively} and uniquely focused on one issue. And we
8 certainly do not want to create across the Nation a
9 culture or an environment of widespread scarcity.

10 What we want to be able to do in order to get
11 ourselves out of the economic situation that we are in is
12 to create opportunities for growth. ~~That is~~ ^{The} only way
13 that the economy is going to be able to absorb more
14 workers across the spectrum is to find opportunities for
15 growth.

16 So the goal of an immigration policy cannot simply be
17 to say that we will not have any immigrants as long as we
18 have an unemployed worker someplace in America.

19 The goal of an immigration system is to provide
20 employers and local communities another option in terms
21 of providing opportunities for growth and expansion. It
22 is a tool, one tool, not the only tool, but one important
23 tool in ^{our} ~~a~~ toolbox for building economic opportunities.

24 And then we need other social policies to figure out how
25 do we make sure that African-Americans and other ~~less~~

✓ 1 ~~skilled~~ workers have opportunities to partake in that
2 economic growth.

3 The idea that immigration is going to solve the
4 problems of African-American exclusion from the growth
5 opportunities in the United States is a fiction that is
6 just not going to withstand scrutiny.

7 I mean, if you look at Steve's recent study that goes
8 back to 1970, marking the dramatic increase in
✓ 9 immigration since 1970, ~~he~~ ^{he cherry picked} has ~~picked~~ the lowest points
10 of immigration in the United States to show this dramatic
11 increase. But I would note that in 1970, at that time,
12 African-American unemployment rates were above 10
13 percent. They were then, when there were very, very few
14 immigrants in our labor force, still twice as high as
15 native-born unemployment rates.

✓ 16 The idea that you can solve those kinds of systemic
17 problems of exclusion from economic growth of certain
18 groups in our society by looking at the immigration
19 system is a fiction.

20 Here is another thing I think we can agree on.
21 Undocumented immigration is a huge problem. I will be
22 brief. But -- and to the extent we see negative impacts,
23 particularly at the low wage or the low skilled sector,
24 it is because of the fact that we have turned our back on
25 the immigration system, ignored the fact that we had a