

BUSINESS WORKING GROUP

August 5, 2009

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Chair
Subcommittee on Immigration, Refugees
and Border Security

Committee on the Judiciary
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Zoe Lofgren
Chair
Subcommittee on Immigration, Citizenship,
Refugees, Border Security and
International Law

Committee on the Judiciary
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Schumer and Chairwoman Lofgren:

As coalitions representing employers from virtually every sector in the U.S. economy, we applaud the renewed focus you and your fellow policymakers have placed on immigration reform. We also appreciate the time you have taken recently to brief us and other immigration stakeholders on your respective views on the process going forward. We look forward to working with you and your colleagues to craft a workable, common sense solution to the immigration issue.

Many of the broad elements of comprehensive reform are part of a growing consensus: strengthened border security; the development of accurate, timely, employment eligibility verification systems; resolution of the status of the current unauthorized population; and process improvements for current legal immigrants. But we cannot forget another key element of effective reform: future immigration. To truly fix the problem, a reform package must ensure that America's economy will have the legal workforce it needs in the decades to come. It must create a legal system that is responsive to the U.S. economy.

The business community has often felt the limits of the current legal system. American employers from many sectors – those who use high- and low-skilled workers – have felt acute workforce constraints. And demographic trends make future workforce needs inescapable, creating a clear need for a non-politicized, legal immigration system that responds to the diverse economic needs of our various workforce sectors as they arise.

Any plan to address future immigration should be flexible enough to adapt to changing workforce conditions, including new, emerging industries. And it should be able to respond to the workforce needs of the nation's myriad industry sectors in a timely and accurate fashion.

The existing broken immigration system offers many cautionary lessons for Congress and the President. Policymakers must fix the system – with an eye toward both our current economic situation and our nation's future economic growth. The business community looks forward to working with Congress to achieve the goal of rational, workable immigration reform that benefits the United States and U.S. workers while maintaining America's role as a welcoming nation of immigrants.

Sincerely,

Agriculture Coalition for Immigration Reform

American Farm Bureau

Americans for Immigration Reform

Compete America

Essential Worker Immigration Coalition

ImmigrationWorks USA

Mexicans & Americans Thinking Together

National Association of Manufacturers

U.S. Chamber of Commerce

cc: The Honorable John Cornyn
Ranking Member
Senate Subcommittee on Immigration, Refugees and Border Security

The Honorable Steven King
Ranking Member
House Subcommittee on Immigration, Citizenship, Refugees, Border Security
and International Law