



**STATEMENT**  
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## A CRITICAL STEP FORWARD

*Yesterday, the Senate Judiciary Committee passed the Border Security, Economic Opportunity and Immigration Modernization Act, voting 13 to 5 to send the measure to the full Senate for debate. ImmigrationWorks USA president Tamar Jacoby made the following statement:*

ImmigrationWorks congratulates the Senate Judiciary Committee on a critical step forward.

S. 744 is a balanced, bipartisan bill with the makings of landmark legislation. It balances a humane, practical answer for the 11 million unauthorized immigrants in the United States with toughminded determination to enforce the rule of law on the border and in the workplace. It honors America's traditional commitment to family-based immigration but recognizes the nation's growing need for foreign workers, skilled and unskilled, and mandates a long overdue rebalancing of these priorities.

Perhaps most important for employers who hire immigrants and for all Americans who want to see an end to illegal immigration, the Senate legislation creates a new temporary worker program that will enable less-skilled immigrants to enter the U.S. legally in years ahead, filling jobs when there are no willing and able Americans. The Judiciary Committee's passage of S. 744 represents vital bipartisan recognition that the U.S. needs a less-skilled worker visa program to redirect illegal immigration into legal channels, replacing the chaos on our borders with a safe, orderly process and providing employers in an array of sectors with an ample legal labor force.

The Senate Judiciary Committee modestly improved S. 744, but there is still work to be done. The W Visa program approved by the committee is not likely to be big enough to meet U.S. labor needs in years ahead. Also troubling is the way the program discriminates against the construction industry, imposing a quota within a quota that could halt the growth of one of the nation's most dynamic and vital business sectors. Together, these limitations will create incentives for future illegal immigration, and they among other provisions must be addressed if the bill is to live up to its historic promise.

ImmigrationWorks looks forward to working with lawmakers in the Senate and the House to refine and improve the Senate's blueprint. The nation faces a rare opportunity – the stakes could hardly be higher. Approval by the Senate Judiciary Committee moves us one step closer to reform and to implementing a 21st century immigration system that can serve America's interests in the decades ahead.

**ImmigrationWorks USA president Tamar Jacoby can be reached for comment at 202 407-9372.**

*ImmigrationWorks USA is a national federation of employers working to advance better immigration law. The network links major corporations, national trade associations and 25 state-based coalitions of small to medium-sized business owners concerned that the broken immigration system is holding back the nation's economic growth. Their shared aim: legislation that brings America's annual legal intake of foreign workers more realistically into line with the country's labor needs.*