

## **HOUSE IMMIGRATION REFORM PART I 2013**

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AILA (American Immigration Lawyers Association) has provided its Take on “House Immigration Reform” which covers various topics including Legalization of undocumented aliens, provisions in Senate Bill S.744 passed by the Senate, what is happening in the House on Immigration Reform, the Legal Immigration System – Family and Business, Employment Immigration, Skills Act, Agricultural Guest worker Act, Border Security plans, and how Border triggers to Legalization, Interior enforcement and detention and deportation of individuals in unlawful status, Employment Verification and Legal workforce Act HR 1772, and other issues.

In the series of articles, we will provide detailed information on AILA’s Take on House Immigration Reform.

American families, businesses, and communities are all affected by the shortcomings of our outdated immigration laws. Our nation needs a common sense policy that keeps families together, rebuilds our economy, strengthens our security, and provides legal status and the prospect of citizenship for aspiring new Americans. Our immigration laws must reflect America’s core values of fairness, equality and justice. Finally, true reform must address all parts of our immigration system in order to prevent one broken piece from undermining the whole system.

### **Legalization**

Immigration reform cannot be successful without a solution for the estimated 11 million undocumented immigrants who are working and living in the U.S. It is in our nation’s security, economic, and humanitarian interests to bring undocumented immigrants out of the shadows and provide them with legal status and eventually the opportunity to apply for a green card and citizenship that the current system for legal immigration has never allowed.

- The American people overwhelmingly support legalization. A June 2013 Fox News poll showed 74 percent of registered voters favor legalization and eventual citizenship for the undocumented.
- Any legalization plan should be broad and inclusive to ensure the greatest participation. Legalizing only a small proportion of the relevant population would defeat the goals of registering those who are here.

### **Senate bill, S.744**

The Senate bill’s legalization plan establishes stringent eligibility criteria for someone to qualify for Registered Provisional Immigrant status, including payment of fines and taxes and the learning of English. Those who register will have to wait at least ten years before being able to apply for green cards and cannot do so before everyone in the current visa backlogs receives their green cards. Among the toughest legalization plans ever proposed, the Senate bill would exclude anyone who poses a threat to our communities or to national security.

- Legalization is in our economic interests. The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) concluded that the Senate bill, S. 744, will grow the nation’s economy and reduce the federal deficit by \$158 billion over the next 10 years and \$685 billion more over the following decade. Much of these gains would come from legalization.

## **The House**

As yet, none of the bills introduced in the House include a legalization component. Majority Leader Cantor and Judiciary Chairman Goodlatte have announced intentions of introducing a bill similar to the DREAM Act. This would be a start, but a full legalization plan is necessary to ensure millions of people are not left in the shadows. In early July, Rep. Goodlatte said that House Republicans could back a legalization plan. However, the details of this plan are as yet unclear and do not specify how or whether those registering could achieve permanent residence or citizenship. Without more, many who participate in legalization could be stuck in a long term limbo status. The central problem with such a status is the division it would foster in society by creating a large population that can never achieve equality. The legalization plan needs to honor America's immigrant tradition and be designed in a way that enables the potential for those participating to achieve full status as Americans.

*To be continued...*

For more information, please feel free to contact the Immigration and Nationality Lawyers at the NPZ Law Group at 201-670-0006 or by e-mailing us at [info@visaserve.com](mailto:info@visaserve.com).