

Businesses Stand with Immigrants

To Our Elected Officials:

We are a diverse group of employers, business owners, and entrepreneurs who are united in our respect for and appreciation of the immigrants we work with every day. We celebrate our immigrant heritage, whether we ourselves are new Americans or the descendants of enterprising immigrants who took the risk long ago to come to the United States. The men and women we work with represent many nations and backgrounds, and bring a range of skills and talent to their jobs, but all share a commitment to their adopted country.

We are a nation made stronger when we are more generous and open to immigrants from around the world, whether they come as refugees, to reunite with a close family member or to work for an employer who needs their particular skill set. Our character as a nation is defined not only by our immigrant heritage but by the message we send to new immigrants who seek to join our beloved country.

We join those who reject arbitrary restrictions based on religion or country and ask instead that the President and Congress join together to address the true problems facing our immigration system. We ask that Congress enact, and the President sign, laws that modernize our system by ensuring that there are sufficient visas to meet the demand for permanent and short-term workers, that enterprising individuals have the chance to contribute their skills and talents, and to earn citizenship, without regard to race, or color or creed. As the American economy and communities grow, so too does our nation's need and capacity for newcomers. Both family and employment visa categories are vital to our national interest, and expansions in one category should not be viewed as necessitating decreases in another. Some argue that immigrants take jobs from native-born Americans, but the facts prove otherwise. Immigrants are engines of growth; they start businesses and create jobs. We ask that opportunities be made available to people with varying skill sets and family ties, as we know that the likelihood of success cannot be measured by criteria that admit only the best educated or wealthiest immigrants.

We also recognize that undocumented immigrants have been productive, if not essential, contributors to society and to the American economy. In our zeal to enforce the law or protect the country we cannot forget that those who lack legal status are very much a part of our families and communities and should have the opportunity to legalize their status.

America needs immigrants every bit as much as those seeking refuge and opportunity need America. As President Ronald Reagan stated in 1981:

Immigration and refugee policy is an important part of our past and fundamental to our national interest. With the help of the Congress and the American people, we will work towards a new and realistic immigration policy, a policy that will be fair to our own citizens while it opens the door of opportunity for those who seek a new life in America.

We ask our leaders to put aside partisanship and recognize that reforming our immigration system consistent with our democratic values is vital to our future as a great, prosperous, and generous nation.