



THE NEW YORK IMMIGRATION COALITION

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PRESS STATEMENT

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IMMIGRANT GROUP VOWS TO FIGHT BUSH IMMIGRATION PROPOSAL

New York City, October 19, 2005. The New York Immigration Coalition denounces the Bush Administration's immigration proposal, revealed yesterday by senior officials in a hearing before the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Labor Secretary Elaine Chao and Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff outlined a plan that calls for stepped-up enforcement at the border and in the interior, combined with a temporary-worker program that kicks workers out of the United States after six years.

Unfortunately, the President's "report to deport" scheme is unrealistic and unworkable. Far from being compassionate, it crushes the dreams of millions of immigrants who, like generations of immigrants before them, hoped that their hard work and dedication to the American Dream would earn them the right to call this country their home.

The Bush plan emphasizes more of the same ineffective enforcement that has led to thousands of deaths at the border. It would sap hard work and taxes out of immigrant workers who are the backbone of our economy, but leave them open to exploitation by unscrupulous employers. Perhaps the greatest insult, however, is the lack of any path to permanent residence and citizenship, which essentially says to immigrants, "Work hard, pay taxes, and then get lost! You are welcome in the lowest rung of our economy but not in our society."

We urge President Bush to stop catering to the extremist, xenophobic wing of his party and forge bipartisan consensus around reforms that strengthen our families and our communities, advance our economic prosperity, and enhance our security. A good starting point for reform is the bipartisan Secure America and Orderly Immigration Act of 2005, sponsored by Senators John McCain (R-AZ) and Edward Kennedy (D-MA) and Representatives Luis Gutierrez (D-IL), Jeff Flake (R-AZ), and Jim Kolbe (R-AZ). In addition, we call on the President and Congress to pass the DREAM Act and AgJOBS bills, which would grant legal status to undocumented students and farmworkers, respectively.

New York's Senators Schumer and Clinton have not yet expressed clear support for legalization and comprehensive immigration reform. We urge them to stand up for New York's immigrant communities, speak out against the White House proposal, and support the McCain-Kennedy immigration reform bill.

The NYIC will continue to partner with religious, labor, and business communities and reform-minded Americans to broaden support for smart, sensible, and fair immigration reform that respects our proud tradition as a nation of immigrants.

The NYIC is an umbrella policy and advocacy organization with more than 160 member groups in New York that work to promote fairness and opportunity for today's immigrants and refugees.

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