



March 22, 2006

The Honorable Senator Arlen Specter
United States Senate
711 Hart Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Specter:

On behalf of the community that we serve, we would like to inform you of some of the pending concerns that we have with the immigration reform proposals being discussed in the Senate Judiciary Committee. We are community-based organizations from all over the country that are providing much needed services to the Arab-American and Muslim community. On a daily basis, our staff and board members hear the concerns of citizens and non-citizens about the anti-immigrant legislation taking place in Congress, especially those that may increase violations of civil liberties and rights, fuel a surge in hate crimes and abuse towards immigrant families. Our organizations are dedicated to empowering people to lead more informed, productive, and fulfilling lives. One of our major focuses is to assure that our local communities are heard at the national level and one of the repeated concerns we hear is the importance of fixing our broken immigration system.

As human service providers, we know first-hand how our broken immigration system is affecting local communities. As you know, immigrant communities are some of the most vulnerable and we believe that increasing access to much needed human service programs promote dignity and independence. We are extremely concerned with the inclusion of some of the enforcement measures (i.e. mandatory and indefinite detentions), especially those that jeopardize due process of the law, such as the so called "report to deport" measures, the enforcement of immigration laws by local police, the criminalization of organizations like ours that may come in contact with undocumented people, the creation of a sub-class for immigrant workers and the lack of paths to permanent residency and citizenship.

We ask that you support immigration reform that is similar to the McCain/Kennedy *Secure America* (S 1033) bill which addresses backlogs, promotes family reunification, safeguards due process, offers a path to citizenship and recognizes the contributions immigrants make to our country. Our communities need better naturalization programs that are committed to the full integration of newcomers by providing quality English instruction, promoting and preparing them for citizenship, and providing them with

opportunities to improve their quality of life in the U.S. We urge you to support a fair and just solution that does not punish law-abiding immigrants that have contributed to our society, both culturally and economically.

Sincerely,

American Arab Heritage Council, Michigan
Arab Cultural Center, California
Arab American Action Network, Illinois
Arab-American Community Center, Florida
Arab American Community Center for Economic and Social Services, Ohio
Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services, Michigan
The Arab American Cultural and Community Center, Texas
The Arab American Family Support Center, New York
Access California Services, California
Philadelphia Arab American Community Development Corp, Pennsylvania
Arab American Association of New York, New York
Arab-American Family Services, Illinois
Greater Lansing Arab American Social Services, Michigan

Cc: Senate Judiciary Committee Members