

Title II Talking Points

April 7, 2006

In upcoming events we are urging colleagues to make sure that the “civil rights for immigrants” message is featured prominently. We have made enormous progress on our messages regarding criminalization, legalization, family reunification, workers rights, and protections. But harsh enforcement provisions remain in legislation before the Senate (“Title II” issues). Unless we raise these issues and fight for changes, any bill that might pass this year could include terrible setbacks that will undermine our gains on other fronts. Here are some suggested talking points on these critically important civil rights issues.

Don’t Gut ‘Legalization’ Before It Starts

Dozens of hidden traps in the Senate and House bills sabotage the “legalization” programs and will exclude tens of thousands of people. This would undermine the very purpose of earned legalization, which is to encourage undocumented immigrants to come forward and become full members of American society.

Don’t Turn Our Local Police Into Federal Immigration Agents

Asking local law enforcement to ask those who look like immigrants about their immigration status would be a public safety disaster. It will lead to racial profiling and undermine community policing strategies that are aimed at building trust and solving local crimes. This is why police officials from across the country oppose this idea.

Let Every Person Have Their Day In Court

The Senate proposals put unchecked power in the hands of bungling bureaucrats in the Department of Homeland Security – the people who brought you the Katrina relief effort. Citizens, green card holders, and the undocumented could all be affected. Due process is the foundation of American justice and should be preserved for all.

Stop Cruel Deportations – Keep Families Together and Communities Strong

The Senate and House bills will rip families apart by permanently separating children from parents and spouses from each other, often for minor infractions for which deportation is an unfair and excessive punishment. The government would send back countless families seeking safety from war, persecution, and violence.

Build Bridges Not Jails

Immigration reform should bring immigrants out of the shadows, not consign them to mandatory detention and deportation. Locking innocent people up in jails and military bases without meaningful review – even those who pose no flight risk or danger to the community – is not the American way.

Choose Freedom, Not Fear

We are at a crossroads in America. We have to make a choice about what kind of a country we want to be. Do we want to live with pre-dawn raids on innocent families, Federal agents crawling through our communities, armed military camps, thousands of deaths along our walled borders? Or will we support a positive vision of America made strong, secure, and vibrant by full participation of immigrant families?