

**For Immediate Release**

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**Senate Immigration Bill Jeopardizes Rights and  
Liberties,  
Offers Little Hope for Millions of Immigrant Workers  
and Their Families**

**Immigrant Communities Continue Demanding Fair and  
Just Immigration Reform**

(Oakland, CA) The U.S. Senate has passed an immigration bill that promises little relief for millions of immigrants, documented and undocumented, who have come to the U.S. to reunify with families, for their own and their children's economic survival and wellbeing. The compromise bill that made its way through the Senate process is a far cry from the positive and sweeping immigration reforms still needed. Its purported path to legalization is a gauntlet of unfair treatment, severe fines, separation of families and stepped up deportations.

We are outraged and disappointed, but not surprised, by the passage of this bill. Many of the provisions in the Senate bill will foster racial segregation and discrimination. The Senate bill will marginalize immigrants into a new type of second-class status, where immigrants -- or anyone who "looks or sounds" foreign -- will be readily subjected to discrimination, exploitation and abuse where they live, work, study and worship. The bill will all but give a green light to anti-immigrant hate violence. If the rights and stability of our communities are to survive, this Senate bill, and the bill that was passed in the House last December, HR 4437, need to be scrapped.

Unfortunately, the Senate passed on an opportunity to provide strategic and respectful leadership on the immigration issue, to support a real alternative to the narrow and restrictive immigration bill passed by the House.

The Senate bill mimics many provisions of the enforcement-laden House bill passed in December. Some members of the House are already declaring they will never support even some limited provisions of the Senate bill. We have no confidence that the conference process between the House and Senate can reconcile HR 4437 and SB 2611 to produce a bill that could be fair or just. Moreover, we are concerned that many immigrants will be confused by the news of the Senate's action and will be targeted by

unscrupulous lawyers and programs for scam "legalization" applications. Over the next weeks and months as the electoral campaigns heat up, we need to make sure that communities understand the consequences and limits of this bill, that it is not yet law, and that is not the fair and just program that millions have rallied for during the past few months.

SB 2611 will undermine labor rights and protections. It will divide immigrant families and communities with its so-called three-tier "legalization" program. Like the House bill, it moves in the wrong direction to shore up flawed and failed programs - including the construction of hundreds of miles of walls and barriers at the border, and expanding a "worker verification system." Billions of tax dollars have gone into border enforcement over the past decade with no impact on migration flows, instead creating a human rights crisis as migrants and their children have suffered abuses and have died while desperately crossing dangerous border stretches in search of family, work and survival.

Proponents of the bill have claimed that it will provide a path to legal status for over eight million undocumented immigrants; unfortunately, the reality is that far fewer would likely benefit from this bill's program. Legal status would be out of reach for many undocumented whose eligibility would be undercut by other devastating provisions of the bill. Millions would have to leave the country in order to qualify at a future date, and still others would become immediately subject to deportation. Rather than providing access to legal status - even over a number of years - the Senate's proposal will leave millions living and working in the shadows, still vulnerable to exploitation in the workplace, and without the prospect of true immigration reform for years to come.

The Senate legislation, even without HR 4437, poses a severe threat to community stability, undermining our human rights and civil liberties: SB 2611 would reinstate indefinite detention of immigrants, encourage state and local law enforcement of federal immigration laws, and expand the definition of an aggravated felony - so that even minor offenses could result in deportation and the separation of families. The bill even includes an "English Only" provision - a mean-spirited proposal that was wrong 20 years ago and is wrong today.

Barely differentiating itself from HR 4437, the Senate bill's provisions expanding guest worker programs is not the way to address the issues of "future flows" of immigration. Immigrants seeking to work here should have opportunities that allow them to work on an equal footing with native-born workers. They should have the right to set down roots and to determine where they live and work. By their very nature, guest worker programs diminish the rights of all workers, immigrant and native born, to the benefit of employers. Guest worker programs ensure that more families will continue being separated, causing disruptions and destabilization of communities.

If we truly want to address future flows, our nation needs to support the development of sustainable economies that benefit communities and negotiate fair trade agreements, so that workers in other countries have greater access to jobs, better wages and decent

working conditions and are not forcibly propelled into the global streams of migration in search of work and survival

We reiterate our call to Congress to craft legislation that provides legalization with rights, full labor protections, reunifies families, makes the border safe for the rights of migrants and communities, and provides legal and safe ways to migrate, with genuine access and options to permanent residency and citizenship. Our country depends on it; our communities demand it.