



February 2006

With regard to the Border and Immigration Enforcement Act, H.R. 4437, as proposed and approved by the House of Representatives, we stand oppose to the "Border and Immigration Enforcement Act of 2005" H.R. 4437 which has been introduced by Congressman Sensenbrenner. Our nation's security depends upon the passage of comprehensive immigration reform that is fair and effective. The House version of the legislation is neither. We also believe that smart, effective, and realistic enforcement of a well-functioning immigration system is possible. H.R. 4437 does not take us down the path to real immigration reform.

* Whereas, the bill criminalizes the undocumented population in the United States and will flood our jails with harmless, decent, respectable and responsible immigrant workers.

* Whereas, the bill would broaden the definition of smuggling and would apply to and criminalize the work of social service organizations, refugee agencies, churches, pastors, attorneys, and other groups that counsel immigrants, as well as family members or employers or any other immigrant advocates that provide humanitarian assistance, treating them the same as smuggling organizations.

* Whereas, with that definition, family members, employers and pastors, etc. could be fined and imprisoned for "harboring," "shielding," "assisting," or "transporting" undocumented individuals since they would be considered "criminals."

* Whereas, the bill would waste federal tax dollars on persecuting the most vulnerable population in the United States when the reality is we need their labor just as much as they need an opportunity to work. In most

cases, they work in jobs that most U.S. Citizens do not want.

* Whereas, the bill would destabilize the U.S. economy by creating an aggressive employment verification system without providing an opportunity for essential workers to work legally.

* Whereas, the bill would prevent the 11 million undocumented immigrants in the United States from ever being eligible for legal status.

* Whereas, the bill would forever deny citizenship to any legal permanent resident who was unlawfully present in the United States at any time.

* Whereas, the bill severely reduces due process rights for legal immigrants in a way that dramatically undercuts basic principles of American justice.

* Whereas, by focusing only on enforcement, this bill will force undocumented immigrants further into the shadows endangering their lives and making all of us less safe.

We cannot allow this type of legislation to go unchecked.

Hispanic Americans, like all Americans, want effective reform of the nation's immigration laws, not short-sighted measures that appear tough on immigration but do not resolve the underlying problems. HCPCIR believes that only a comprehensive approach that (a) provides a path to citizenship for current undocumented immigrants, (b) deals with the 11 million already here in the United States, (c) reunites families and reduces family immigration backlogs, (d) protects workers' rights, and (e) addresses the needs of American employers to utilize immigrant labor, will reduce undocumented immigration and bring better order to our immigration system. Furthermore, we also know that it must include increased border security, along with enhanced border intelligence. But one without the other would not truly be fixing our broken immigration policy for our nation. All these will have to be key components to have true immigration reform.

Knowing that we are a nation of laws, but also a nation of immigrants, we urge you to support comprehensive immigration reform that will find solutions that make sense and are in the best interests of all Americans.

Please take action today and help stop this particular Bill, the Border Immigration Enforcement Act of 2005!

For Just Reform,
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