

Immigration Reform Update and Call to Act

Comprehensive Immigration Reform (CIR) discussions are underway. Both the group of Senators and the Obama Administration introduced their vision of CIR legislation.

This update outlines the following positions, and identifies where there is commonality, and where common ground has yet to be reached.

1. [Senators' Framework](#);
2. [Obama Administration's Principles](#);
3. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB)
 - ◇ [Elements necessary For a Just Immigration Reform](#)
 - ◇ [Family Immigration Principles](#)

Obama Administration's Comprehensive Immigration Reform Principles

- I. Continue to strengthen border security
- II. Crack down on employers that hire undocumented workers
- III. Create a path to earned citizenship
- IV. Streamline our legal immigration system

ACTION:

Call the U.S. Capitol Switchboard at **(202) 224-3121** and ask for your **senators' and/or representative's** office and emphasize the **USCCB Principles** yet to be addressed in by the Senate or the Obama Administration.

ONLINE ACTIONS:

If you have not already, Please sign the [Justice for Immigrants](#) postcard to your representatives. The Intercommunity Peace and Justice Center has also prepared [an excellent online action](#).

Bipartisan Group of Senators

Republicans

John McCain (R-Arizona)
Lindsey Graham (R-South Carolina)
Marco Rubio (R-Florida)
Jeff Flake (R-Arizona)

Democrats

Chuck Schumer (D-New York)
Dick Durbin (D-Illinois)
Bob Menendez (D-New Jersey)
Michael Bennet (D-Colorado)

Bipartisan Framework for Comprehensive Immigration Reform

- I. Create a tough but fair path to citizenship for unauthorized immigrants currently living in the United States that is contingent upon securing our borders and tracking whether legal immigrants have left the country when required;
- II. Reform our legal immigration system to better recognize the importance of characteristics that will help build the American economy and strengthen American families;
- III. Create an effective employment verification system that will prevent identity theft and end the hiring of future unauthorized workers; and,
- IV. Establish an improved process for admitting future workers to serve our nation's workforce needs, while simultaneously protecting all workers.

The Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) released a [Statement on the Immigration Proposals put forward by the Senators](#). In it they applaud the plans for pathways to citizenship for the 11 million individuals who are undocumented. LCWR also offers its observations on where the proposals are lacking such as restoration of the 1996 Illegal Immigrant Responsibility Act; root causes of migration; and concerns over certification of border security and how they threaten to block the path to citizenship.

DO THE SENATE FRAMEWORK AND PRESIDENT'S SPEECH ADDRESS THE ELEMENTS NECESSARY FOR A JUST IMMIGRATION REFORM PROPOSAL, AS OUTLINED BY THE USCCB?

Senate	Obama	USCCB—Elements necessary For a Just Immigration Reform
X	X	1. Path to citizenship for the undocumented: A program which provides an opportunity for the undocumented residing in the United States to earn permanent residency and eventual citizenship. “Earned” citizenship should be achievable and independently verifiable.
X	X	2. Future Flow Worker Program: Worker program which includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Optional path to citizenship which is achievable/verifiable • Family unity which allows immediate family members to join worker • Job portability which allows workers to change employers • Enforcement mechanisms and resources to enforce worker’s rights • Living-wage protections • Mobility between U.S. and homeland and within U.S. • Labor-market test to ensure U.S. workers are not harmed
	X	3. Family-Based Immigration Reform: The family-based system should be reformed to reduce current backlogs in family categories, the allocation of unused visas, the reclassification of spouses and minor children of legal permanent residents as immediate relatives, and humanitarian consideration for families.
		4. Restoration of Due Process Protections: Provisions which restore due process protections lost in the 1996 Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA) which separate families, including repeal of the 3 and 10-year bars and restoration of judicial discretion in deportation proceedings. One-year filing deadline on asylum applications should be eliminated. Community-based alternatives to detention programs should be authorized.
		5. Addressing Root Causes of Migration: Examine root causes of migration, such as lack of development in sending countries, and seek long-term solutions.
X	X	6. Inclusion of the DREAM Act and AgJOBS: Two proposals addressing specific groups should be included in any reform legislation. The Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act (DREAM) would place minor undocumented students, who came to the United States with their parents, on a path to citizenship and would make them eligible for in-state tuition. The Agricultural Jobs, Opportunity, and Benefits Act (AgJOBS) would address the legal status of migrant farm workers in the United States.
Senate	Obama	USCCB Family Immigration Principles <i>The following principles and policies should be embodied in comprehensive immigration reform legislation:</i>
	X	Backlog reduction: Existing family backlogs must be systematically and quickly reviewed, resolved and processed to reinforce the incentive to immigrate legally.
	X	Family preference categories must be retained at adequate levels: Sufficient future visas must be allocated to allow family members to unite within a reasonable period of time. Failure to address this problem will lead to renewed backlogs which once again will lead to illegal immigration and visa overstay.
		Allocation of unused visas: Annual unused and unclaimed family based and employment based visas should be recaptured, and a mechanism provided to ensure that future unused visas are not wasted.
	X	Assure family unity for lawful permanent resident spouses and minor children: Reclassify spouses and minor children of lawful permanent residents as immediate relatives to ensure that these individuals are reunited as quickly as possible.
	X	Humanitarian consideration for families: Increase the flexibility in federal immigration laws to address hardships that would be caused by removing a parent, son or daughter who is either a U.S. citizen or green card holder. Authorize discretion to waive bars to admission for individuals who qualify for a family based or employment based visa petition or if denying their admission to the United States would cause hardship to their U.S. citizen or lawful green card holder spouse, son or daughter. Provide due relief for surviving spouses, stepchildren of U.S. citizens and children of certain Filipino World War II veterans.
		Point based systems: Family immigration migrants are often highly disadvantaged by any sort of point system. The Family Coalition recommends that point systems not be utilized in order to determine eligibility for visas.