The background of the entire page is a repeating pattern of the Statue of Liberty's face, rendered in white and black. The faces are arranged in a grid-like fashion, with some appearing larger than others, creating a dense, textured effect.

NOTEBOOK

NAME: AILA

SUBJECT: Tools of
Engagement

Talk to Congress ■ Engage the Media
Work With Advocates

AMERICAN IMMIGRATION LAWYERS ASSOCIATION

6.125" x 9.125" ■ 64 Pages



Dear NDA Participants:

AILA welcomes you to our annual National Day of Action when hundreds of AILA members will be meeting with elected leaders in Washington, D.C. and across the nation. To aid you in your meetings and continuing advocacy, AILA's national office has prepared *AILA's Tools of Engagement*, which includes how-to advocacy guides, briefing materials, and talking points.

With the U.S. economy still recovering, all of America is thinking about how best to create jobs and jumpstart the economic engine. In his State of the Union address, President Obama called for more innovation, more competition, and greater investment in business to grow our economy and "win the future." On Capitol Hill, the first five hearings held in the new House Immigration Subcommittee addressed the issue of jobs and employment.

As America rebuilds our economy, now is also the right time for our leaders to look seriously at reforms to the immigration system. America has always attracted the "best and the brightest" from around the world. Immigrants and immigrant-owned businesses are proven engines that help drive economic growth. If done right, immigration reform can spur business innovation and economic development in regions or sectors where growth is most needed while still protecting American workers. Indeed, immigration reform is good for American businesses and workers, and all of America.

Although the politics of Washington have changed dramatically, AILA's principles for smart immigration reform—drawn from the unparalleled expertise of our members—have held steady. AILA calls upon our nation's leaders to push for solutions premised on sound policy principles. AILA's framework for reform is described in our *Solutions* guide, www.aila.org/solutions.

We are also acutely aware that, on an issue as controversial as immigration, there is always the possibility that inflammatory rhetoric rather than reasoned debate will control the discourse. In the first few months of 2011, we have already seen proposals that focus exclusively on enforcement, or that eliminate major parts of the family visa system, or that even attack the 14th Amendment. As immigration experts, AILA plays an important role in helping dispel myths and misunderstandings about immigration law and policy.

Thank you for participating in this effort, which is as important as ever in a year in which rhetoric threatens to reign over reason. You bring reason and knowledge to Congress as no one else can. We look forward to hearing your reports.

Crystal Williams
Executive Director

Gregory Chen
Director of Advocacy

George Paul Tzamaras
Director of Communications

AILA InfoNet Doc. No. 11060775. (Posted 06/07/11)

Talking Points and Messaging for National Day of Action Meetings

AMERICA NEEDS SOLUTIONS. AILA calls upon our nation's leaders to push for real solutions—not band-aids or slogans—to fix our immigration system. AILA's reform framework, drawn from our experience representing clients in every facet of immigration law, consists of the following:

1. Require all undocumented immigrants to register with the government and earn permanent legal status by paying stiff fines and back taxes, undergoing rigorous background checks, and learning English
2. Provide fair and lawful ways for American businesses to hire much-needed immigrant workers while protecting U.S. workers from unfair competition and all workers from exploitation
3. Reduce the counterproductive backlogs in family-based and employment-based immigration
4. Ensure the immigration system provides adequate visas to meet the future needs of American families, businesses, and communities
5. Preserve and restore the fundamental principles of due process and equal protection while protecting our national security

IMMIGRATION REFORM IS GOOD FOR AMERICAN BUSINESSES, WORKERS.

- With the U.S. economy still recovering and jobs scarce, all of America is thinking about how best to create jobs and jumpstart the economic engine. Immigrants and immigrant-owned businesses are proven engines that help drive economic growth.
- America has always attracted the “best and the brightest.” Smart immigration reform can spur business innovation and economic development in regions or sectors where growth is most needed while still protecting American workers.
- “Enforcement-only” proposals do nothing to help the economy and are costly to implement. For example, expanding the E-verify program is unlikely to create jobs for the unemployed and could devastate productive businesses or industries.

WHAT'S WRONG WITH “ENFORCEMENT-ONLY”?

- Effective border security and interior enforcement are essential to a functioning immigration system. But many members of Congress continue to offer enforcement-only proposals like mass deportations or building border fences.
- These are band-aid approaches that will not be effective until smart, practical solutions are implemented that address the millions of undocumented already in the U.S. and America's continuing need for legal immigration avenues to meet business and family needs.
- Despite aggressive enforcement by the Bush and Obama administrations that include a record-breaking 392,000 deportations last year and unprecedented spending on border security (with an extra \$600 million added last August), studies show that larger economic factors, such as the recession and job availability are what really affect rates of legal and illegal immigration.

Talking Points and Messaging for National Day of Action Meetings

EXPANDING E-VERIFY WITHOUT LEGALIZATION WOULD HURT OUR ECONOMY.

While a functioning and efficient employment verification system is necessary to ensure workers are authorized, the current E-Verify system suffers from serious privacy, civil liberties, budgetary and technological concerns. Unless a solution is found to legalize thousands of essential workers, an expansion of E-verify would do grave harm to American jobs and the economy.

- Expanding E-verify will not create jobs and would not rid our country of the undocumented despite the claims made by restrictionists.
- Expanding E-Verify would drive thousands into an underground economy and undermine business growth. A mandatory E-verify program would cost \$23 billion in program costs and lost tax revenues over a decade.
- A Bloomberg report estimated that a mandatory E-verify would cost small businesses \$2.6 billion.
- Industries that depend on unauthorized workers, such as farming, would be decimated if E-verify became mandatory

CONGRESS MUST PROTECT AND RESTORE DUE PROCESS AND FAIRNESS. Current reactionary laws against immigrants go too far and deny basic due process and fairness to millions of people who live in the U.S. When our immigration system fails to reflect core values of fairness and transparency, it undermines basic American principles and values.

- The immigration court system should be restored to ensure everyone a fair day in court.
- Immigration detention has become the default practice resulting in the skyrocketing use of detention in poor conditions for hundreds of thousands of people.
- AILA opposes proposals that add stiff penalties for those who violate immigration laws and immigrants who commit even minor criminal offenses. These kinds of “get-tough” measures are punitive and disproportionate to the offending behavior.
- Congress should guarantee the right to counsel for those in removal proceedings and protect the public from the unlicensed practice of immigration law.

FAMILIES CANNOT BE COMPROMISED.

Congress needs to build upon family strengths to ensure that future generations of immigrants continue to fulfill their extraordinary potential for success. With the economy like it is today, we need more immigrants who can be committed to their new country, work hard, play by the rules, start businesses and pay taxes.

- The immigrant visa system should be reformed to ensure adequate family visas are available and to eliminate backlogs that keep families waiting years to reunify.
- Restricting family immigration would be a dramatic and unwise shift in American immigration policy. AILA opposes proposals to reduce or eliminate the family-based immigration system or to convert to a point-based system.

Talking Points and Messaging for National Day of Action Meetings

ATTACKS ON THE 14TH AMENDMENT. At both the federal and state levels, the repugnant idea of eliminating automatic citizenship for children born on U.S. soil has gained renewed attention. Legislators have proposed amending the 14th Amendment or redefining it to prevent the children of undocumented parents from receiving citizenship.

- AILA opposes these proposals as attacks on civil rights and the Constitution.

STATE AND LOCAL ENFORCEMENT OF IMMIGRATION LAWS. AILA opposes the proliferation of enforcement laws at the state and local levels, like Arizona's SB 1070, that require local law enforcement agencies to enforce immigration law.

- Immigration law should remain a federal matter.
- AILA also opposes federal laws, like the CLEAR Act, that grant states and localities so-called "inherent authority" to police immigration. Such laws compromise the effectiveness of local policing and undermine community safety.

National Day of Action Feedback Forms

We want to know what you learned during your meetings with Congressional offices! Please take notes on this form and enter them online at <http://capwiz.com/aila2/go/NDA11>

NAME OF MEMBER OF CONGRESS: _____

NAME OF STAFF PERSON: _____

Does the legislator support the need for Comprehensive Immigration Reform that includes a legalization program for the 10-11 million or more undocumented living in the U.S.?

Does the legislator support reforming the family visa system to ensure that enough visas are available so family members do not have to wait years or even decades to reunite with their close family?

Does the legislator support the need for high and low skilled foreign workers?

Does the legislator support reforming the immigration detention system, and expanding the use of alternatives to detention and humane treatment of immigration detainees?

Does the legislator support an expansion of the employment verification system on its own, or only as a component of reforms that would also address the large undocumented working population?

Does the legislator oppose/support giving state and local entities the authority to enforce immigration law?

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AILA's Tools of Engagement

Introduction

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- Work with the Media and Ace Print, Radio & TV Interviews [16]
- Collaborate with Community Advocates [33]

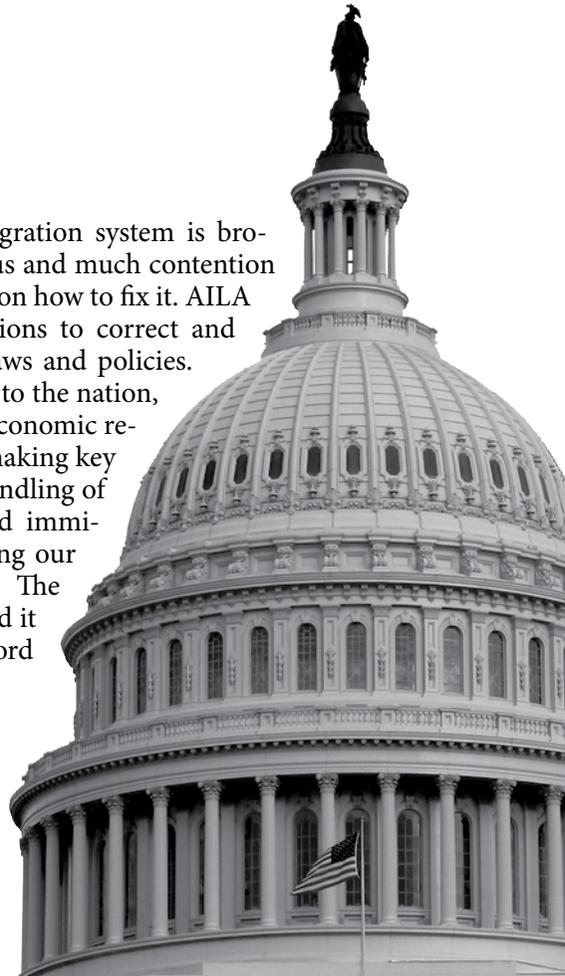
2. Issue Areas and Talking Points [41]

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Introduction

Everyone agrees that the immigration system is broken, but there is little consensus and much contention among national policy makers on how to fix it. AILA has developed workable solutions to correct and modernize our failed immigration laws and policies. We believe that among other benefits to the nation, with our solutions we can speed the economic recovery and stimulate job growth by making key changes to visa processing and the handling of the current legal and undocumented immigrant population, and by reprioritizing our immigration enforcement strategies. The solutions are absolutely achievable and it is our job as advocates to spread the word and make the case for change.



MAKING THE CASE FOR CHANGE

To be an effective voice for change we need to think strategically about what we say, how we say it, and who we tell.

WHAT TO SAY: *AILA's Solutions That Work: A Policy Manual for Immigration Reform* clearly and concisely makes our case for immigration reform; it is the core of our advocacy message. The complete manual, available online at www.aila.org/solutions, summarizes the components of the existing immigration system, identifies their deficiencies and offers workable solutions that will fix the totality of the broken, outdated, and inadequate system.



HOW TO SAY IT: The final section of *AILA's Tools of Engagement* includes our best guess for immigration proposals we can expect to see during the 112th Congress (from mandating E-Verify to repealing birthright citizenship), as well as AILA's issue-specific talking points. These talking points were crafted for the current political climate and we believe that these messages will be as useful on Capitol Hill as they will be with the media and members of your community.

WHO TO TELL: Our strategy for educating different audiences and concurrently advocating for change requires a three pronged outreach effort. We need to educate our policymakers and advocate for better immigration legislation, educate the media and advocate for objective and accurate reporting on immigration issues, and educate our communities so that they will join us in our quest for change.

SPREADING THE WORD

As immigration law practitioners, AILA advocates are generally recognized as credible spokespeople on immigration-related legal matters. But, credibility is only half the battle of winning over the hearts and minds of American voters and lawmakers. Immigration is very complex and the Rube Goldberg-esque system of rules and policies that regulate it can be hard for non-experts to understand. For us, spreading the message about fixing the problem is as much about promoting our solutions as it is about general education regarding how people come to live and work in the U.S., why the number of undocumented immigrants is so high, and how, even in a slow economy, all immigrants benefit the country.

AILA's Tools of Engagement are designed to make reaching out to these three audiences a piece of cake for AILA advocates. The next section of the guide is broken into three How-To sections—one about each of AILA's target audiences. It covers everything from arranging meetings with Congressional staff to excelling at on-camera interviews to building relationships with the business community.

D HOW TO...

Talk to Members of Congress

Work With the Media

Collaborate With Advocates

HOW TO ... Talk to Congress

Our goal is to modernize our immigration system so that it works for all of our nation's businesses, families, and communities. To achieve this, a significant amount of our effort must be focused on communicating with Congress in order to educate them about how our current system works and to advocate for necessary changes.

There are a lot of important ways to communicate with members of Congress and their staff.

PHONE CALLS AND URGENT ACTION E-MAILS:

During key votes on immigration legislation, it's crucial that we register our opinion with congressional offices so that our senators and representatives know how their constituents feel about the issue.

ACTION ALERTS!

- **The Senate is voting on the DREAM Act—call or e-mail your senators and register your support!**
- **The House is about to vote on an amendment to prohibit immigrant children from receiving health care—call or e-mail your Representative and express your opposition!**

Calling and e-mailing is key during immigration votes because many congressional offices keep a running tally of the vote-specific communications they receive; typically, the pro-immigration side is grossly outnumbered and that's why it is crucial that we are diligent about contacting Congress during key votes.

PETITIONS, POSTCARDS, AND GENERAL E-MAILS:

There are lots of opportunities to send messages to Congress. Whether a canvasser comes to your door with a petition to sign, an activist greets you in front of the local supermarket and hands you a postcard to mail, or a website directs you to an e-mail to send to your congressperson, you are presented with a chance to tell your elected officials how you feel about specific political issues. Taking a few moments to sign your name, lick a stamp, or click send is a fast and easy way to draw attention to a cause or concern. Because it's always beneficial to keep immigration relevant on Capitol Hill, we encourage you to send e-mails through AILA's Contact Congress website (<http://capwiz.com/aila2/home/>). The e-mails are pre-written and all you have to do is enter your name and zipcode and the message will be sent directly to your senators and representatives.

PERSONAL LETTERS:

Congressional House and Senate offices receive thousands of pieces of mail each month. In order to make any written communications stand out among the rest, it's important to personalize any letter sent to elected officials. Personal stories from constituents can go a long way to influence opinion on Capitol Hill. The Congressional Management Foundation recently held focus groups with congressional staff and found that:

Focus group participants indicated that constituent communications were particularly helpful or influential early on in a decision-making process, when Members and staff are researching and developing policy positions. Staff reported that well-reasoned letters from constituents often helped them assess the impact of pending legislation or proposals on a particular group, or on the district or state as a whole (CMF, 20).

TOWN HALL MEETINGS:

Members of Congress often schedule town hall-style or public meetings in their districts. This is a good way for them to get out and talk to their constituents and “take the pulse” of the communities they represent in Congress. It is also a great opportunity for AILA advocates to educate and inform senators, representatives, and other meeting attendees about the need to modernize our immigration law and policy.

Consider attending a town hall meeting with your AILA colleagues to show collective support for your shared ideals. Generating a large and well-informed crowd at a public meeting is an extremely effective way to elicit the views of your member of Congress and to share your perspective, not to mention helpful on the off chance that other meeting attendees are hostile to your question or the immigration issue. Once you've arranged to attend the town hall meeting together with your chapter colleagues, jointly draft some questions and comments for the host. Questions and comments should be well thought out and to the point because long, laborious questions and speeches will only turn off others in the crowd, including the press. To keep the audience's attention, you may want to relate your question to a real-life example or experience that will help to humanize the politics of immigration. Above all, remember that this is your opportunity, as a constituent, to stand up and ask the senator or representative a pointed question about an issue of concern.

For example, you should tailor your questions to draw out substantive, non-generic answers. Even if your representative voted against the DREAM Act, you can ask her to elaborate on her position: What, specifically, does she oppose about putting high achieving young people on a path to permanent residence?

If your member of Congress staunchly opposes meaningful immigration reform, you may want to use the town hall meeting as an opportunity to deliver a coordinated letter of rebuke from all of the members of your chapter. Or you may want to evaluate the central arguments the member of Congress has against immigration reform and prepare yourself with a few basic statistics that could refute those arguments—see the final section of *AILA's Tools of Engagement* for talking points.

In some cases, a member of Congress may be unfamiliar with the details of the legislation you wish to discuss. She may refer you to a legislative aide or other staff expert who can better respond to your question. In this situation, make sure to get the full name and contact information of this staff person so that you can raise your question with him or her.

As always, follow-up is important. If you get an opportunity to ask a question or talk to a member you should follow it up a day or so later with a letter. This is your chance to thank the member for meeting with you and for supporting your views, or if they don't, to encourage reconsideration. It is always important to be respectful and courteous regardless of the member's views and to represent your organization in a professional manner. Report any happenings back to AILA by e-mailing advocacy@aila.org.

8 STEPS FOR ATTENDING AND MAKING THE MOST OF A TOWN HALL MEETING WITH YOUR MEMBER OF CONGRESS

1. Check your local paper for announcements about town hall meetings held in your area.
2. Work with your chapter's Executive Committee to coordinate a group of chapter colleagues to attend the town hall meeting together.
3. Research your members of Congress and find out how they voted on key immigration issues at www.aila.org/advocacy.
4. Review AILA's resources and materials to bolster your familiarity with the current immigration debate—start with the materials in the last section of *AILA's Tools of Engagement*.
5. Prepare educated, open-ended questions for your member of Congress with the intention of drawing out substantive, non-generic answers.
6. Contact the local media—let reporters know that you and your AILA colleagues will be attending the town hall meeting and intend to ask immigration-related questions. Visit AILA's Media Center to e-mail the local media through AILA's Contact Congress Action Center and review the next section of *AILA's Tools of Engagement* for other ideas about working with the press.
7. Submit letters to the editor or op-eds before or after the town hall meeting. Town hall meetings held by members of Congress will make timely letters to the editor and opinion pieces about your elected officials' voting records.
8. Attend the meeting and engage the member of Congress in a discussion about immigration, being sure to draw out substantive responses, and also get the name and contact information of the member's legislative aide working on immigration issues. Follow up with a letter to both the member of Congress and her staff expert.

IN-PERSON MEETINGS:

Face-to-face meetings are the most effective way to influence your legislators and build relationships with their key staff members. You can meet with them either in their district offices or in Washington, D.C. If you are unable to see your legislators in person, you should still meet with their staffers.

In the district offices, staff typically handle constituent services and immigration case-work and are the legislator's constant connection to their constituents. Meeting with them is a good opportunity to present yourself as a resource on legal matters and also to help connect the dots between compelling immigration cases and the imperfections in our existing immigration laws. Helping the member of Congress understand the direct correlation between the treatment of immigrants under the law and our fractured immigration policy is a huge step towards achieving our advocacy goals.

In the D.C. offices, staff work on legislation, regulatory, and policy issues every day and greatly influence their bosses' positions and votes. Prior to any major actions on legislation, the relevant staffer is usually tasked with writing a policy memo for the member of Congress. The memo briefly explains the issue, the potential impact of the legislation, and also provides a vote recommendation. Meeting with these staff members, usually called legislative assistants, is an opportunity to inform that memo by explaining the practical implications of immigration law. It's also a time to give real life examples of how immigrants and their families as well as U.S. businesses and communities are affected by our immigration policy.

Here are some tips for arranging your meetings with members of Congress or their staff:

Arranging the Appointment

1. Call your legislator's office and ask to speak to the staffer responsible for scheduling meetings with the member of Congress and the person who handles immigration for the office. Find out their preferred method for appointment requests (fax, e-mail, or over the phone). You can find telephone numbers for the D.C. and district offices on AILA's Contact Congress website. Generally, members of Congress are in Washington Tuesday through Thursday and are frequently home Friday through Monday and when Congress is not in session.
2. Let the scheduler know the purpose of the meeting and who will be attending. Make sure to mention that you are a constituent!

Going as a Group? Coordinate Your Lobby Team

1. Be organized. Before your meeting, designate a team leader to introduce the issue and handle the flow of the meeting, a secretary to take notes, and assign each participant a priority issue to bring up during the meeting.

2. Make sure everyone in your group is prepared. Brief everyone attending the meeting and make sure they have reviewed any relevant background information ahead of time.
3. If you are going as part of a larger group or coalition, meet ahead of time. It is unwise to have an internal debate or conversation in front of your elected official or his or her staff. Be certain everyone agrees on your group's central message and what you want to ask the legislator to do for you.

Preparing for the Meetings

1. **DO YOUR HOMEWORK!** Know exactly what you want to say and carefully review your message. Use the materials provided at the end of *AILA's Tools of Engagement!*
2. If possible, compile information about the impact of specific immigration issues on the legislator's district/state. Do not compile a long list of statistics; your elected officials will not remember them and they will lose their impact. Prepare a few dramatic numbers or anecdotes to illustrate your points. Collect recent local news articles that illustrate the issue. Like most people, legislators and staff more easily remember examples conveyed in human and personal terms.
3. To encourage legislators to support a specific immigration issue, present materials that clearly articulate your position, using specific case examples when possible.
4. Know the counterarguments and be ready to respectfully answer any questions or disagreements. Call the AILA Advocacy Department for more information and assistance.
5. Prepare a packet to leave with your legislator that could include background information, fact sheets and/or newspaper clippings. Attach your business card(s) to the packet.

Making the Presentation

1. Be on time!
2. Begin by introducing yourselves.
3. Explain to the legislator/staffer why you asked for the meeting.
4. Present your concerns simply and directly. Get to your "bottom line" immediately. Be brief, direct, courteous and positive. When presenting each issue, do not assume that your legislator has any prior knowledge of the subject. Presentation of each topic roughly should follow this outline:

BACKGROUND: Explain the need to change our immigration laws in the simplest possible terms.

IMPACT: Explain how immigrants and immigration directly benefit your community and how our broken immigration laws hold us back as a nation.

RECOMMENDATION: Indicate what you would like your legislator to do. Discuss important immigration legislation or issues currently before Congress and how you hope he or she will vote. If you want your elected officials to support a specific issue, explain how your community has been impacted, and the consequences in concrete terms if, for example, Congress does not pass immigration reform that would legalize the status of hardworking people already in the U.S., create a new future flow program, and reduce family backlogs. Finally, ask your legislator to support legislation that would authorize such reform.

5. Do not fight with your legislator or staff members. Politely answer questions and concerns, but if you disagree, make your point and move on. Remember, you are meeting with the member or staff person to inform him/her about your positions on issues.
6. If you do not know the answer to a question, say so, and promise to get back with the answer. Be sure to follow up with your answer as quickly as possible after the meeting.
7. Make sure you do not do all of the talking! Give your legislator opportunities to ask questions or state his or her opinion. Members and staff will appreciate the chance to be heard. Also ask questions.
8. Stay away from jargon and acronyms. Remember that your legislator deals with dozens, if not hundreds, of issues each week, each with its own “language.”
9. Thank your legislators if they have been supportive. They get thanked far less than they get criticized. They will appreciate your recognition.
10. Be sure to ask for your legislator’s support. If your legislator already is very supportive, ask him or her to cosponsor the relevant bill and/or take a leadership role in moving the bill through the process by getting additional cosponsors or other ways.

Following Up After the Meeting

1. Send a note thanking the member or staff person for meeting with you. Briefly summarize the main points of the meeting.
2. Remember to follow up with responses to any questions the member or staff person asked but you could not answer at the time.

3. The information you learn in your meeting will be helpful for AILA staff and our allies. Debrief AILA staff so that we can develop a coordinated legislative strategy and message for your district. Contact the Advocacy Department to report back about your meeting: (202) 507-7611 or advocacy@aila.org.
4. Do not think of the meeting as an isolated event. Although you may not have a face-to-face meeting again for some time, periodically check in with the staff person and find out if you can provide any new information about immigration. You can also invite your elected officials to speak at an event or meeting—like Citizenship Day or a breakfast for congressional staff.

Here is a sample Appointment-Request E-mail that you can modify to meet the needs of your own meeting with your legislator.

From: Mandel, Michael [mailto:mmandel@wkgj.com]

To: Connolly, Brenda

Cc: Perler, Andrea

Subject: Immigration Advocacy – April 7



Dear Representative Ackerman:

We are contacting you on behalf of the New York Chapter of the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA). AILA is a nationwide bar association of over 11,000 lawyers who are involved with various aspects of immigration law. The New York Chapter is the country's largest, with more than 1,100 members. Our members represent U.S. citizens who sponsor foreign family members, U.S. businesses that employ foreign workers, foreign nationals and legal residents faced with deportation, and individuals seeking refuge under U.S. asylum laws, among others. Additional information about AILA and the work we do is available at www.aila.org.

AILA is holding a National Day of Action to focus on immigration in Washington, D.C. on Thursday, April 7, 2011. A delegation from the AILA New York Chapter would like to meet with you and your staff to discuss issues of mutual concern. Among other things, these include visa retrogression (green card unavailability), civil liberties and judicial review, the DREAM/Student Adjustment Act, the H-1B visa crisis, and other processing and enforcement issues relating to our immigration laws.

We welcome the opportunity to meet with you in your office on April 7 to discuss these issues. We will contact your office shortly to set up an appointment. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Michael Mandel & Stuart Reich

Co-Chairs, Congressional Advocacy Committee

HOW TO ... Talk to the Media

Working with reporters and other members of the news media is vital to our mission of educating the public about the need for sensible immigration law and policy. In this section, you will learn about submitting written materials like op-eds, letters to the editor, and public service announcements to your local paper, as well as how to proactively educate writers and editors by setting up meetings with them and introducing yourself as a key source on immigration matters. This section will help you to prepare for those meetings and for interviews with journalists from all media formats.

SUBMITTING WRITTEN MATERIALS TO YOUR LOCAL PAPER

Writing Your Op-Ed

Named for its position in a newspaper or magazine—opposite the editorial page—the op-ed piece provides a place for you to take a stand on a current immigration issue or perhaps offer an opinion on an immigration subject. Criteria for op-ed pieces may vary by publication but there are some general rules.

On average, one to three op-ed pieces are run every day and are about 750 words in length. Almost all editors agree that op-ed pieces must have two things: timeliness and creativity. The best advice is to read the intended publication to see how other op-eds have been written, and to contact the publication for specifics on length of piece, submission criteria, etc.

Some editors like to discuss the idea for an op-ed piece ahead of time; others prefer to receive the op-ed with a cover letter.

Topics for op-ed pieces are many and range from: opinions and analysis of public affairs, politics, education and law to journalism, healthcare, religion, the military, science, and lifestyles (notice how immigration touches on all of these areas). Topics can be of a local, national or international importance. They must, however, be relevant and timely to something that is happening now or is about to happen. Some editors prefer to avoid extremely controversial issues, feeling that adversary journalism is a never-ending ping-pong match. Others encourage publication of diverse opinions on sensitive issues.

Op-ed pieces are not to be used as a vendetta medium against some alleged injustice to you (or your client), nor are they the forum for challenging a reporter's techniques. The key word in considering op-ed pieces is judicious. Just define the issue you wish to discuss or state the problem as you see it, provide whatever background or history is needed and then suggest ways the situation can be changed or improved.



Publishing Your Op-Ed

1. **Have something to say.** The best op-ed pieces are tough, straight-forward, categorical.
2. **Be timely.** The best op-eds concern subjects triggered by breaking news.
3. **Be topical.** Topicality means that an op-ed is relevant to readers.
4. **Start with a grabber.** It's particularly important to "hit the ground running"—begin the op-ed with a straight-to-the-gut sentence.
5. **Have a point.** There's not enough space to make more than one, maybe two.
6. **Back it up with facts.** Op-eds must be loaded with evidence (cite IPC reports and studies).
7. **End with a zinger.** Many people will remember the initial thing you said and few will remember the middle—most will remember how you end.

Ideal Structure for an Op-Ed

<p>Ideal Op-Ed Structure Review this structure as many times as needed until it feels normal to use.</p>	<p>Example Text excerpted from Op-Ed below by AILA member Margaret Stock</p>
<p>Main Argument It is best to identify and highlight your main argument in the first or second paragraph of the op-ed</p>	<p>It is no secret that several of the military services expect to experience difficulties recruiting eligible enlisted soldiers in future years. For that reason, in its FY10-12 Strategic Plan, the Department of Defense identified the DREAM Act as a smart way to expand the pool of potential candidates because it lets high achieving young people enlist.</p>
<p>First Supporting Statement Statement supports the main argument</p>	<p>Former Acting Deputy Undersecretary of Defense for Military Personnel Policy Bill Carr has called the DREAM Act "very appealing" to the military because it applies to the "cream of the crop" of students. Potential DREAM Act beneficiaries like David and Cesar are likely to be a military recruiter's dream candidates for enlistment; they are not "bottom of the barrel" recruits even if they have no legal status.</p>
<p>Second Supporting Statement Statement supports the main argument</p>	<p>They will have "conditional lawful residence," a status that is recognized under current military recruiting regulations; thus, the military will not have to change its regulations or process their enlistments differently from other recruits.</p>
<p>Third Supporting Statement Statement supports the main argument</p>	<p>... even though deporting these young people confers a massive benefit on their countries of birth while depriving the United States of their talents. Instead of wearing our uniforms, these recruits could be recruited to work for foreign governments, foreign militaries, and foreign intelligence agencies.</p>
<p>Specific Recommendations/Solutions</p>	<p>I strongly urge members of Congress to pass this long overdue measure.</p>
<p>Strong Ending It is best to have the ending, to the extent possible, wrap up the beginning or reference some theme introduced at the beginning of the op-ed.</p>	<p>The House and Senate are poised to act on the DREAM Act during the current lame duck session of Congress. The vote on the DREAM Act presents an opportunity for our lawmakers to vote to increase military recruitment, enhance US national security, and help high achieving young people at the same time. I strongly urge members of Congress to pass this long overdue measure.</p>

Sample Op-Ed



Three years ago, the U.S. Armed Forces struggled with a serious recruiting crisis, a crisis that evaporated temporarily only because of the economic downturn. As the economy recovers and our population continues to age, our Armed Forces will face yet another challenge in recruiting the high quality people needed for the modern military. It is no secret that several of the military services expect to experience difficulties recruiting eligible enlisted soldiers in future years. For that reason, in its FY10-12 Strategic Plan, the Department of Defense identified the DREAM Act as a smart way to expand the pool of potential candidates because it lets high achieving young people enlist.

The Development, Relief and Education of Alien Minors (DREAM) Act is a bipartisan bill that would provide a conditional pathway to legal permanent residence for certain unauthorized youth who, as children, were brought to the U.S. They must graduate from high school, demonstrate good moral character, and—to keep their legal status—complete at least two years of higher education or serve for at least two years in the U.S. military.

Without the relief of the DREAM Act, the future of these American-educated young people is bleak. About 65,000 eligible students graduate from U.S. high schools each year, but upon graduation, these young people—who include honor roll students, star athletes, and junior ROTC members—face a roadblock. Instead of advancing to college or the military and later repaying the investment that taxpayers made in their education, they live in fear of being discovered by the Department of Homeland Security and deported to their “home” country, even if it is a country they cannot remember and where they have no friends, family, or support.

Two potential DREAM Act students are David Cho, a senior honors student at UCLA, and Cesar Vargas, a third year law student at CUNY. Cho who dreams of joining the Air Force after graduation is at the top of his class and has lived here since he was nine. Vargas who has lived here since he was five, he wants to be a military lawyer after graduation. David and Cesar are exactly the kind of recruits the military needs: self-motivated and eager to defend the country they love. Without the DREAM Act, both will be deported.

Former Acting Deputy Undersecretary of Defense for Military Personnel Policy Bill Carr has called the DREAM Act “very appealing” to the military because it applies to the “cream of the crop” of students. Potential DREAM Act beneficiaries like David and Cesar are likely to be a military recruiter’s dream candidates for enlistment; they are not “bottom of the barrel” recruits even if they have no legal status. They are Americanized, having lived in the United States for at least five years, unlike the new lawful permanent residents whom the military currently enlists. DREAM Act beneficiaries have no adult period of residence in a foreign country, which might make a background check difficult for security clearance purposes. They often speak both English and another language fluently. Many have participated in Junior ROTC in high school. They do not have criminal records or other evidence of bad character. They have graduated from a U.S. high school.

If approved as DREAM Act beneficiaries, they will have passed rigorous criminal background and security checks from DHS. They will have “conditional lawful residence,” a status that is recognized under current military recruiting regulations; thus, the military will not have to change its regulations or process their enlistments differently from other recruits. Finally, they will be motivated to serve the United States so as to be given a chance to stay here.

Opponents of the DREAM Act call it a “sugar coated” amnesty that only rewards law breakers. To them, the best solution to the problem of illegal residents who are also high achieving students with dreams of serving in the military is deportation; even though deporting these young people confers a massive benefit on their countries of birth while depriving the United States of their talents. Instead of wearing our uniforms, these recruits could be recruited to work for foreign governments, foreign militaries, and foreign intelligence agencies. At a time when we are focused on protecting our borders and quashing threats to our national security, it seems unwise to export thousands of American-educated and American-aculturated young people to militaries other than our own.

The House and Senate are poised to act on the DREAM Act during the current lame duck session of Congress. The vote on the DREAM Act presents an opportunity for our lawmakers to vote to increase military recruitment, enhance US national security, and help high achieving young people at the same time. I strongly urge members of Congress to pass this long overdue measure.

Writing Letters to the Editor

Letters to the editor are used for a variety of purposes in public debate. They are used to respond to criticism, correct an inaccuracy, complain about the slant of coverage, point out a missing fact in a story, or amplify an element of the story in an interesting way. Letters to the editor are an extremely effective tool for raising public awareness on an issue, especially after you’ve directly contacted your legislators. Letters to the editor are also one of the best ways to get legislators’ attention.

Legislators are creatures with egos, and they want to be loved by everyone. Two lines of criticism (or praise) might seem meaningless in a broad effort to sway opinion, but if you mention the name of a member of Congress in a letter to the editor that is published, it will be read by the person you most want to influence.

This letter to the editor from AILA’s New England Chapter was published in the *New York Times* in September, 2010.

Revising Our Immigration Rules for Foreign Workers

To the Editor:
Re “Foreign Stimulus” (Op-Ed, Sept. 14):

Pia Orrenius and Madeline Zavodny are completely on the money with their call for a greater emphasis on work-based immigration to enhance our competitiveness in the world economy. It should be the national policy of the United States to forthrightly and unapologetically attract the best minds from all over the world and turn them into assets of the United States.

How we do it—through the proposed auction system, a reform of the existing skills-based system or some other method—is less important than that we do it.

Matthew J. Maiona
*Chairman, New England Chapter
American Immigration Lawyers Assn.*

Here are Tips for Writing Letters to the Editor That Will Get Published:

- **FIRST**, editors are more likely to run your letter if it references a story that ran in the paper during the last week. In fact, it's almost impossible to get a letter to the editor published that does not reference a story. If possible, include it in the first sentence of the letter.
- **SECOND**, keep the letters short—100 to 200 words, or two to four paragraphs. Succinct, strong, and powerful language is much more likely to gain an editor's attention than long-winded rants, or even thoughtful but lengthy arguments. Like lawmakers, editors are much more attracted to stories from someone who has an interest or connection to an issue, rather than those just expressing an opinion. Those with a personal story to tell about an issue have an advantage over those that do not. Also, anyone who is representative of a group warrants attention. Even those who chair a small neighborhood committee can be seen to speak for others and are therefore good candidates for publication.

If you see appropriate language on a web site of an organization you support, use it as a foundation for your writing, but do not send it to the newspaper verbatim. Some grassroots organizations and political campaigns are smart about organizing letter to the editor campaigns, and they are a valuable and ethical component of any advocacy effort. However, if an editor sees two letters with identical copy, he will consider the letter “manufactured” and will not run it. Use your own words to express your views.

- **THIRD**, a reference to the legislator is a must. If the lawmaker has ignored you or your issue, letters to the editor are a great way to gain his/her attention. By contrast, if the lawmaker has supported your issue, definitely write a letter to the editor. It's also very wise to send a copy of the legislator's office (directed to his chief of staff). Even if the letter isn't published, you will be sending a potent message that you have the power (and inclination) to influence thousands of voters. The voice of one person in the letters to the editor section can confer as much credibility as a roomful of politicians.
- **FINALLY**, if appropriate (and if space allows), tell allies how they can get involved by including organizations' names or web addresses.

HOW TO PLACE A PSA IN THE NEWSPAPER

AILA and the American Immigration Council developed several print public service announcements (PSAs) for distribution by our members. They are available on InfoNet in the PressRoom. You can follow these tips to place ours, or make your own!

The keys to successfully placing a PSA in your local newspaper are advance planning and research. You will be asking the newspaper to give you space for free—space the paper usually sells to companies willing to pay full price. Therefore, to place the PSA, you must be willing to meet the requirements of the newspaper and be flexible.

Consider these pointers to help you successfully navigate the world of newspaper public service placements.

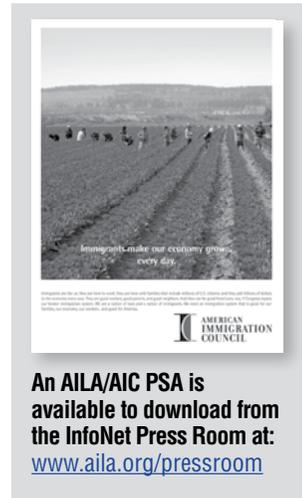
What is a PSA?

A PSA is a message promoting a “public service” or “educational program” that helps people learn more about an important issue. It is not a message to buy a product or service, and it does not endorse a company’s product or service.

Learn the Newspaper’s Policy on PSAs

The question is, will your local newspaper run the print PSA? Contact the newspaper to learn:

- Do they run PSAs?
- Will they run the PSA free-of-charge, or do you have to pay a rate for the placement? If you have to pay a fee, ask what you can do to receive a reduced rate.
- Will the newspaper help you find a company to help sponsor the print PSA if a fee is required to place the ad?
- What restrictions does the paper have for PSAs, including size, font and photo requirements?
- How do they want the PSA submitted, hard copy or computer file? Ask what file type(s) the paper accepts.
- How far in advance do you have to submit the PSA for placement in the paper?
- How long will the PSA run?
- Can you run the same PSA at different times throughout the year, or do you have to submit a new one?



Who to Work With at the Newspaper

First you might want to contact a reporter that you know or someone that you may have worked with on a story in the past. Forging strong bonds with your local newspaper can pay off in many ways. (Reporters you work with regularly will often contact you first for information when a story breaks, or will be more willing to take your phone call when you pitch a story.) If no relationship exists, reach out to the public service announcement manager. Tell them about the campaign and why the issue is so important to the community and chances are they’ll be more responsive.

If You Have to Buy Ad Space

Again, ask for help. Many newspapers offer significant rate cuts for non-profit groups, so do ask if they will extend the offer to you. Work with your local coalitions/partners to raise the funds needed to secure placement of the print PSAs (with a promise of adding their organization’s name and logo to the announcement).

Meet All Deadlines

Newspapers run on deadlines. Since you're the one asking for help, it is critical that you meet all key dates. Missing a deadline could prohibit your PSA from running and hinder any future efforts.

REACHING OUT TO REPORTERS, EDITORS, AND PRODUCERS

The most important aspect of day-to-day media relations work is interacting with reporters, editors, and producers. The one-on-one contact that you have with a representative of the media will define the successful presentation of your message.

Whether you practice media relations full-time, part-time or as a volunteer the best way to approach the media is by developing news judgment. You can develop your news judgment by looking at stories the way reporters do. The easiest way to do this is to: 1) Read your local daily newspaper; 2) Watch your local evening news broadcasts; and 3) Listen to local talk radio. This will allow you to target the right reporters with the right pitch at the right time.

Many newspapers, magazines, TV, and radio stations make it easy for you to contact the "right" reporter by posting the journalist's e-mail address at the end of their article or on that news organization's web site. This affords you a golden opportunity to reach out to and either comment positively or point out inaccuracies and offer up missed examples of how that immigration issue truly impacts your community. It also gives you the chance to introduce yourself.

Arranging Meetings with Reporters and Members of the Media

Begin the relationship-building process by e-mailing the reporter and introducing yourself. Keep it brief—just say who you are, why you are contacting them, and invite that person to meet and talk about other immigration stories that could be of local interest. You can also encourage the reporter/editor to call you in the future with questions about anything related to immigration. The mission with this e-mail is to let the journalist know that you can serve as a trustworthy resource and immigration expert.

At the actual meeting, use that time to learn more about that person's role and responsibilities with their respective news organization, as well as their interests. What stories is he/she working on now? What ideas for immigration stories are they considering down the road? What would they consider their dream assignment? How can you help him/her? It doesn't have to be all about work, but the more you know about that person's role, the more likely you can help them out even when assisting them may not lead to a direct quote from you.

When you're pitching a story, do as much of the legwork for the reporter as you can. Help them do their jobs by including links to AILA or IPC reports and studies that support the story/issue, pass along examples of pertinent local cases and or clients that are ready to share their story firsthand ("real people" who will put a face on the story), and names of other AILA members that they could contact for more perspective and

expertise. This information makes it easier for the reporter to start the story and lets them see that you understand their job.

Steps to Pitching a Story:

- Hone in on a specific topic or issue
- Organize and compile supporting documents
- Develop talking points
- Determine if a client will agree to be interviewed
- Try and tie your story idea into a larger issue or theme
- Contact reporter
- Identify who you are and why you are calling
- Ask if this is a good time to discuss your story idea. If it isn't ask the reporter to suggest the best time to call back
- Let the reporter/editor/producer know you are familiar with their news organization and their coverage of immigration stories
- Briefly explain the idea and why the audience will be interested
- Consider teaming up with a coalition partner and community groups
- Ask them if they would like to meet for an interview over coffee or lunch

If the reporter is interested, expect a call back and make sure to return the call promptly. If you don't the reporter may move on to another story. By developing news judgment and understanding how the media works, a news source (you) can effectively educate the public and promote a cause.

Sample Meeting Request Phone Call

 Hello my name is [Your Name] and I am the media liaison officer with the [Your State] Chapter of the American Immigration Lawyers Association. Our Association is currently making a coordinated effort to reach out to key members of the media who cover immigration and immigration-related issues.

Knowing you have written/covered several immigration related stories for [Name of News Organization] I wanted to contact you with some story ideas that I believe are important for our community to be aware of. For example, at the Federal level, some Members of Congress have introduced legislation that would mandate employers to electronically verify that new hires are authorized to work by using a system called E-Verify.

At the same time, it seems like there is momentum building in our [State] legislature to pass a bill that would make E-Verify mandatory (or law) and if this were to happen it would impact our community in this way:



- Turn to AILA/IPC Talking Points on E-Verify to detail the impact to the community: <http://www.immigrationpolicy.org/just-facts/e-verify-resource-page>
- Alert reporter to the fact you have reports and studies from AILA/IPC that document what has happened in other states that already have adopted E-Verify
- Point out the real flaws of E-Verify

- Discuss the impact E-Verify would have on local and state businesses as well the economy
- Let them know you can provide access to others such as business leaders and clients who can comment on this pending issue and fear the impact this law could have on their operations

Invite the reporter to discuss this further over coffee or lunch, provide your contact information, and thank them for their time.

HOW TO GET ON LOCAL TALK & NEWS RADIO

Sharing positive messages about immigrants and immigration is an integral part of our work as advocates for immigration reform. Immigration is a highly contentious political issue that is debated with passion and vigor from all sides of the political aisle. Too often, and especially during heated on-air debates, radio personalities mischaracterize immigrants and present misinterpretations of the policies that regulate immigration. Sadly, these one-sided messages currently dominate the airwaves. We need knowledgeable speakers to counter the rhetoric and thinly veiled intolerance of the shock jocks on the radio.

AILA members are well positioned to be spokespeople on talk radio because your experience as an immigration attorney gives you qualifications most of these radio personalities don't have— an understanding of the real life impact of immigration law and policy. Lori Chesser is a great example of an AILA member who tackled talk radio—and won!

Lori had heard a Des Moines talk radio host put down immigrants one too many times when she decided it was time for an immigration advocate's voice to be heard on Iowa's airwaves. Although admittedly nervous the first time, Lori thinks it was a highly effective way of communicating our message to a broad audience. She said:

I was incredibly nervous before going on talk radio the first time, but then my colleague assured me—lawyers are great on radio! We like to talk and we sound good talking. Talking is what we do for a living.

She was right. It was actually fun and exciting to be on the spot on live radio, and interesting to see how a live show works. We know LOTS more than anyone else about immigration laws, the need for reform and the facts of immigration. The only challenge is to state it in a way that is understandable to the lay person who is listening to the particular show. Unless the host is very aggressively anti-immigrant, most people are willing to listen to reason and are happy to talk with someone who really knows what she is talking about. I have done two shows now and have an open invitation to do more—and bring guests.

The show reached people who would never come to an immigration program or maybe even read about it in the newspaper. I encourage AILA members to try talk radio. If they only hear the other side, how can people make an informed decision?

Steps to Getting on the Air

1. Contact local public and commercial radio stations. You can find station lists and contact information on InfoNet on the Advocacy and Media Tools section of the Advocacy homepage.
2. Ask to speak with the Station Manager. Explain to the Station Manager that you are a professional immigration attorney and are knowledgeable about immigration law and policy. Tell the Station Manager that you are available for live interviews and background information about your areas of specialization in immigration law.
3. Review the final section of AILA's Tools of Engagement for key messages and talking points.
4. Contact George Tzamaras, AILA's Director of Communications, for speaking tips and mock interview questions to help you feel comfortable taking tough inquiries and speaking for a broad radio audience. George can be reached by phone or e-mail at (202) 507-7649 or gtzamaras@aila.org.

HOW TO PREPARE FOR AN INTERVIEW

Among the other things you should consider, there's also the question of where the interview will take place. If the reporter gives you a choice on where you can conduct the interview, pick a setting that feels right to you. Most of the time, the setting is determined by the type of interview (broadcast or print; live or taped) or the amount of time the reporter has to work on a story (phone interviews are better for tight deadlines).

Every interview is different and the differences start with the setting. Here is what to expect in each type of interview.

- **TIPS FOR THE PHONE INTERVIEW:** If you have agreed to do a phone interview, let the reporter know you will initiate the call at the agreed-upon time. Elementary as this may sound, double-check the time if different time zones are involved. Sound quality is of the utmost importance; don't use speakerphone or a phone of poor quality. **For radio interviews—speakerphones, cell phones and cordless phones are no-no's.* You don't want listeners to have to work too hard to listen to your message. Make sure you have your notes, talking points, and any studies that you might cite neatly in front of you. Do not use a phone interview as an opportunity to multi-task. Your full attention must be on the interview, not answering e-mails or sorting piles of paper. Try and monitor the conversation, make notations to yourself if you feel points need clarifying or further data to be gathered.

If you are dealing with a particularly sensitive issue or complex topic, you may want to write up your notes, including key questions and answers, in case there are questions later about what was said or done.



- **TIPS FOR THE E-MAIL INTERVIEW:** This type of interview is happening more and more often now, especially with the immense growth of blogs and news gathering web sites. Usually, reporters will only use e-mail when they need to check a fact with a source who has already been interviewed in person or on the phone. Occasionally, reporters e-mail a single question to sources when they are doing a round-up type of story, in which they are canvassing many people about their opinions on an issue. E-mail interviews must be treated with the highest level of care because once you click on the “send” button, it’s out of your hands. ****It is advisable to follow-up a reporter’s e-mail question with a phone call to that reporter to make sure he has received your reply.*** Finally, remember that sometimes humorous e-mail doesn’t translate well. You might think you are making a joke, but the reader could misinterpret your e-mailed comment.
- **TIPS FOR THE IN-PERSON INTERVIEW:** When a reporter comes to your office, don’t leave him waiting in the lobby. Go to the lobby and meet him in person. Giving a quick tour of the office is a good way to break the ice. Ask the reporter if he or she wants something to drink, and then find a quiet place to hold the interview. It says some positive things about you if the interview takes place in your office, not in a sterile conference room. By having the interview in your office, you’re sending the message that you are open and friendly. However, if you take this route, make sure you clean it up. Throw out your old lunches, file any paper on your desk that you wouldn’t want a reporter to read, and hold all calls. Before the interview is even scheduled, find out how much time the reporter needs. Add 15 to 30 minutes to the reporter’s estimate. Don’t rush the reporter, but when time is up, if you need to move on to another appointment, offer to follow up within 24 hours with a phone interview. If you don’t need to stop the interview, then just let it flow for a while longer.
- **TIPS FOR EDITORIAL BOARD MEETINGS AND DESKSIDE BRIEFINGS:** As an AILA Chapter officer (i.e. Chair, Media Liaison or Advocacy Liaison) you are in position to take a stance on an issue of the day. Meeting with newspaper opinion editors and reporters at their offices or desks (hence the term deskside) is your opportunity to approach the major newspapers in your community and discuss with the editorial board staff important immigration topics that might be currently in the news either nationally or locally.

Editorial board meetings generally start with one of the senior newspaper staffers introducing everyone in the room. If the introductions don’t happen, gracefully find a way to introduce yourself to those you don’t know. Then the senior newspaper staffer will open the meeting with a broad question. Leap into the answer and take an active role in guiding the resulting conversation. Editorial page coverage is great if the newspaper’s editorial board agrees with you. So be proactive and call your newspaper and ask for the opinion department and then request a meeting with the editorial board. When you attend the meeting, be prepared for tough questions and make sure you bring any supporting materials with you, such as IPC reports and studies or AILA position papers that can strengthen your position. Everything

you say in an editorial board meeting should be considered on the record and for attribution. Bring some leave-behind collateral, such as AILA's *Solutions Manual* and AILA's *Immigration Resources for the 112th Congress*.

- **TIPS FOR RADIO INTERVIEWS:**

- **(Call-In)** A radio interview has some unique characteristics. Unless it is a major news story, the station will use only a brief segment (10 to 20 seconds) of your interview—although it is likely to rebroadcast the item several times, perhaps using different sound bites each time. ***So it is even more important that you make your key message points succinctly.*** Also, radio rarely uses the reporter's questions on the air. Before you answer you should pause a moment to be sure the questioner is finished and you are not "stepping on that person's line." You should speak in a conversational tone as you would with a friend on the phone. During the interview you should gesture and smile as you would during a normal conversation; it will help both your voice and your body to relax. Be sure to repeat your affiliation to AILA several times during the interview. People listening on the radio have no visuals to remind them who you are and what you are talking about. So you need to paint repeated word pictures for your messages to be remembered.
- **(In-Studio with a Host)** In this situation, you'll wear bulky headphones. There is so much equipment in radio studios that you might not even be able to see your host. If you can make eye contact, then do so. During lengthy commercials, you can take off your headphones but pay attention, so that you don't miss the signal to put them back on. If your host has to push buttons and adjust dials during your interview, don't let the action distract you from your key message points. Radio interviewers often ask you to stay on for an extra segment to take questions from callers. Callers can be unpredictable and because they are often anonymous, many will ask tough questions or display emotion. Don't let that throw you; remember to bridge back to a key message point.

- **TIPS FOR TELEVISION INTERVIEWS:** Always remember two things: First, television is a visual medium, so what the eye sees is more important than what the ear hears. And second, the camera magnifies whatever it sees. It sounds trite, but you should act naturally.

- Do not smile when it is not appropriate—you will look phony, not friendly.
- Do not gesture wildly or move suddenly—the camera may lose you altogether.
- Do not stare upward into space when you are thinking—you will look like you are praying for guidance.
- Maintain eye contact with your interviewer.
- If you are being videotaped in your office, you should suggest other attractive areas of your space for taping. Think visually. Television is an intimate medium. You will be speaking not to the "general public" but rather to individual people—mom and dad in the family room, a tired worker dozing off in the den, someone catching up with ironing while watching the news.
- Normally the interview will be videotaped and then severely edited before being aired. Many times reporters will ask you the same question several

times in different ways. They are giving their editors a variety of versions and lengths from which to choose. It may be disconcerting to have the reporter pay more attention to a stopwatch than to your words, and seem unnecessarily repetitive to be asked the same question. You should take the opportunity to sharpen your answer.

- No matter how often you are asked, you should ALWAYS include your key message point in each answer—right up front—said in different ways, of course. When the tape is edited, only one response will be left—and you and the reporter both want it to be a clear and concise statement.
- Try to avoid nodding as the reporter talks. It could be viewed on camera as acknowledgement of the premise behind the question. Similarly, be careful about saying, “That’s a good point” after a negative question. Tight editing could wipe out the rest of your response.
- Do not be intimidated by a reporter with a microphone during a fast-breaking “spot news” situation. An unnerving interview technique is to thrust the mike at you and then pull it back when the reporter has what he or she wants. You regain control of the interview with a smile and saying “I haven’t finished answering the last question yet,” and go back to making your point.
- **TIPS FOR TELEVISION INTERVIEWS VIA SATELLITE:** There are also situations where you’ll be interviewed in the studio, but the interviewer is located elsewhere. For example, perhaps the interview takes place in a studio in DC, and you are going to be interviewed by the anchor in New York.
 - Sit in a chair, look straight ahead at the camera, and talk to the camera while hearing the questions in your earpiece.
 - During the sound check, make sure to turn the volume up a little louder than you think you are going to need.
 - If the chair swivels or is on wheels, ask for a different chair, or at least ask how to lock it so that it doesn’t move.
 - If a television monitor is in your line of sight, ask the camera operator to turn the monitor so that you won’t see it and it won’t distract you.
 - During the interview, feel free to gesture with your hands from time to time. Otherwise, keep them clasped.
 - After the interview, don’t move out of your chair until the director or host gives you the all clear. Assume you are on the air all the time when being interviewed on television.
 - Also remember: *You are always on the record.*

HOW TO GIVE A GREAT INTERVIEW

Good interviews are not an accident. They might look effortless, but people who consistently give strong interviews know that before you sit down for any interview, you have to do your homework. You have to go into the interview with a plan. Ask yourself: what is the most important point I want to make and how do I make my key message point heard? Here are the steps to take for ensuring that your interview is stellar.

1. **Study up on your interviewer.** If you have never seen or heard the show you have agreed to be a guest on, then you need to go online and search and view (or listen to) older segments of the program. If you are being interviewed by a local newspaper reporter, look through back issues, or go online and find articles written by that reporter so you can get a feel for his or her writing style. (If you feel you don't have the time or resources to do this, contact AILA's Communications Department for help). This exercise will also give you something to make small talk about before the interview begins.
2. **Have a sense of what type of story this is going to be.** When you agree to the interview, you should have a pretty good idea about the story the reporter is working on. In other words, is it a feature story that focuses on business immigration? Are you just one of many people to be interviewed? Is it a "live" or taped interview? Make sure you ask all these questions before saying yes to doing the interview.
3. **Review your key message points & bolster your argument with data.** Check out AILA InfoNet for the latest position statements, talking points, and links to the Immigration Policy Center's research studies. Using statistics and facts will enhance your credibility and contextualize your key message points. Make sure you anticipate both tough and easy questions, double-check any facts you intend to use.
4. **Warm yourself up, and project energy.** Before the interview begins, take a moment to prepare your voice by clearing your throat. When the interview begins, take an active role and be attentive. Get your messages out there. If the reporter doesn't ask you the specific question you would like to answer, find an opportunity to say what you want to say.
5. **Remember your objective.** Is your purpose in doing the interview merely to inform the reporter's audience of some new immigration law? Or are you attempting to persuade people to adopt your point of view? Inspire them to change their belief? Motivate them to take some particular action—like contacting their Congressional representatives? Focusing on your ultimate objective should help guide what you say and how you say it.
6. **Prepare and Practice.** Have in mind one key message that you want to get across in the finished story. Ask yourself, "If I could edit the article that will come out of this interview, what one sentence would I most like to see?" Write the key messages out well in advance of the interview. Practice saying them out loud so that they sound natural to the ear. Do not recite talking points verbatim because perfectly proper sentences in a written text are often too formal (and even cumbersome) when spoken out loud—**USE YOUR OWN WORDS.**



7. **Simplify, simplify, simplify.** Keep your messaging simple. That is your best chance to have your message break through the clutter of competing messages and opinions for your target audience's time and attention. It is impossible to tell everyone everything – so simplify the message and deliver it with consistency and clarity.
8. **Place your most important message points at the beginning** of each response where they will be clear and isolated. In 15 words or less, what is the essence of your message for this interview? In TV or radio interviews this is especially important because broadcast journalists are looking for a very short “sound bite.” Try to get your key message point down to 9 or 10 seconds which, sadly, are too often all a spokesperson gets when the TV editing is complete.
9. **It is not only what you say but also how you say it.** The effective speaker is not necessarily polished and perfect. He/she is energetic, enthusiastic and direct. A forthright, enthusiastic response to a question portrays candor and confidence.
10. **You should not feel pressured to respond instantly.** When you are posed with a difficult question or a complex issue, it is appropriate to take a moment to organize your thoughts. In a print interview you can verbalize the pause by saying something like “I hadn't thought of it from that viewpoint before.....”
11. **Think fast but talk slowly.** If the reporter is taking notes, it will help the accuracy. If you are being taped for broadcast—audio or video—it will help your audience's comprehension.
12. **Never forget your ultimate audience.** You are talking to a reporter, but you are speaking to the people who read the publication or watch/listen to the program. Frame your answers from your target audience's point of view—meaning how this issue impacts them directly. For example, “If E-Verify becomes mandatory it could create significant problems for members of our community and slow down the country's economic recovery because the system is no where near ready to be implemented,” rather than “AILA opposes this legislation because.....”
13. **Always include the “me factor.”** It is crucial to appreciate your audience's viewpoint in order to understand how they will react to your message. The key word is benefit. If you can articulate the benefit to each individual's life or family or career or wallet, you will turn a nod of agreement into a spark of interest—and ultimately, action. People listen and respond in terms of their own lives. What are you telling them that will make a difference in their lives?
14. **Do not be embarrassed if a number or detail is not at hand and NEVER GUESS.** Simply tell the reporter that you will get that information to him/her as soon as the interview is over. Also, don't feel obliged to accept a figure or fact the reporter cites. Say you are not familiar with it and offer to have it checked. Never—repeat, never—guess at a statistic or fact if you don't know for sure.

15. **Do not let a reporter put words in your mouth.** Whenever you hear the phrases, “Are you saying that ... ?” or “Do you mean ... ?” or “Isn’t it really ... ?” Alarm bells should go off in your head. Mishandling this type of question can result in your feeling your words were reflected back by a fun-house mirror when the final story appears. If you do not like the way a question is stated, do not repeat it back in your response—even to deny it. The reporter’s question will not appear in print. Your answer will. It is better to respond in a positive way, using your own words, not the reporter’s. For example, if a reporter asks you if AILA is against more border security, don’t say: “I wouldn’t want to use the term ‘against.’” Because, you just did! Instead, say what you would want to say: “We believe in smart enforcement. For example ...” And go on and detail what that means. This is particularly important in a television interview, when time constraints will force severe editing. You want to be sure your key message point is right up front in every answer, in case you are on the air with only one sentence. Look back at this example to see what a one-sentence edit would do to you.
16. **Do not waste your brief time with a reporter by arguing against the other side.** You may want to refute their point of view but inadvertently end up giving valuable media exposure to their position. Instead stay on your message. State your case positively, without mentioning your opponents by name. If you are forced to refer to your adversaries, avoid emotional labels such as “radical.” Use the term “the other side” instead.
17. **Do not answer hypothetical questions.** Instead, particularize them with: “That’s a hypothetical question so it is impossible to know what might happen. But let me tell you exactly what did happen in a similar case ...”
18. **Avoid “frankly,” “to tell you the truth,” and “to be honest.”** These expressions serve no useful purpose. In fact, they may backfire on you by raising the question of how frank or truthful or honest you have been in all the rest of your interview if you suddenly say that you are going to be “frank” or “truthful” or “honest” with the reporter now.
19. **Respond to a simple question with a simple answer and speak in the active voice.** Short, simple answers are better than long, complicated ones. A few sentences using everyday language (not jargon or “legalize”) and avoiding the passive voice give the interviewer less opportunity to misunderstand you. And on TV and radio (where time is measured in dollars), this is especially important. Remember you should be able to say your key message points in about 10 seconds.
20. **Be yourself.** See this interview as an opportunity to educate and to demonstrate that you really care about immigration law. Remember the reporter asked you to do this interview because you are the expert—you are an authority in your area of expertise.

TOP INTERVIEWING TRICKS TO ALWAYS REMEMBER

Don't let down your guard during any interview. You are most vulnerable when you let your mind wander. Stay focused, regardless of how long the interview might last.

Whenever you hear "What if ..." from a reporter, know that your answer, however speculative, will be open to wide interpretation by readers, viewers, and listeners. It's best to refocus the question to a factual content and avoid all hypothetical situations.

Respond to negatives with a positive. Aggressive reporters often use a negative line of questioning to put you on edge. Deflating that stance takes patience, focus and a steady supply of positive, supportive data on your issue.

"For example ..." Are the words reporters most enjoy. They are not experts in immigration laws so examples help bring focus to your information.

Use "bridging" to help move the interview in a positive direction, such as "Let's look at this from this perspective ..."

Avoid: "As I said in my presentation ...", "As explained in our position statement ...", "As you know ..." The reporter may not have heard your presentation, read the position statement, and he or she doesn't know. That's why you're having the interview.



HOW TO ...

Collaborate with Community Advocates

Grassroots movements are much more likely to be associated with community organizers than they are with attorneys, but that doesn't mean AILA members can't be outstanding activists. Thousands of our members are involved in pro-immigration advocacy at the grassroots level. They diligently send letters to congress through our online action center, participate in civic organizations, and look for opportunities to educate neighbors and colleagues about the urgent need for meaningful immigration reform. Hundreds of our more advanced grassroots activists work in coalition with business associations, community groups, and religious organizations to promote pro-immigrant and pro-immigration policies at the state and national level. These leaders have developed influential relationships with elected officials and their staff, members of the media, and community leaders.

Here is an example of how AILA Chapter leaders in Minnesota successfully worked with an existing state coalition to promote national comprehensive immigration reform to key legislators and community leaders in the Twin Cities.

CASE STUDY: THE MINNESOTA/DAKOTAS CHAPTER-COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Minnesota is regarded as having a high level of activity at the grassroots level on immigration issues. An example of AILA's Minnesota/Dakotas Chapter's engagement is when they co-hosted a community forum that involved high-level community, religious and political leaders.

The Chapter's Chair and Vice Chair, Loan Huynh and Elizabeth Streefland, were determined to get involved in advocacy work and were looking for an opportunity to tap into the state's existing coalitions when the Governor of Minnesota announced new legislative proposals for local immigration enforcement. Loan and Elizabeth recognized the urgent need for AILA members to respond to the shortsighted proposals and so they introduced themselves to state organizations that had been involved in immigration advocacy for decades. The organizations included Minnesota Legal Services Coalition, Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights, Jewish Community Action, and the Archdiocese of St. Paul/Minneapolis.

Together, they established shared principles for their work and made decisions about how to address the state and national immigration policies at the same time. They used these principles to guide the structure and objectives of their outreach work: "We affirm the contributions of immigrants to the United States. We celebrate the ways in which a multi-cultural society enriches and strengthens our country, and we reject efforts to scapegoat immigrants for political gain. We urge our elected officials at local, state and federal levels to acknowledge that immigration policies which recognize

the dignity and value of all individuals are fully compatible with goals of economic progress and national security.”

The new coalition coordinated a very well attended community forum on immigration reform. AILA leaders’ participation included logistical planning for the event and facilitated e-mails among the groups involved. AILA members John Keller and Virgil Wiebe were involved in presenting highlights of federal immigration legislation and also providing substantive research to the presentations. Notable speakers included the mayors of Minneapolis and St. Paul (the two largest cities in MN), representatives of the police departments of both cities, a refugee immigrant telling her story, an AILA member who serves the Latino community as part of a non-profit organization, and a professor from the University of Minnesota’s Humphrey Institute who is versed in immigration policy and research. Many state senators, representatives and candidates were in the audience in addition to professional and student activists from a diverse group of community organizations.

In addition to the media coverage in the state’s major and ethnic newspapers, the forum spurred a renewed public dialogue on immigration. The coalition went on to plan future forums in other parts of the state that also included a broader base of interest, especially business and employers.

15 STEPS TO WORKING IN COALITION

1. Talk to your Chapter Chair and members of your Chapter’s Executive Committee about the benefits of getting involved in coalition work.
2. Find out which associations, organizations, and community groups are already engaged in immigration advocacy in your state.
3. Contact and introduce yourself to those groups and explain that you are interested in working together to advocate for progressive immigration reform.
4. Establish shared principles that you can use to guide your work and objectives.
5. Coordinate an event in your community.
6. Choose a location that is accessible for your intended audience. (The Minnesota Chapter actually made the decision to hold their forum at a community center instead of a downtown law firm.)
7. Invite speakers who can present different perspectives on the same problem and who are committed to the same solution.
8. Invite distinguished guests such as members of Congress, their staff, and community leaders, with personalized invitations.
9. Promote the event in local newspaper calendars and community bulletins
10. Create and disseminate a press release.
11. Make sign-in sheets for all of the guests.
12. Make a separate sign-in sheet for members of the press.
13. Create an action that guests can take immediately after the event. (The Minnesota Chapter created pre-addressed post cards to Congressional offices for guests to sign. They also encouraged guests to endorse their shared principles.)
14. After the event, make yourself available to the press to answer questions.
15. Immediately follow up with elected officials and their staff.

PROMOTE YOUR STRENGTHS AS A CHAPTER

As you and your Chapter pursue relationships with other organizations and existing coalitions, it is important to be aware of the way you are perceived by other members of your community. Other groups may not be clear about the way that AILA Chapters can enhance collaborative advocacy efforts and they may be unfamiliar with the type of work you do for immigrant communities – beyond specific casework. Here is an example of how AILA's New England Chapter learned this lesson and how they overcame misconceptions about their advances into advocacy.

It started in the Fall of 2007 when workplace raids in New Bedford, Massachusetts shattered the lives of thousands in the small New England community. Immigrant and native-born residents alike were overwhelmed with fear the moment 500 ICE agents pushed their way into a small leather factory on the north side of town. Fear soon clouded with intense grief as more than 350 workers were arrested and provided no means of contacting their loved ones. Family members, separated and scared, were left questioning – How do I find my husband, my wife, my mommy, my daddy?

The answers to those questions were not easily found. Locating arrested workers and connecting them to their families required significant time, energy, and effort from a diverse group of non-profit, faith-based, and legal organizations. AILA's New England Chapter was one of many entities that responded to the raid first by locating individuals, and soon after by responding to media inquiries, providing legal advice, liaising with state government agencies and elected officials, and volunteering to help as the situation continued to unravel.

CASE STUDY: THE NEW ENGLAND CHAPTER: RAISING YOUR PROFILE IN THE ADVOCACY COMMUNITY

The Chapter's compassionate response and contribution to the collective advocacy work following the devastating raids in New Bedford raised its profile within the community. Non-profit, faith based, and legal entities recognized AILA attorneys as advocates for a common pro-immigrant agenda and also accepted them as new partners who could help advance the immigration social movement.

Two years prior to the raids, when the executive committee began seeking coalition partners in earnest, the New England Chapter made few inroads. They had a topical relationship with the Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy (MIRA) Coalition that revolved around a campaign for state legislation that would allow public colleges and universities to offer in-state tuition to immigrant students. AILA attorneys were involved in writing letters to the editor, making calls and visits to the State House, identifying potential witnesses for hearings, and even testifying on the bill. Unfortunately, the positive reform was defeated during that session, but advocates remained hopeful that it would be reintroduced during a future legislative session. Punam Rogers, a Past President of the New England Chapter, remembered, "It was great to work with and learn from the MIRA Coalition the first time around. Now, with all of our

experience and new contacts from our work on the raids, we'll be prepared to give this fight all we've got." Punam later served as the Chapter's inaugural Community Based Organization Liaison, a new executive committee position dedicated to maintaining and fostering their burgeoning relationships with local groups.

No longer on the periphery after the raids, the New England Chapter is recognized by the local advocacy community as a knowledgeable and important voice in the debate. Groups like the ACLU and the Mayor's Office of New Bostonians frequently request AILA's endorsement of their letters and projects. They also invite attorneys to participate in meetings with legislators and speak at local conferences. The Chapter has also become a resource of information for reporters and opinion editors at the Boston Globe and Spanish language media outlets.

In turn, these new allies are participating in the Chapter's Pro-bono Project with Boston EOIR. It's a huge undertaking and AILA leaders are relieved to know that many of their new partners are volunteering to assist with coordinating and leading Know Your Rights trainings and presentations as well as arranging Bond Hearing training and representation.

Chapter members were able to establish new relationships with community groups simply by doing what they do best—practicing immigration law. The overwhelming response to the raids by AILA attorneys affirmatively raised their profile around the state. Through their good works they have grown their networks, become a go-to source for the media, and created fresh opportunities for the New England Chapter to advocate for fair and workable immigration law and policy.

FINDING NEW AND DIVERSE MESSENGERS

The social movement to reform our nation's immigration laws and policies is vast and diverse; advocates live in all parts of the country, are every age, race, and social position. It isn't hard to find people who believe that our immigration system is broken and in dire need of repair, but finding the right advocates to act as spokespeople can be a challenge. Because, for instance, a senator who was endorsed by the conservative Club for Growth is unlikely to be compelled by pro-immigration arguments from members of a labor union, it is important that we think strategically about who, and what, is most likely to influence a particular decision maker.

In addition to being a great messenger for immigration reform yourself AILA advocates are uniquely positioned to engage key spokespeople in the immigration movement. As attorneys, you regularly interact with individuals from different sectors of your community—maybe some of your clients are employers who have an interest in raising the cap on H-1Bs or they are hospitals that need more nurse, or perhaps you represent refugees and asylum seekers—you have access to individuals who have a valuable and possibly persuasive perspective on the way that U.S. immigration laws impact their lives.

Think about the person or people you want to convince to support immigration reform. Is it a State Senator from a rural part of your state, a U.S. Representative who cares deeply about education, or a County Executive with an eye toward economic development in the city? Who influences these decision makers and are they already a part of your personal or professional network? Here's an example of an AILA member who realized that if his U.S. Congressman was ever going to support immigration reform, the message was going to have to come from a business owner. Mid-South Chapter member Mario Ramos who lives in Tennessee met one key staff person from the Nashville Chamber of Commerce for coffee one time and introduced him to the issue of immigration. Two more meetings and two more months later, executive members of the Nashville Chamber of Commerce came to Washington, D.C. to lobby for comprehensive immigration reform.

CASE STUDY: MARIO RAMOS—ENGAGING THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY

This case study will provide you with a summary of Mario's outstanding advocacy work and a step-by-step plan for you to follow so that you can replicate his successful results.

Mario became more engaged with AILA Advocacy in May 2005 when he joined the national effort to oppose REAL ID. He worked in coalition with community leaders to mobilize advocates around the state to educate senators and representatives about the threats to civil liberties and due process imposed by the legislation. His enthusiasm for advocacy grew and Mario soon became determined to engage non-traditional immigration advocates in the pro-immigrant movement. He said, "My goal is to convert the unconverted, preaching to ethnic Chambers is preaching to the choir. I want to increase the pro-immigration reform network by focusing on mainstream Chambers." He intentionally targeted mainstream business-focused community groups that have an interest in employing foreign-born workers, and so he sought out professionals at the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce and the Middle Tennessee Homebuilders Association.

He evaluated the contacts in his personal network and wondered if any of them could help him find the right person at either of his targeted groups. In his search, Mario found the name and information of a prominent attorney and business executive in the Nashville area, whom he had met briefly during a leadership seminar a year or so before. That contact was recently hired by the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce to serve as the Senior Vice President of Government Relations and Community Improvement.

Once he realized the connection, Mario called his contact, and they set up a meeting to discuss the harmful impact that overly punitive, enforcement-only federal immigration legislation could have on local business. In his interview, Mario said, "I used their interests to guide their support of comprehensive immigration reform. I focused on business-related issues, i.e., their self-interest." After their initial conversation and coffee meeting, it was clear that the Chamber could be convinced to be key advocates for immigration reform in the state of Tennessee. Mario also realized he would need to promote the objectivity and specialized knowledge that AILA brings to the immigration debate.

Because Mario kept AILA Advocacy staff abreast of his outreach efforts, he was able to quickly provide his contact with updated legislative analysis of pending bills, fact sheets, position papers, and specific information about members of the national business community who publicly support comprehensive immigration reform. He also was able to arrange a breakout meeting with the Chamber executive and Jenny Levy, AILA's Manager of Grassroots Advocacy, who was in town for the Mid-South Chapter meeting.

As he worked to leverage his relationship with the Chamber of Commerce, Mario was contacted by some of the local immigrants' rights groups, churches, and individuals to work together to meet with members of the business community. Out of concern for alienating the Chamber before they had solidified their support for comprehensive immigration reform, he chose not to pursue this collective strategy.

He continued to pursue the Chamber and attended various local events such as forums and receptions to get to know more leadership and executives at the organization. While there, he continually talked about immigration in terms of economic development and the ways that foreign-born workers could contribute to the local economy. His work spurred the Chamber to include immigration reform as one of their five annual legislative priorities. When the Nashville Chamber's executive lobbying group visited Capitol Hill to meet with its state's senate and congressional delegations, the group made a special focus on immigration. Mario informed AILA National staff that the Nashville Chamber would be in D.C. so that staff could prepare the lobbying group to speak about current immigration legislation.

Because of Mario's outreach, the Chamber and other business groups in Nashville and the metro area, expressly seek AILA to help guide their efforts. He explained that "[t]hese groups have virtually no immigration knowledge and they seek our help [to teach them about the impact that immigration policy could have their business]."

For Mario, convincing diverse groups that comprehensive immigration reform is a non-partisan issue is easy if one considers the needs and interests of the target audience. "Going back to network theory, we need to join the interest of AILA to business networks. They seek our technical expertise and knowledge of immigration law." AILA needs the support of the business community in order to win comprehensive immigration reform. Instead of telling the Chamber of Commerce why they should help AILA, Mario told the Nashville Chamber of Commerce why they need comprehensive immigration reform and that AILA can help them to achieve it.

“My goal is to convert the unconverted, preaching to ethnic Chambers is preaching to the choir. I want to increase the pro-immigration reform network by focusing on mainstream Chambers.”

—Mario Ramos

10 STEPS TO BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY

1. **Identify** target association or organization.
2. **Do Your Research**—Identify your target's needs, interests, and motivation. Determine the value you bring to your target.
3. **Determine a specific goal** that you want your target to accomplish (e.g.: an in-district meeting with a member of Congress, an event to attend, an op-ed to author).
4. **Carefully consider your outreach strategy** and identify which partners, if any, will enhance the message you share with your target audience.
5. **Evaluate your personal and professional networks** and determine which contacts can help you meet someone from your target.
6. **Have coffee** or other meetings with your target.
7. **Keep in touch with AILA staff** and work together to reach your target audience and objective. Try to coordinate opportunities for AILA staff to meet directly with your contact.
8. **Be visible in your target community** by attending events they host. Build relationships with their leadership and decision makers.
9. **Share your expertise** with your target by alerting them to local articles or events that are of joint interest for you both.
10. **Commit to maintaining the relationship** so that you can jointly accomplish your predetermined goal.



USE THIS SAMPLE LETTER OF INTRODUCTION TO REACH OUT TO BUSINESS PROFESSIONALS OR GROUPS IN YOUR COMMUNITY.

“ Re: Immigration Reform Partnerships

Dear _____ :

On behalf of the **[insert name of chapter]** Chapter of the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA), I am contacting you regarding the adverse effects of immigration-related policies confronting you and your coalition members. The dearth of willing native born workers combined with the limited number of visas for foreign workers has led to labor shortages in all sectors of the economy, including yours. While the American people recognize that our immigration system is broken and needs to be fixed, our national law makers have walked away from each legislative opportunity to initiate reform.

In the wake of their shortsighted actions, DHS has implemented a wide-spread enforcement plan throughout the country, conducted by Immigration Control and Enforcement, or “ICE”. These raids and audits have the potential to destroy businesses, the economy and families. It is a tragedy in the making; one that Congress could have avoided. In fact, objective polls taken over the last 2 or 3 years consistently show that some 70% of the American public wants Congress to enact a reform bill that will provide legal status to essential workers in construction, landscaping, manufacturing, food processing and multiple other service industries.

Reflecting that broad consensus, many members of Congress from both parties have introduced workable proposals over the last several years, only to see their efforts frustrated by Congressional members who listen only to the small minority who endorse an “enforcement only” approach to this issue.

The purpose of this letter is not to review the irrational and reactionary nature of the “enforcement only” approach. Instead, we want to begin a dialogue between your organization and the **[insert name of chapter]** Chapter of AILA. We believe that our groups have much in common and that by working together we can:

- Help members connect with others in **[insert name of state]** and on a wider scale to share information and education on how to approach your members of Congress effectively and on a continuing basis;
- Assist each other in monitoring federal and state proposals affecting those we represent;
- Share Action Alerts and information on pressing issues and important developments;
- Identify members of Congress (and candidates in upcoming races) who are and will be willing to support sensible reform.

Many groups lobby Congress through paid lobbyists who make polished arguments. We believe that it is more effective for your members to make direct contacts with Congressional members, both as individuals and through your office. In fact, Congressional staffers regularly tell us that:

“My boss agrees with your position on immigration reform, but the calls and e-mails and letters from constituents are running 10 to 1 against the reform proposals. Until we hear from your clients and other groups who support reform, we only can assume that the majority of our constituents oppose it.”

The polls we have seen do not support that kind of response, but until this point, the business community (i.e., your members) has been largely silent on this issue. Your members are busy running their businesses, and we do not criticize them for this. But we are in a crisis, and further inaction by Congress on this issue has the potential to damage and even destroy the economy. We cannot let that happen.

As a member of the AILA advocacy team, it is my job to identify business groups and related coalitions with an interest in immigration reform, and help educate their members about how to approach member of Congress effectively. I promise that we will do everything possible to support those contacts.

I will be calling you shortly to set up a short meeting at a convenient time and place to discuss these ideas further, and we look forward to working with you on this critical issue.

Thank you for your time and attention to my comments.

Sincerely yours,

”

2) Issue Areas & Talking Points

Issue Areas and Talking Points

AILA's Immigration Resources for the 112th Congress

For years, Americans and our elected leaders have been in agreement that the immigration system is outdated and failing to meet our country's needs. Every American business, community, and family is affected by the shortcomings of this system, which regulates the flow of foreign workers, students, and family members to our country. Each year that policymakers fail to recast these laws is another year that families cannot reunite with their loved ones, businesses cannot hire the workers they need, and that people enter the United States unlawfully because a viable system for legal immigration does not exist. Moreover the U.S. Government misses billions of dollars in potential tax revenue each year. Our economy and our communities are worse off. People are growing frustrated that Congress and the President have not fixed this intractable problem.

In 2010, AILA published *Solutions That Work: A Policy Manual for Immigration Reform*, which describes the shortcomings of our immigration system and the solutions needed to fix it. AILA's reform framework consists of the following: 1) require the unauthorized population to register their presence with the government and earn legal permanent legal status by paying stiff fines and back taxes, undergoing rigorous background checks, and learning English; 2) provide fair and lawful ways for American businesses to hire much-needed immigrant workers who help grow our economy while protecting U.S. workers from unfair competition and all workers from exploitation; 3) reduce the counterproductive backlogs in family-based and employment-based immigration; 4) ensure the immigration system provides adequate visas to meet the future needs of American families, businesses, and communities; and 5) preserve and restore the fundamental principles of due process and equal protection while protecting our national security.

This section of *AILA's Tools of Engagement* describes proposals AILA anticipates will be made in the 112th Congress. Many of them may sound appealing—as easy fixes or ways to get tough on illegal immigration—but they would do little to address America's immigration needs. What's worse, in most cases they would cause great suffering to immigrants and their families, add unnecessary costs to the DHS budget, or slow our economic recovery at a time when we desperately need job growth.

The proposals outlined below range from very small fixes to expansive overhauls—they span the largely symbolic to agency-wide funding bills. No matter their size or scope, however, they all will have enormous consequences not only for the immigration system but also immigrants themselves, American families, businesses, and communities. These ideas warrant the close attention of all members in the 112th Congress. AILA opposes nearly all the proposals described below or urges lawmakers to exercise caution before supporting them. AILA has long stood for the position that reform must be done sensibly to ensure America has an effective immigration system that meets our nation's needs. Immigration is an issue of such great importance to the United States that lawmakers can no longer turn to proposals that look easy but ultimately do not address the real issues. We urge the 112th Congress to roll up its sleeves and do the tough work of reform.

KEY TOPICS:

- 1. Emphasis on Border and Interior Enforcement**
 - 2. Mandatory Employment Verification**
 - 3. State and Local Authority to Enforce Immigration Law**
 - 4. Punitive Enforcement Approaches**
 - 5. Limits on the Opportunity for a Fair Hearing and Due Process**
 - 6. Attacks on the 14th Amendment**
 - 7. Restrictions on Legal Immigration That Hurt Families**
 - 8. Restrictions on Immigrants' Access to Public Services and Benefits**
 - 9. English-Only Proposals**
-

1. EMPHASIS ON BORDER AND INTERIOR ENFORCEMENT

Effective border security and interior enforcement are essential to a functioning immigration system. But enforcement cannot be done alone without addressing the root problems with the immigration system. AILA also urges caution and careful examination of enforcement proposals that may sound tough but ultimately will neither be effective, nor fix our immigration system, nor help the economy grow. Enforcement should be done in a smart and effective manner that ensures public safety while also protecting American values of fairness and justice.

The new leadership in the House of Representatives has made clear that its agenda will have a far greater emphasis on border security and interior enforcement. In particular, border security has been a constant drumbeat. Spending for more fencing, surveillance technologies, and boots on the border has increased steadily, including a \$600 million supplemental border spending bill that was enacted last year.

- Heaping on more money for border security without legalizing the undocumented or addressing our nation's immigration needs is not a smart approach.
- Tough-sounding enforcement proposals, like a mass deportation approach or the border fence, are extremely costly and impractical to implement.
- Punitive enforcement causes a great deal of suffering to people who are members of our communities, including U.S. citizens, without necessarily advancing U.S. policy interests.

2. MANDATORY EMPLOYMENT VERIFICATION

In 2011, there will likely be proposals to expand the existing electronic employment verification system, called E-Verify, or to make it mandatory for all employers. E-Verify is an internet-based system that allows an employer to determine whether an employee is legally authorized to work in the United States. The E-Verify system is operated by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in partnership with the Social Security Administration.

While a functioning and efficient employment verification system is necessary to ensure workers have authorization to work, the current E-Verify system suffers from serious privacy, civil liberties, budgetary and technological concerns. Most legislative proposals to expand E-Verify fail to address these flaws. Until these problems are resolved, any mandatory, nationwide implementation of E-Verify could harm hundreds of thousands of people eligible to work, including U.S. citizens. Unless a solution is found to legalize thousands of essential workers in key business sectors, an expansion of E-verify would do grave harm to American jobs and the economy.

- E-Verify relies upon databases that contain unacceptably high percentages of outdated or inaccurate information. At a February 10, 2011 hearing before the House Immigration Policy and Enforcement Subcommittee on worksite enforcement, a representative of the Government Accountability Office testified that it will be difficult or impossible to improve the accuracy of the E-verify system beyond where it is today. Based on DHS data, if E-Verify were to be made mandatory nationwide, at least 1.2 million U.S. citizens, permanent residents, and others legally authorized to work in the U.S. would lose their jobs if they do not take steps to correct their records. Because an error in a database has the severe consequence of preventing someone from being able to work, these issues with the E-Verify program must be addressed before any significant expansion of the program is authorized.
- Expanding E-Verify will not create jobs. Instead of driving undocumented workers out of the labor force, an expanded E-Verify program will force workers into the underground economy. That would have devastating impacts on the economy—in particular, the loss of \$17.3 billion in tax revenue over 10 years.
- E-Verify can be misused by employers who might use it to prescreen potential employees, take an adverse employment action based on an initial response from E-Verify, or fail to inform workers of their rights under the program. A government-sponsored study, for example, found that database errors led 22 percent of employers to restrict work assignments, 16 percent to delay job training, and 2 percent to reduce pay—all in violation of the E-Verify program.
- Expanding E-Verify will hurt businesses. At a time when we need economic growth, it is a step in the wrong direction to require thousands of businesses to sign up for and make the resource investments to use E-Verify. E-Verify is a voluntary system and currently only about 3 percent of the 7 million American employers use it. Bloomberg reported last week that a mandatory E-Verify system would cost small businesses \$2.6 billion (based on fiscal year 2010 costs).
- An inaccurate verification system makes it difficult for employers to hire authorized workers and citizens, harming our economy when we can least afford it. Rather than expand—or worse, make mandatory—a program that remains deeply flawed and not ready for mass use, SSA should work with Congress to create a smart and effective system in which the needs of businesses and the economy are met and workers' rights are protected.

3. STATE AND LOCAL AUTHORITY TO ENFORCE IMMIGRATION LAW

Since the passage of Arizona's SB 1070 law, few issues have been more controversial than the question of what role state and local law enforcement should play in the enforcement of federal immigration laws. Traditionally, immigration has been viewed as an area of exclusive federal jurisdiction because it affects national and homeland security, border security, and foreign relations. The laws governing these issues work far better if established at a national level rather than a state or local level. If states and localities can also enact their own border laws or immigration laws, there would be numerous, conflicting laws that would make implementation impractical, if not impossible.

For these reasons, AILA believes that immigration law should remain a federal matter and opposes the use of local and state legislation to regulate immigration.

Current Challenges to State and Local Immigration Laws

Despite their dubious constitutionality, every year states and local governments pass hundreds of laws related to immigration policy not only in the arena of law enforcement but in housing, public benefits, employment, identification cards and licenses, education, and public health. Recently, several of these state and local immigration laws have been struck down because they were judged to have intruded into the federal government's exclusive power to regulate immigration:

- In July 2010, a federal judge ruled that major elements of SB 1070 were preempted by federal law. Arizona has appealed the decision.
- In September 2010, a federal appellate court struck down as unconstitutional a law enacted four years ago by the city of Hazelton, PA that would have punished landlords and employers who rent to or hire "illegal aliens." The court found the Hazelton law violated the Constitution's Supremacy Clause.
- Finally, in December 2010, the U.S. Supreme Court heard argument regarding another Arizona law mandating use of the federal E-verify program. A decision is expected in that case by summer 2011.

In a misguided attempt to avoid similar legal battles in the future, some federal lawmakers have even proposed bills that would cede authority to states and localities on immigration. Bills like the CLEAR Act of 2011 (H.R. 100) would grant broad authority to states and localities to enforce immigration laws and, in some cases, mandate that state and local police enforce federal laws.

Federal Programs That Utilize Local Law Enforcement

There are several federal immigration enforcement programs that rely on state and local law enforcement agencies to arrest, detain, and provide information about possible immigration law violators to DHS. These programs include the federal "287(g)" program (named after their federal immigration code cite), Secure Communities, the Criminal Alien Program, and DHS's extensive reliance on state and local authorities to hold immigrants on "detainers." The 287(g) program authorizes states and localities to enter into specific cooperative agreements with the federal government, and empower

their police officers to engage in certain civil immigration enforcement activities. The Secure Communities program provides federal immigration authorities access to fingerprints taken by a local police department at time of booking so that they can be run through federal immigration databases to check immigration status.



A leading concern with these federal programs is that they erode the trust between immigrant communities and local law enforcement agencies and ultimately compromise their ability to keep our communities safe. AILA is also concerned that programs like Secure Communities will function like a dragnet and result in the arrest and harassment of large numbers of people who are law-abiding members of the community. In 2011, we are likely to see a push to expand these enforcement programs, even though many questions remain about their effectiveness and impact on our communities.

- A major concern with local law enforcement agencies enforcing civil immigration laws is the chill it will put on immigrant communities to report crimes. When immigrants learn that contact with local law enforcement could lead to their own deportation or the deportation of close relatives, they lose trust in the police. When they do not report crimes, crimes go unsolved and community safety is compromised.
- Many state and local police leaders have opposed local enforcement of immigration laws. Police chiefs recognize the enormous benefit that “community policing” has had on reducing crime rates. They see their number one job as fighting crime and protecting the community, and know that becoming “deportation agents” will hurt their ability to protect the public.
- Local and state law enforcement should not be tasked with enforcing federal immigration law when they do not have the resources or the training needed to properly undertake this role. At a time of severe budget crises when local police departments are laying off staff, adding more enforcement responsibilities will overwhelm many local agencies.

4. PUNITIVE ENFORCEMENT APPROACHES

In the 112th Congress, there will likely be proposals to add stiff new penalties against individuals who violate immigration laws and immigrants who commit even minor criminal offenses. Past proposals have called for making it a crime to be in the United States without authorization; mandatory deportation for lawful permanent residents who commit even minor crimes; expansion of expedited deportation practices; and mandatory jail sentences for people who use a fake passport or visa (something many asylum seekers resort to because it is the only way they were able to escape persecution). There should be consequences for violating immigration law, but the current system already has these. The kinds of “get-tough” measures proposed in past years tend to be so punitive that they are disproportionate to the offending behavior. They are also costly and impractical to implement.

What's Wrong With "Enforcement-First"?

We cannot enforce our way out of a broken immigration system. Many who favor tough immigration enforcement have argued that putting more agents on the border and ramping up deportations is the only way to get rid of the estimated 11 million unauthorized immigrants in the United States.

- Increased border security and interior enforcement are essential components of smart immigration reform. But enforcement alone will not be effective; Congress also needs to address the fact that our immigration system does not meet the needs of American families, businesses, and the economy.
- Republican and Democratic leaders, including former President George W. Bush, Senator John McCain, and DHS Secretary Jane Napolitano, have rejected a mass deportation strategy as too costly and impractical. The Center for American Progress has estimated that it would cost \$41.2 billion each year for a period of five years to deport the undocumented population. Economists have pointed out that deportation of millions of unauthorized workers and their families would disrupt thousands of jobs held by many Americans and legal immigrants, and would be disastrous for the American economy.
- The Bush and Obama administrations have aggressively enforced immigration laws. Reduced levels of illegal immigration, however, are not necessarily due to increased enforcement but rather the economic recession and decline in the U.S. job market.

Harsh Enforcement Measures Have Unintended Consequences:

In 1996, Congress passed the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA), a sweeping enforcement bill that virtually mandated deportation for even long-term lawful permanent residents who violate laws, including some with minor criminal offenses. As a result, immigration judges have been required by law to order deportation, even when the result seems wholly unfair or inhumane. Yet proposals to build on the 1996 law have surfaced again and again.

- Mary Anne Gehris, is a lawful permanent resident who came to the U.S. from Germany as an infant. After being arrested for pulling another woman's hair, Ms. Gehris pleaded guilty to a misdemeanor and was given a one-year suspended jail sentence. Despite the fact that she served no time in jail and was convicted of a misdemeanor, she faced automatic deportation. She was permitted to remain in the U.S. only after the pardon board of Georgia took the extraordinary step of granting her a pardon.
- In a November 4, 1999 letter to the attorney general and INS commissioner, twenty-eight members of the House of Representatives, including Lamar Smith and James Sensenbrenner, acknowledged that some deportations under IIRIRA "were unfair and resulted in unjustifiable hardship."

- Tough-sounding proposals that mandate deportation do not make communities any safer—our laws already provide enforcement tools, including criminal prosecution and civil deportation proceedings, to protect communities from those who pose serious threats to public safety.

Another popular proposal has been the criminalization of unlawful presence, i.e. making it a federal criminal offense to live in the United States without authorization. Generally, a person living in the United States without a valid visa or green card is in violation of civil immigration laws and can be deported but has not committed a crime.

- Unauthorized presence encompasses even minor violations, including entering the United States with a valid visa but staying longer than permitted. For example, a college student who does not take enough credits is in violation of his visa, while a tourist's visa may expire while he is in the hospital.
- Passing a law that criminalizes unauthorized presence would label millions of undocumented immigrants as “criminals” and push a huge class of people further underground where their identities will remain unknown.
- Criminalizing unauthorized presence would punish legitimate asylum seekers who have fled persecution and enter the United States without a valid visa. Other vulnerable groups, like victims of human trafficking, would also become criminals.
- Undocumented victims of domestic violence or human trafficking would be even more afraid to come forward and report abuse for fear that they, themselves, would be prosecuted for being in the U.S. without permission. Batterers and traffickers commonly threaten to call immigration officials to isolate their victims and subject them to further abuse.
- The federal court system is already overwhelmed by immigration cases. A law that criminalizes unauthorized presence would add millions of criminal cases to courts and impose prohibitive expenses for the prosecution of individuals, most of whom pose no danger to our communities.

5. LIMITING THE OPPORTUNITY FOR A FAIR HEARING AND DUE PROCESS

Access to courts is a fundamental principle of our country, both as a means to protect individual rights and to ensure that our laws are applied correctly and uniformly. Whether in a criminal or civil case, Americans value their right to a fair hearing by an impartial fact-finder who is trained to apply the law. In the immigration system, however, this principle has gradually been eroded. Several laws passed since 1996 have severely restricted the rights of immigrants—both legal and undocumented—to gain access to courts. In some cases, DHS officers have the authority to remove immigrants, including individuals fleeing persecution, without a court hearing. Federal district

courts now retain only narrow authority to review DHS and DOJ decisions, barring many immigrants from obtaining independent judicial review of agency decisions.

Recent proposals to restrict court access even further have included provisions to prevent people who are applying for citizenship from appealing their case to the federal courts. Some lawmakers have proposed that summary deportations by DHS officers should be expanded.

- Checks and balances are an essential feature of our government. Barring immigrants from seeking judicial review of DHS decisions means that there are no “checks” on mistakes made by individual officers or immigration judges.
- The dramatic consequences in immigration cases—usually deportation from the United States—means that a person’s entire life circumstances could be changed overnight by a single officer whose decision is final.
- Greater use of summary deportations (those made without court hearings) will lead to increased deportations of asylum seekers and other immigrants who are entitled to remain in the U.S.
- Immigration law is complex and requires careful and objective analysis by trained judges. DHS officers are trained as enforcers of the law, not impartial fact-finders.

6. ATTACKS ON THE 14TH AMENDMENT

In July 2010, the idea of eliminating automatic citizenship for children born on U.S. soil gained renewed attention when Senator Lindsay Graham (R-SC) announced that he was considering introducing a constitutional amendment to revoke portions of the 14th Amendment to achieve this end. This long-established constitutional rule guarantees that U.S. citizenship is principally determined based on birthplace.

Since then other members of Congress, including Senators John Kyl (R-AZ), John McCain (R-AZ), and Mitch McConnell (R-KY), have called for congressional hearings on birth citizenship. Congressman Steve King (R-IA) has already introduced legislation (Birthright Citizenship Act of 2011, H.R. 140) to redefine the meaning of the 14th amendment to prevent the children of undocumented immigrants from receiving citizenship.

Though many agree that our immigration system is broken, restricting rights granted under the 14th Amendment would do little to fix it and would actually increase the number of people in this country without a legal status. Moreover, such a step would be a drastic measure that would levy an enormous cost to our civil rights and civil liberties.

About the 14th Amendment and the Citizenship Clause

The 14th amendment was adopted in 1868 and forms the cornerstone of American civil rights by ensuring due process and equal protection under the law to all persons. The Citizenship Clause of the 14th Amendment states: “All persons born or naturalized in the United States and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside.” The intent of the provision was to codify

the existing Anglo-American common law rule of birthright citizenship and to reject the philosophy behind the infamous 1857 Supreme Court Dred Scott decision which sought to deny citizenship to US-born slaves and their children.

This right to citizenship under the 14th Amendment has been consistently recognized by courts and Attorneys General for over a century, most notably by the Supreme Court in *United States v. Wong Kim Ark*.

Since 1995, members of Congress have introduced 28 separate bills aimed at restricting the citizenship rights granted under the 14th Amendment. They have justified such proposals using inaccurate and misleading scare tactics such as claims about undocumented parents coming to the United States to give birth to “anchor babies” for the purpose of enabling the parents to gain legal immigration status. According to this line of argument, restricting birthright citizenship rights would solve this problem by preventing undocumented immigrants from circumventing immigration laws. However, the wait time for these parents to gain legal status is over two decades since children cannot begin the process of sponsoring their parents until they are at least twenty-one years old, and many of these parents would be required to return to their home country for a ten-year period, delaying the process further.

AILA rejects proposals that restrict the 14th Amendment’s guarantee of citizenship for persons born in the U.S.

- Any restrictions on the rights of citizenship guaranteed in the 14th Amendment would offend this country’s most sacred values and Constitutional principles. Placing limits on citizenship rights would re-establish the very same discriminatory exclusion that the 14th Amendment was intended to remedy.
- Proposed legislation to subvert the 14th Amendment, like Rep. Steve King’s (R-IA) bill, H.R. 140, is unconstitutional. Congress cannot pass bills to circumvent the Constitution and any such legislation should be rejected.
- Citizenship based on place of birth is a fundamental right inextricably tied to our liberty and equal rights. In America, each person is born equal with no disadvantage or exalted status arising from the circumstance of their parentage.
- The American public wants real solutions that address the problems with the immigration system and its inability to meet the needs of the American economy, businesses, workers, and families. Proposing to restrict citizenship rights makes for tough-sounding political rhetoric but does little to fix the system.
- Repeal of citizenship based on place of birth would create an administrative nightmare for most American citizens, who would be unable to use their birth certificates as proof of citizenship. The only alternative would be costly new bureaucracies, either to judge each new baby’s worthiness to receive a birth certificate, or to create and run a national citizens’ registry.

7. RESTRICTIONS ON IMMIGRATION THAT HURT FAMILIES

For decades, the primary sources of legal immigration to the United States have been family members reuniting with their loved ones and workers filling jobs at American businesses. The reunification of families, in particular, has been rooted in American history with each successive wave of immigrants that has come from different parts of the world bringing their close family to join them. In rough economic times, not only business immigration but also family immigration has benefited our economy and aided job growth.

The current system allows U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents to sponsor their spouses, children, parents and siblings for immigrant visas. In the absence of immigration reform, however, there are massive backlogs in visa applications that keep families waiting 10, 15 or even 20 years to be reunited.

Even with the backlogs in family visas, some lawmakers seeking to restrict legal immigration to the United States have argued that the family visa system should be further limited.

- Restrictions on family immigration would be a dramatic and unwise shift in American immigration policy.
- Immigrants who have the support of family members are better able to integrate into the mainstream of American society and become productive taxpayers. Now more than ever, with the economy like it is today, we need more people who can be committed to their new country, work hard, play by the rules, start businesses and pay taxes.
- Immigrant families help expand our tax base, broaden tax revenues, and strengthen our economy.
- The immigration system should not punish immigrants who have done everything right and come to our country legally by telling them they can never be reunited with their closest family members.

The Points-Based System

Another idea has been to radically restructure the immigration system and introduce a new points-based system for allocating visas. In 2007, Congress considered a proposal that would have replaced the family and employer sponsorship method with one based on points awarded for certain characteristics like age, education, employment skills and English proficiency. Earn enough points, and you can apply for a green card. There are many problems inherent in point system proposals:

- A point system would change the historical foundations of our immigration system and unhinge the immigration system from its grounding in family and employment relationships.
- A point system would be extremely difficult to implement and likely vulnerable to fraud.
- Point systems result in a mismatch of skills to fit the needs of the economy. A point system lumps all immigrant workers into a single pool, whatever the skill level. This would severely curtail family immigration, and favor high-skilled over less-skilled workers, leaving industries like agriculture and construction without necessary manpower.
- A point system would place too much authority with the federal government to select who is best for jobs. This could leave some high-skilled industries without the workers required to fill specific positions, since employers would lose their ability to recruit the specialized knowledge and skills they need. Such a system would therefore compromise labor market flexibility, and threaten the United State's long-term economic competitiveness and stability.

Congress needs to formulate policies that build upon family strengths to ensure that future generations of immigrants continue to fulfill their extraordinary potential and track record of success. In order to maximize the contribution of family-based immigration, Americans need a system that will recognize the overwhelming economic contribution of family-based entrants and maintain family as the cornerstone of U.S. immigration policy.

8. RESTRICTING ACCESS TO BENEFITS

AILA also anticipates bills will be introduced in the 112th Congress that deny legal and unauthorized immigrants federally-funded public benefits. These proposals typically deny benefits to immigrants or clarify and reinforce that under existing law immigrants are not entitled to certain benefits. In the past, members have targeted Social Security benefits, the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), health care, and housing assistance programs. In addition, bills that create new programs often include provisions that deny immigrants access to those benefits. AILA urges careful scrutiny of these proposals as they are frequently superfluous, symbolic statements that will have little practical impact, especially since undocumented immigrants are ineligible for most benefits and legal immigrants are severely restricted. Moreover, some proposals, like those that place more stringent requirements on EITC, will likely make it harder for U.S. citizens to obtain benefits and would even lead to erroneous denials.

9. ENGLISH-ONLY PROPOSALS

In recent years, lawmakers have proposed bills to make English the official language of the United States. One recent example is the English Language Unity Act of 2009 (H.R. 997) introduced by Representative Steve King, the vice-chair of the House Immigration Subcommittee. Typical provisions of English-only proposals include: (1) requiring English to be the official language of the United States; (2) requiring all federal government documents to be printed in English-only; and (3) prohibiting the use of funds that creates an entitlement to services provided in a language other than English.

English has never been declared the official language of the United States, although it is clearly the language of communication and commerce in our society. AILA opposes English-only proposals that raise public policy and constitutional concerns:

- An English-only law could undermine and limit the government's ability to provide access to critical information and services. For example, in the event of a natural disaster or terrorist threat, English-only policies could impede the government's ability to convey warnings or post danger or hazard signs in languages other than English.
- In the area of public health, an English-only requirement could hinder the ability of medical personnel to communicate effectively with patients at federally-funded hospitals or the public at large, potentially complicating treatment or even facilitating the spread of communicable diseases
- Courts have concluded that state and local English-only laws violate the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment and the First Amendment on the ground that such laws they make it virtually impossible for persons who do not speak English well—whether they are U.S. citizens, legal immigrants, or undocumented workers—to communicate effectively and to assert their constitutional rights.

3) Contact Info.
& Conclusion

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DOWNLOAD *Solutions That Work*
at www.aila.org/solutions

Solutions That Work: A Policy Manual for Immigration Reform was crafted by the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA) to show that a solution to our nation's immigration problem does exist and can be achieved. Each section of this policy manual summarizes a key component of the existing immigration system, identifies its deficiencies and offers workable solutions that when applied together, will fix the totality of the broken, outdated, and inadequate system. AILA believes that for lasting and meaningful reform to take hold, these various components must be addressed in a comprehensive immigration reform package.

Helpful Organizations

▶ **American Immigration Council & Immigration Policy Center**

www.immigrationpolicy.org

The Immigration Policy Center (IPC) is the research and policy arm of the American Immigration Council. IPC's mission is to shape a rational conversation on immigration and immigrant integration. Through its research and analysis, IPC provides policymakers, the media, and the general public with accurate information about the role of immigrants and immigration policy on U.S. society. IPC reports and materials are widely disseminated and relied upon by press and policy makers. IPC staff regularly serves as experts to leaders on Capitol Hill, opinion-makers and the media. IPC, formed in 2003, is a non-partisan organization that neither supports nor opposes any political party or candidate for office.

▶ **Americas Voice**

www.americasvoiceonline.org

America's Voice is a communications and public opinion organization dedicated to creating the public momentum for reforms that will transform a dysfunctional immigration system into a regulatory system that works. To achieve this, they conduct cutting edge public opinion research, perform rapid response communications in English and Spanish, and support courageous leaders who are standing up for real immigration reform.

▶ **Center for American Progress**

www.americanprogress.org

The Center for American Progress is dedicated to improving the lives of Americans through progressive ideas and action. Building on the achievements of progressive pioneers such as Teddy Roosevelt and Martin Luther King, CAP's work addresses 21st-century challenges such as energy, national security, economic growth and opportunity, immigration, education, and health care.

▶ **Compete America**

www.competeamerica.org

The Compete America coalition is the leading advocate for reform of U.S. immigration policy for highly educated foreign professionals. Compete's members include corporations, universities, research institutions and trade associations. Compete America has worked with both the Administration and Congress on issues critical to immigration compliance, as well as the global mobility of talent. The Coalition is committed to continuing its efforts to ensure that the United States has the capacity to educate and retain the talent necessary for continued innovation, job creation and expansion in a worldwide economy.

▶ **Essential Worker Immigration Coalition**

www.ewic.org

The Essential Worker Immigration Coalition (EWIC) is a coalition of businesses, trade associations, and other organizations from across the industry spectrum concerned with the shortage of both lesser skilled and unskilled (“essential worker”) labor. EWIC stands ready to work with the Administration and Congress to push forward on important immigration reform issues.

▶ **Immigrants’ Rights Project**

www.aclu.org/immigrants-rights/about-aclus-immigrants-rights-project

Founded in 1987, the ACLU Immigrants’ Rights Project is dedicated to expanding and enforcing the civil liberties and civil rights of non-citizens and to combating public and private discrimination against immigrants. For more than twenty years, the IRP has been at the forefront of almost every major legal struggle on behalf of immigrants’ rights through class action lawsuits, law reform litigation, judicial rulings and legal advocacy. IRP has won nationwide injunctions, established major precedents and litigated leading cases in the United States Supreme Court, including *Demore v. Kim* and the landmark *INS v. St. Cyr*, which upheld immigrants’ right to habeas corpus and reversed the retroactive deportation of longtime legal residents.

▶ **Immigration Works USA**

www.immigrationworksusa.org

ImmigrationWorks USA is a national organization advancing immigration reform that works for all Americans—employers, workers and citizens. Its twin goals: to educate the public about the benefits of immigration and build a mainstream grass-roots constituency in favor of better law—business owners and others from across America willing to speak out and demand an overhaul.

The organization links 25 state-based business coalitions: employers and trade associations from Florida to Oregon and from every sector of the economy that relies on immigrant workers. Made up primarily of small business owners known and trusted in their communities, these coalitions are ideally positioned to make the case for immigration reform, explaining how immigrant workers help sustain the economy and will play a critical part in the nation’s economic recovery.

▶ **Migration Policy Institute**

www.migrationpolicy.org

The Migration Policy Institute is an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit think tank in Washington, DC dedicated to analysis of the movement of people worldwide.

MPI provides analysis, development, and evaluation of migration and refugee policies at the local, national, and international levels. It aims to meet the rising demand for pragmatic and thoughtful responses to the challenges and opportunities that large-scale migration, whether voluntary or forced, presents to communities and institutions in an increasingly integrated world.

▶ **National Conference of State Legislatures**

www.ncsl.org

The National Conference of State Legislatures is a bipartisan organization that serves the legislators and staffs of the nation's 50 states, its commonwealths and territories. NCSL provides research, technical assistance and opportunities for policymakers to exchange ideas on the most pressing state issues. NCSL is an effective and respected advocate for the interests of state governments before Congress and federal agencies. NCSL is your organization. The leadership of NCSL is composed of legislators and staff from across the country. The NCSL Executive Committee provides overall direction on operations of the Conference.

▶ **National Council of La Raza**

www.nclr.org

The National Council of La Raza (NCLR)—the largest national Hispanic civil rights and advocacy organization in the United States—works to improve opportunities for Hispanic Americans. Through its network of nearly 300 affiliated community-based organizations, NCLR reaches millions of Hispanics each year in 41 states, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia. To achieve its mission, NCLR conducts applied research, policy analysis, and advocacy, providing a Latino perspective in five key areas—assets/investments, civil rights/immigration, education, employment and economic status, and health. In addition, it provides capacity-building assistance to its Affiliates who work at the state and local level to advance opportunities for individuals and families.

▶ **National Employment Law Project**

www.nelp.org

In partnership with national, state and local allies, NELP promotes policies and programs that create good jobs, strengthen upward mobility, enforce hard-won worker rights, and help unemployed workers regain their economic footing through improved benefits and services. Their model is to develop and test new policies at the state and local level, then scale them up to spur change at the national level. NELP partners with strong advocacy networks, grounded in the full range of stakeholders—grassroots groups and national organizations, worker centers and unions, policymakers and think tanks. With our staff of lawyers, policy experts and researchers, NELP provides in-depth legal and policy analysis, rigorous empirical research, expert legal advice and technical assistance, strategic leadership in coalitions, communications, public education and messaging, and capacity building.

► **National Immigration Forum**

www.immigrationforum.org

Established in 1982, the National Immigration Forum is the leading immigrant advocacy organization in the country with a mission to advocate for the value of immigrants and immigration to the nation. The Forum uses its communications, advocacy and policy expertise to create a vision, consensus and strategy that leads to a better, more welcoming America—one that treats all newcomers fairly.

For over two decades, the Forum has occupied a unique role, knitting together alliances across diverse faith, labor, immigrant, non-immigrant and business constituencies in communities across the country. These alliances come together under the Forum's leadership to develop, execute and evaluate legislative and administrative advocacy strategies.

► **National Immigration Law Center**

www.nilc.org/

Since 1979, the National Immigration Law Center has been dedicated to defending and advancing the rights of low-income immigrants and their family members. Over the past 30 years, NILC has earned a national reputation as a leading expert on immigration, public benefits, and employment laws affecting immigrants and refugees. NILC's extensive knowledge of the complex interplay between immigrants' legal status and their rights under U.S. laws is an essential resource for legal aid programs, community groups, and social service agencies across the country.

Conclusion

AILA's *Tools of Engagement* is a starting point for advocates and not an exhaustive set of resources for making your voice heard on Capitol Hill, in the media, or with community advocates. For more materials and ideas to help you in your effort to win hearts and change minds, visit AILA InfoNet, www.aila.org, where you'll find:

LEGISLATION

- **Contact Congress**—Opportunities to Call and E-mail Congress
- **Proposed Legislation**—Summaries of immigration-related legislation introduced in Congress
- **Enacted Legislation**—Summaries of immigration-related legislation that has been signed into law by the President
- **Congressional Press Releases & Correspondence**—Press releases and letters from members of Congress that address immigration
- **Congressional Testimony**—Written testimony by witnesses for Congressional hearings
- **Key Votes**—Key immigration-related votes in Congress since 1996. Enter your ZIP code to learn how your representatives voted on these measures.
- **State/Local Issues**—Links to state legislatures and AILA's State and Local Resource Guide

PRESS ROOM

- **Press Releases and Statements**—Check here for AILA’s latest press releases
- **AILA National Spokespeople**—AILA’s network of national spokespeople includes recognized immigration law experts.
- **AILA Leadership Blog**—AILA’s elected leadership writes on current issues in immigration.
- **AILA Twitters**—Connect with AILA (@ailabusiness, @ailaremoval, @AILA_CLE) and AILA’s Executive Director Crystal Williams (@AILAExecDir) on business immigration, removal, and latest events.
- **AILA Correspondence**—Read letters from AILA’s leadership on key policy issues.
- **Mythbusters!**—Check the facts on immigration rumors.
- **Public Service Announcements**—PSAs for newspapers on immigration issues.
- **AILA on the Air**—Learn about AILA’s Hometown Radio Tour.
- **AILA on Facebook**—Show your support and become a fan of AILA.

ADVOCACY

- **Being an Advocate**—Step-by-step guides to practicing grassroots advocacy
- **Making the Case for Fair and Reasonable Immigration Policy**—Includes AILA’s Resource Guide: Making the Case for Comprehensive Immigration Reform, talking points, surveys and polls, and all the other information you need to promote positive changes in immigration policy
- **Workplace Enforcement Response**—Includes a plan of action for chapters and communities to respond to workplace enforcement actions, and a list of resources for raids response.
- **Community Advocacy**—Tools and resources for protecting and promoting the fair treatment of immigrant communities
- **AILA Allies**—Resources beyond AILA for immigration advocacy
- **The Pulse**—AILA’s weekly advocacy e-newsletter a prospective look at immigration events in Congress and around the country. The members’ only resource also reviews new reports, promotes talking points, and lists AILA member radio and television shows.

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We hope that *AILA’s Tools of Engagement* showed you what to say, how to say it, and who to tell! Please contact us when you have questions or concerns and, of course, to share your success stories!

4) Notes



AMERICAN
IMMIGRATION
LAWYERS
ASSOCIATION