

- Good morning and thank you for allowing me to speak today, as the Chair of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus.
- The CHC, under the leadership of our Immigration Task Force Chair, Rep. Gutierrez, has a long and proud history of working on immigration. I particularly want to thank Rep. Gutierrez for his service.
- I also thank Chairwoman Lofgren and the Subcommittee for this important hearing today and for their leadership on this vital issue.
- Immigration is critically important to the CHC and our constituents across the country. Whether it is the Hispanic small business owner, the family struggling to stay together while living in fear, or the individual who dreams of a life in the US only to confront an unrealistic process fraught with delays—the communities we represent care about immigration reform.
- Our immigration system is broken, and people are suffering. And as a result, this issue is much more than a “Hispanic” or “immigrant” issue. This issue has become an American issue.
- The fact is our broken immigration system is hurting our economy, and making our nation less secure.

- As such, the CHC stands with willingness and responsibility to roll up our sleeves and get to work in a bipartisan fashion to make real headway, for the good of all Americans.
- We offer our help, expertise, and commitment to lead on the immigration issue on behalf of our community and our constituents.
- And we believe that the STRIVE Act is the compromise solution that best fits the immigration problem and the political reality we are in.
- STRIVE is a *comprehensive* bill that addresses employers and business' needs, holds employers accountable, protects employees' rights, and provides for strong border security.
- STRIVE addresses the needs of farmers through the Ag Jobs provision. It sets up an employment verification system to help our businesses better comply with immigration laws. It benefits families by giving more children access to education through the DREAM Act.
- It also makes our nation safer by increasing enforcement personnel on the border and increasing penalties for crimes committed by immigrants.
- STRIVE provides a pathway to legalization for qualified, hard-working immigrants only.

- It is critically important to emphasize that this *is not amnesty*. Any attempt to brand it as such is empty rhetoric designed to play politics with our security.
- It calls for real penalties and for real sacrifice. In fact, many of our Members who are supportive of the immigrant community might personally wish for a different bill.
- But, at the end of the day, we feel STRIVE offers our best chance at real reform.
- STRIVE helps families stay together. Many of us only have to look at the case work in our district offices to know the heartbreaking realities facing immigrant families who want to play by the rules to adjust their status, but are facing the unreasonable backlogs and inefficiencies of our current visa system.
- Congress has a responsibility to deal with our broken immigration system, and we cannot ignore the immigration crisis in hopes that it will go away or solve itself.
- Congress needs to take action, and the STRIVE Act offers the best solution.
- It is time to solve this crisis. I urge the Subcommittee and the Congress to strongly consider the STRIVE Act as a solution that is fair and realistic.

- It promotes security, helps business, and protects our nation's proud immigrant history. Thank you.