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MEMBERS OF CONGRESS INTRODUCE COMPREHENSIVE BORDER SECURITY & IMMIGRATION REFORM BILL

WASHINGTON - Senators McCain and Kennedy, and Representatives Kolbe, Flake and Gutierrez, joined by Senators Brownback and Lieberman today introduced *The Secure America and Orderly Immigration Act of 2005*. The legislation follows months of thoughtful debate and negotiation, which has resulted in bipartisan, bicameral, comprehensive border security and immigration reform.

“The status quo is unacceptable, and we need to modernize our broken immigration system to meet the challenges of the 21st Century. And we need policies that continue to reflect our best values as a nation -- of fairness, equal opportunity, and respect for the law. One of the mistakes of the past is to assume we can control illegal immigration on our own. A realistic immigration policy must be a two-way street. Under our plan, America will do its part, but we expect Mexico and other nations to do their part, too, to replace an illegal immigration flow with regulated, legal immigration,” said Kennedy.

McCain said, “Homeland security is our nation’s number one priority, this legislation includes a number of provisions that together will make our nation more secure. For far too long, our nation’s broken immigration laws have gone unreformed – leaving Americans vulnerable. We can no longer afford to delay reform. I am proud to join my colleagues today as an original Sponsor of this legislation”

“This is a comprehensive bill that doesn’t try to solve the hemorrhaging immigration problem with a band-aid – this bill is major surgery. The majority of the illegal immigration is happening in Arizona, and I will not stand by and let southern Arizona be the doormat for this country’s failed immigration policy,” said Rep. Kolbe. “They are illegal immigrants – they have broken the law and must be punished. That is why this legislation includes strict fines and penalties for those already in this country illegally and tough punishments for employers who hire illegal immigrants. More importantly, it provides the secure identification document so an employer can know the person seeking work is here legally. We must recognize reality and implement a tightly structured guest worker program to securely, and legally, fill jobs that no American is available or wants to do. Over the past several years, border security has been a necessity for all members of Congress, but it has been a top priority for only a few. Today, I am proud to continue my work as one of those few. I will work hard with Senator McCain, Senator Kennedy, Rep. Flake and Rep. Gutierrez to educate Congress and the public about the need for practical reform. We are at an important threshold – we can either work hard to secure our borders through commonsense reform of our immigration system, or hang-on to unrealistic ideals that will never improve the safety of our country.”

“We need a plan that fairly balances national security, economic reality, and worker protections, and I think our bill comes pretty darn close,” said Flake. “I believe that this bill is very consistent with President Bush’s principles of immigration reform and, given that the President has made immigration reform a

priority of his second term, I hope that our colleagues in Congress will give this bill the consideration that it deserves.”

“This bill represents a vital step toward an immigration policy that makes sense,” Gutierrez said. "It reflects the enormous contributions immigrants make every day, it respects our nation's proud history of welcoming men and women to seek a better life and it better protects our homeland by creating a system of improved accountability and security."

If enacted, this legislation will help America meet 21st century challenges by replacing current outdated immigration laws with reforms that will improve our border security and make immigration policies more realistic and enforceable. The bill will help get control of our borders, strengthen our national security, create an even playing field for employers and ensure full labor rights for all our workers.