

COMPREHENSIVE IMMIGRATION REFORM

The Need for Reform

- **A Nation of Immigrants:** The hard work and strength of our immigrants have made our Nation prosperous. However due to our complex, broken immigration system, employers have a difficult time hiring foreign workers to fill jobs that Americans are not available to do.
- **Immigrants Are Increasingly Needed To Do Low-Skilled Work:** U.S. workers have become more educated and increasingly work in jobs requiring higher education levels. Today, the share of adults in America without a high school degree is just 15% (down from more than 50% in 1965). Employers also confront more than 77 million retiring baby boomers who will soon leave the workforce (one boomer turns 60 every 11 seconds).
- **Immigrants Fill Many Essential Jobs:** They make up one-fifth of workers in food service, almost one-fourth of construction jobs, and one-third of all grounds and cleaning staff.

President Bush's Plan for Comprehensive Immigration Reform

Secure Our Borders

- Increased border security funding since 2001 by 66% to more than \$7.6 billion, equipped the border patrol with better technology, and built new infrastructure. Will double the size of the Border Patrol to 18,000 agents by 2008.
- Ending the practice of "catch and release." Since 2001, more than 6 million people entering America illegally have been apprehended and sent home.
- More than 6,000 National Guard members are supporting Border Patrol agents along our borders.
- The number of captured illegal immigrants has fallen 45% since spring, indicating fewer attempted crossings.

Create a Temporary Worker Program

- Securing the border is a necessary component of immigration reform, but is insufficient since it does not address the root cause of what attracts immigrants to the U.S., which is the opportunity to work.
- A Temporary Worker Program (TWP) would meet the needs of our economy, ease the financial burden on state and local governments, and add to our security. TWP would give honest immigrants a way to provide for their families while respecting the law, would replace illegal workers with lawful taxpayers, and would enable us to make certain we know who is in our country and why they are here.

Hold Employers Accountable

- Funding for immigration enforcement inside our country has increased by 42% since 2001. Last year, the President signed a bill doubling federal resources for worksite enforcement.
- Since January, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has made twice as many arrests as the Clinton Administration did in its last five years combined.
- The President has expanded Basic Pilot verification system to all 50 states so employers can quickly and accurately confirm the work eligibility of prospective employees. By making it harder for illegal immigrants to find work in our country, we can discourage people from crossing the border illegally in the first place.

Reject Amnesty, Provide A Hard Earned Path To Citizenship for Illegal Immigrants in the Country

- It is neither realistic nor humane to round up millions of people – including three million children who are U.S. citizens by birth - and send them home.
- Those who want to apply for citizenship would have to get on the end of the line; pay penalties for breaking the law by being here illegally; pay taxes; learn English; and hold a job for several years.

Honor the Great American Tradition of the Melting Pot.

- The success of our country depends upon helping newcomers embrace our common identity as Americans.

All Elements Of This Problem Must Be Addressed Together - Or None Of Them Will Be Solved At All.

U.S. IMMIGRATION BY THE NUMBERS

Immigrants Contribute to the U.S. Economy

- **Economists Agree That Immigration Has Been a Net Gain for American Citizens:** On June 19, more than 500 top economists, including five Nobel Laureates, signed a joint letter stating unequivocally that immigration has been a net gain for American citizens. (Source: Open Letter on Immigration, The Independent Institute, 6/19/2006)
- **The Number of Hispanic-Owned Businesses Grew at Three Times the National Rate:** 1.6 million Hispanic-owned businesses in 2002, up 31% from 1997. (Source: Census Survey of Business Owners, 2006)
- **The Net Impact of Immigration on Public Budgets is Positive:** A study by the National Research Council found that immigrants and their descendants contribute \$99,200 more in taxes than they receive in public services over their lifetimes. (Source: Smith and Edmonston, *The New Americans*)
- **Immigrants Don't Take Jobs Away From Americans:** Nearly two-thirds of Americans say that immigrants coming to the country mostly take jobs that Americans do not want, rather than take jobs away from Americans. (Source: "America's Immigration Quandary," Pew Research Center for the People & the Press Pew Hispanic Center, 3/30/2006)
- **Immigrants Increase the Size of the Economic Pie:** In 1997, the National Research Council conducted a thorough study of immigration and concluded that immigration provides a "significant positive gain" – which adjusted for a \$12 trillion economy in 2005 – amounts to \$25 billion annually for Americans born in the United States. (Source: Smith and Edmonston, *The New Americans*)
- **Access to Migrant Workers Is Critical To U.S. Agriculture:** Without access to migrant labor, as much as \$5-9 billion in annual agricultural production would be lost to foreign competitors. Production of fresh fruits, vegetables, and nursery products would be hit hardest, as 10-20% of output would shift to other countries and up to a third would disappear. (Source: "Impact of Migrant Labor Restrictions on the Agricultural Sector," American Farm Bureau Federation, 2/2006)

Our new immigrants are just what they've always been -- people willing to risk everything for the dream of freedom. And America remains what she has always been: the great hope on the horizon, an open door to the future, a blessed and promised land. We honor the heritage of all who come here, no matter where they come from, because we trust in our country's genius for making us all Americans -- one nation under God.

President George W. Bush

May 15, 2006

Immigrants Serve Our Country

- **Serving In Our Military:** More than 33,000 non-citizens currently serve in our military, putting their lives on the line to defend liberties and freedoms they have yet to secure for themselves.
- **Since September 11, 2001, More Than 26,000 Service Men And Women Have Been Naturalized:** During 2005, more than 6,000 military service members were naturalized.

Immigrants Strengthen American Values

- **Immigrants Believe in Hard Work, Not Welfare:** More than 73% of immigrants say it is extremely important for immigrants to "work and stay off welfare." (Source: Now That I'm Here, Public Agenda, 2003)
- **Giving Back To Their Communities:** More than 76% of immigrants have volunteered to help a local organization or church. (Source: Now That I'm Here, Public Agenda, 2003)
- **Believe It Is Important To Learn English:** Nearly 9 in 10 of immigrants say it is extremely important for immigrants to be able to speak and understand English. Nearly 2 in 3 say that "the U.S. should expect all immigrants who don't speak English to learn it." (Source: Now That I'm Here, Public Agenda, 2003)

The American People Support Comprehensive Immigration Reform

- **Americans Want Congress to Act:** Eighty-four percent (84%) of voters say it is important Congress pass legislation to address illegal immigration. (Source: Ayres McHenry Poll, June 23-27, 2006, RVs).
- **Voters Support Comprehensive Reform:** 78% of voters support immigration reform that increases border security; enacts tougher penalties on employers; creates a temporary worker program for guest workers; and creates an earned legalization program. (Source: Tarrance Group, 7/9-7/13)

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