

AILA COMMENDS SENATE'S CONTINUED COMMITMENT TO COMPREHENSIVE IMMIGRATION REFORM

*Hagel Re-Introduces Comprehensive Immigration Reform Legislation
Senators Frist, McCain, and Cornyn Affirm Commitment to Comprehensive Solution*

Wednesday, October 26, 2005

Contact: George Paul Tzamaras
202-216-2410
www.aila.org

OCT. 26, 2005, WASHINGTON DC— The American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA) applauds leaders in the Senate for continuing to push for a comprehensive approach to immigration reform. Just yesterday, Senator Chuck Hagel (R-NE) introduced a wide-ranging legislative package designed to address many of the concerns raised by our failing immigration system. In a separate event yesterday, Senators John Cornyn (R-TX) and John McCain (R-AZ) joined Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist (R-TN) to affirm the Senate's commitment to a comprehensive debate on immigration reform early next year.

Deborah Notkin, AILA's President, pointed to Senator Hagel's commitment to a comprehensive solution as evidence of the direction the Senate is headed on this issue. "Senator Hagel views this issue through the eyes of a pragmatist and recognizes that simply throwing more money at our current failed policies is not a viable option. The emerging consensus, reflected in Senator Hagel's proposal, is that only a comprehensive approach to reform will solve the problems plaguing our system." Senator Hagel's bill builds on the bipartisan immigration reform bill he introduced with Senator Daschle (D-SD) last year. It would: provide a path for undocumented workers to earn their way to permanent status, create a new robust temporary worker program to channel labor flows, reunite families by reducing the lengthy backlogs on green cards, and enhance enforcement efforts.

Ms. Notkin emphasized that all of the other significant bills currently in play in the Senate also take a wide-angle view of the problem and eschew an "enforcement-only" approach. Specifically, she noted that AILA has joined with a wide array of business, family, religious and immigrant community organizations in supporting the Secure America and Orderly Immigration Act introduced by Senators McCain and Edward Kennedy (D-MA), and Representatives Jim Kolbe (R-AZ), Jeff Flake (R-AZ), and Luis Gutierrez (D-IL).

Ms. Notkin also lauded President Bush's continued commitment to a comprehensive immigration solution. In comments preceding the signing of the Homeland Security Appropriations Act of 2006, President Bush reiterated that "enforcement cannot work unless it is part of a larger comprehensive immigration reform program. If an employer has a job that no American is willing to take, we need to find a way to fill that demand by matching willing employers with willing workers from foreign countries on a temporary and legal basis."

AILA agrees that the only way to effectively control the nation's borders and enhance security, is through a comprehensive approach to reform. "Legality must become the norm so that businesses can legally employ the workers they need, so that families are not forced to remain separated for years on end, and so that immigrants who work hard and pay taxes can earn their way to lawful permanent status," said Ms. Notkin.

Finally, AILA appreciates the work that Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman, Arlen Specter (R-PA), has done in holding hearings on the subject, and looks forward to Senator Specter's

continued leadership in crafting a comprehensive and rational solution to the immigration problem.

21pr5002A

###30###

Founded in 1946, AILA is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that provides its Members with continuing legal education, information, professional services and expertise through its 35 chapters and over 75 national committees. AILA also advocates before Congress and the Administration, as well as providing liaison with the INS and other government agencies in support of pro-immigration initiatives. AILA is an Affiliated Organization of the American Bar Association and is represented in the ABA House of Delegates.