

# NAACP NEWS

[www.naacp.org](http://www.naacp.org)

Bruce S. Gordon  
President and Chief Executive Officer



Julian Bond  
Chairman, Board of Directors

## IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: John C. White  
(410) 580-5125

March 31, 2006

### **COMPREHENSIVE IMMIGRATION REFORM SHOULD NOT INCLUDE CRIMINALIZING UNDOCUMENTED WORKERS** *Immigration policies must be consistent with humanitarian values*

The NAACP has called for Congress to enact comprehensive immigration reform without a primary focus on the enforcement approach that includes building a 700-mile wall, conducting a campaign of mass deportation and the criminalizing of undocumented workers.

NAACP President & CEO Bruce S. Gordon said: "Our nation's immigration policy must be consistent with humanitarian values and with the need to treat all individuals with respect and dignity. We must move away from the politics of ostracizing immigrants and instead look at the demographic shifts and needs of our nation in a larger context."

Gordon said that legislation to address genuine immigration reform should include proposals that would allow people to earn the right of citizenship through hard work, the commitment of several years and meeting several monetary, security and related requirements. He said the NAACP "strongly opposes any efforts to criminalize undocumented immigrants."

Gordon said, "Problems with the immigration system cannot be resolved without looking at the larger economic needs of the nation such as the creation of job training programs and small business programs, as well as federal education assistance so that all Americans can have enhanced opportunities."

The NAACP released a set of principles that legislation should include in an attempt to tackle the problem of immigration reform. These include:

- Support of family unification by not subtracting the visas given to immediate relatives of U.S. citizens from visas available to all family immigrants thereby reducing the backlogs in which people wait for many years to reunite with their closest family members;
- Support of protections for agricultural workers and a path to legal permanent residency and citizenship for college age students;
- Support of due process rights for immigrants facing deportation, including access to fair, humane and common-sense procedures such as a speedy trial and adequate counsel;

(more)

- Opposition to efforts to penalize anyone for providing humanitarian assistance to their fellow human beings, regardless of the citizenship status of the person in need of help;
- Opposition to any efforts to require, encourage or deputize state or local police to enforce federal immigration laws;
- Opposition to Department of Homeland Security detention of individuals indefinitely;
- Opposition to low-level Citizenship and Immigration Service personnel exercising unreviewable authority to judge good moral character of an applicant for citizenship;
- Opposition to mandatory detention of undocumented immigrants without individualized consideration of whether detention is necessary.

Founded in 1909, the NAACP is the nation's oldest and largest civil rights organization. Its members throughout the United States and the world are the premier advocates for civil rights in their communities, conducting voter mobilization and monitoring equal opportunity in the public and private sectors.

###