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Contact: Judith Golub (202-216-2403)
jgolub@aila.org

Julia Hendrix (202-216-2404)
jhendrix@aila.org

AMERICANS SUPPORT COMMON-SENSE IMMIGRATION REFORM Congress Needs to Follow Up With Bipartisan, Comprehensive Reform

Washington, D.C. – New public opinion research released today by the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA) and the National Immigration Forum demonstrates American voters’ overwhelming support for comprehensive, bipartisan immigration reform. Support for this proposal is strong along party lines, regional lines and demographic lines.

“Americans understand that our immigration system is broken and needs to be fixed. We cannot continue with the status quo,” said Jeanne Butterfield, Executive Director of AILA. “In fact, enforcing dysfunctional laws is only leading to more dysfunction,” continued Ms. Butterfield. “When offered more than just enforcement-only approaches to illegal immigration and reductions in legal immigration, Americans support a comprehensive and reasonable immigration system.”

American voters support a system that combines toughness with fairness, and provides a path to citizenship with reasonable requirements, implements an effective guest worker program, and reunites families. Voters want a system that rewards immigrants who come here to work hard, pay taxes, and learn English.

“The public supports the kind of reform promoted by President Bush and Congressional leaders, not the extreme proposals from the anti-immigrant lobby,” stated Ms. Butterfield. “Such reform will create a safe, orderly, and legal system – one that is characterized by just and reasonable rules, consistent with basic American values of fairness and equal treatment under the law. Our current system keeps families separated for long periods of time, makes it difficult for U.S. businesses to employ needed workers, and forces people to live underground, fearful that our government will separate them from their families and jobs. The current enforcement system fails to prevent illegal immigration and wastes precious resources that should be spent on enhancing our security on stopping hard-working people from filling our labor market needs.”

“As the American public is well aware, our current immigration system is unworkable, outdated, and in disarray. In a debate too easily obscured by fear and threats, it is time for serious solutions to this serious challenge. We need a secure and controlled immigration system that will help keep us safe and fulfill the promise of liberty and opportunity that America represents. Congress needs to listen, and act,” concluded Ms. Butterfield.

The Tarrance Group and Lake, Snell, Perry, and Mermin conducted this poll between March 20-22 of 800 likely voters nationwide. For details on the public opinion research, please go to: <http://www.aila.org/fileViewer.aspx?docID=18192>

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Founded in 1946, AILA is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that provides its Members with continuing legal education, information, and professional services. AILA advocates before Congress and the Administration and provides liaison with the DHS and other government agencies. AILA is an Affiliated Organization of the American Bar Association.

American Immigration Lawyers Association
918 F Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20004
(202) 216-2400 Phone
(202) 783-7853 Fax
www.aila.org