

American Immigration Lawyers Association

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AILA CONDEMNS HOUSE ACTION ON PUNITIVE IMMIGRATION BILL

Immigrants Scapegoated, Neither Border nor Nation More Secure

Washington, DC – The American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA) strongly condemns the action of the U.S. House of Representatives majority, which today passed a punitive immigration “enforcement” bill which will do nothing to make our borders or nation more secure.

“This bill is a cowardly attack on immigrant communities and their employers. It criminalizes five percent of the U.S. workforce, heaps new fines and unfunded mandates on employers, and does absolutely nothing to address the heart of our broken system—the failure of our immigration laws to provide a safe, orderly and controlled legal path for willing workers and employers who need them to engage in a lawful relationship, and the failure of our immigration laws to provide legal paths for families to be united,” stated Marshall Fitz, AILA’s Director of Advocacy.

“Furthermore, the bill is a frontal assault on our democracy’s deeply-held values and an affront to the rule of law which is founded on fundamental principles such as the right to a day in court, checks and balances, and freedom from unjust and arbitrary detention,” Fitz continued. “It criminalizes unwitting violations of immigration status, sharply restricts judicial review, and broadly expands mandatory detention policies.”

“This bill does absolutely nothing to make our nation more secure”, said Deborah Notkin, President of the American Immigration Lawyers Association. “Nor will it relieve the pressures at our borders. The debate on the House floor this week was a shameful assault on immigrants. We applaud those Representatives who had the courage to say “no” to this senseless assault, and who called for a thoughtful and comprehensive approach instead of the slash and burn provisions embodied in this bill.”

“As President Bush has repeatedly stated,” Notkin continued, “we can’t control our borders and enforce our laws until we have a workable set of immigration rules that provide legal channels for immigrants to enter the country to contribute their skills and talents to building and growing our economy.”

AILA calls on the Senate to reject these draconian provisions and to embrace sensible and real solutions to our nation’s immigration challenges by taking up strong bi-partisan proposals such as those introduced by Senators McCain, Kennedy, and others, when it returns to the immigration debate in 2006.

###AILA###

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