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AILA CALLS ON SENATE LEADERSHIP:

MOVE FORWARD WITH BIPARTISAN COMPREHENSIVE IMMIGRATION REFORM

WASHINGTON –The American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA) is greatly dismayed at the partisan finger-pointing that has escalated in the week since the Senate failed to reach agreement about the procedure for moving a bipartisan comprehensive immigration reform bill forward.

“Our country needs workable and comprehensive reform of our immigration laws,” said Jeanne Butterfield, AILA’s executive director. “The blame game is a discredit to our nation, which needs smart border security, a discredit to American businesses that need immigrant workers, and a discredit to U.S. immigrant communities who need relief from extensive family backlogs and who need a way to come out of the shadows and pursue a path to legal status.”

AILA calls on Senators Frist and Reid to come back to the negotiating table, to work out acceptable procedural assurances that will allow the so-called Hagel/Martinez compromise bill to move forward and be protected through any subsequent conference with the House Sensenbrenner bill.

“The compromise bill is far from perfect”, stated Butterfield. “But it is a good-faith effort to move the process forward, and it would bring incredibly important relief to 12 million undocumented persons currently in the country, eliminate existing family backlogs, provide much needed reforms of our agricultural worker program, allow undocumented high school students to pursue their dreams, provide a new temporary worker program for the future with good labor protections, and bring family and employment-based immigration quotas in line with U.S. needs and priorities. The bill would increase our nation’s security by mandating smart border and interior enforcement and by making legality the norm.”

AILA will continue to work to improve those parts of the bill that need fixing, especially those provisions that undermine due process and civil liberties, and those provisions that would inadvertently prevent the new legalization programs from truly working.

“This is an historic opportunity to fix an immigration system that has been broken far too long,” stated Butterfield. “We call on the White House and Senate Leadership to work together to ensure meaningful, workable, comprehensive reform.”

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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.