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Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release June 08, 2013

WEEKLY ADDRESS: Time to Pass Commonsense Immigration Reform

WASHINGTON, DC—In this week’s address, President Obama said that the United States Senate will soon take action to fix our broken immigration system with a commonsense bill. The President urged the Senate to act quickly to pass this bill so that we can continue to live up to our traditions as a nation of laws, and also a nation of immigrants.

The audio of the address and video of the address will be available online at www.whitehouse.gov at 6:00 a.m. ET, June 8, 2013.

Remarks of President Barack Obama
The Weekly Address
Mooreville, North Carolina
June 8, 2013

Hi, everybody. In the next few days, America will take an important step towards fixing our broken immigration system. The entire United States Senate will begin debating a commonsense immigration reform bill that has bipartisan support.

See, we define ourselves as a nation of immigrants. The promise we find in those who come from every corner of the globe has always been one of our greatest strengths. It’s kept our workforce vibrant and dynamic. It’s kept our businesses on the cutting edge. And it’s helped build the greatest economic engine the world has ever known.

But for years, our out-of-date immigration system has actually harmed our economy and threatened our security.

Now, over the past four years, we’ve taken steps to try and patch up some of the worst cracks in the system.

We strengthened security on the southern border by putting more boots on the ground than at any time in our history. And, in part, by using technology more effectively – today, illegal crossings are near their lowest level in decades.

We focused enforcement efforts on criminals who are here illegally – who endanger our communities – and today, we deport more criminals than ever before.

And we took up the cause of “Dreamers,” the young people who were brought to this country as children. We said that if they’re able to meet certain criteria, we’d consider offering them the chance to come out of the shadows so they can continue to work here, and study here, and contribute to our communities legally.

But if we’re going to truly fix a broken system, we need Congress to act in a comprehensive way. And that’s why what’s happening next week is so important.

The bill before the Senate isn’t perfect. It’s a compromise. Nobody will get everything they want – not Democrats, not Republicans, not me. But it is a bill that’s largely consistent with the principles I’ve repeatedly laid out for commonsense immigration reform.

This bill would continue to strengthen security at our borders, increase criminal penalties against smugglers and traffickers, and hold employers more accountable if they knowingly hire undocumented workers. If enacted, it would represent the most ambitious enforcement plan in recent memory.

This bill would provide a pathway to earned citizenship for the 11 million individuals who are in this country illegally – a pathway that includes passing a background check, learning English, paying taxes and a penalty, and then going to the back of the line behind everyone who’s playing by the rules and trying to come here legally.



BLOG POSTS ON THIS ISSUE

June 08, 2013 6:00 AM EDT
[Weekly Address: Time to Pass Commonsense Immigration Reform](#)
In this week’s address, President Obama says that the United States Senate will soon take action to fix our broken immigration system with a commonsense bill, and urges lawmakers to act quickly to pass this bill so that we can continue to live up to our traditions as a nation of laws, and also a nation of immigrants.

June 07, 2013 5:25 PM EDT
[Here's How the Affordable Care Act Is Helping Californians](#)
President Obama explains how the Affordable Care Act benefits people in the California, and across the country.

June 07, 2013 2:56 PM EDT
[Weekly Wrap-Up: Giving Every Student a Shot at Success](#)

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This bill would modernize the legal immigration system so that, alongside training American workers for the jobs of tomorrow, we're also attracting highly-skilled entrepreneurs and engineers who will grow our economy. And so that our people don't have to wait years before their loved ones are able to join them in this country we love.

That's what immigration reform looks like. Smarter enforcement. A pathway to earned citizenship. Improvements to the legal immigration system. They're all commonsense steps. They've got broad support – from Republicans and Democrats, CEOs and labor leaders, law enforcement and clergy. So there is no reason that Congress can't work together to send a bill to my desk by the end of the summer.

We know the opponents of reform are going to do everything they can to prevent that. They'll try to stoke fear and create division. They'll try to play politics with an issue that the vast majority of Americans want addressed. And if they succeed, we will lose this chance to finally fix an immigration system that is badly broken.

So if you agree that now is the time for commonsense reform, reach out to your Representatives. Tell them we have to get this done so that everyone is playing by the same rules. Tell them we have the power to do this in a way that lives up to our traditions as a nation of laws, and a nation of immigrants.

In the end, that's what this is all about. Men and women who want nothing more than the chance to earn their way into the American story, just like so many of our ancestors did. Throughout our history, that has only made us stronger. And it's how we'll make sure that America's best days always lie ahead.

Thanks. And have a great weekend.

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