



June 5, 2007

Please Vote Yes on Menendez-Hagel Amendment

Dear Senators:

We, the undersigned organizations, write to urge you to vote yes on the Menendez-Hagel Amendment to ensure fairness for U.S. citizens and their families. Without this amendment, U.S. citizens will be punished for playing by the rules and waiting in line to be reunited with their family members.

The current immigration bill being considered by the Senate contains a provision that would address the current family backlog of people that have applied for lawful permanent residence, but only for those who applied before May 1, 2005. Applications that were filed by U.S. citizens to sponsor their adult children or siblings after this cut-off date – an estimated 833,000 – would be thrown out. Not only does this send the wrong message to people who are citizens and obey the law, the government will be severely taxed with the administrative cost of returning application fees for the past two years.

Senators Robert Menendez (D-NJ) and Chuck Hagel (R-NE) have introduced an amendment, co-sponsored by Senators Daniel Akaka (D-HI), Hillary Clinton (D-NY), Christopher Dodd (D-CT), Richard Durbin (D-IL), Daniel Inouye (D-HI), Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ), and Barack Obama (D-IL), to the current Senate bill that would correct this grave injustice by changing the cut-off date for legal immigrant applicants from May 1, 2005 to January 1, 2007 - the same cut-off date that is currently set for the legalization of undocumented immigrants – and adding 110,000 green cards a year for a meaningful backlog reduction so as to not lengthen the 8-year deadline for clearing the adult children and sibling backlog.

By voting for the Menendez-Hagel Amendment, you will help immigrants who have gone through the long and sometimes arduous process of learning English and becoming citizens. These Americans have filed applications and paid fees to the U.S. government so that they can bring in their adult children or siblings. They have made life choices based on the very reasonable expectation that they would be eventually reuniting with their family members. Our country can't tell people who have been waiting patiently in line for visas that we are now retroactively rewriting the rules and effectively forcing them to start from scratch.

We urge you to vote yes on the Menendez-Hagel Amendment and ensure our immigration system is fair for United States citizens.

Very truly yours,

National Organizations

Asian American Justice Center
Advocates for Children and Elders International
American Friends Service Committee
American Immigration Lawyers Association
American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee
Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum

Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now
Cambodian American National Conference
Church World Service, Immigration and Refugee Program
Coalition for Comprehensive Immigration Reform
Democracia Ahora
Dominican American National Roundtable
Ethiopian Community Development Council
Federation of Indo-American Seniors' Association of North America
Friends Committee on National Legislation
Hate Free Zone
Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society
Hmong National Development
Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project
Immigrant Legal Resource Center
International Immigration
Foundation Japanese American Citizens League
Kurdish Human Rights Watch
Laotian American National Alliance
Latin American Legal Defense and Education Fund
Leadership Conference on Civil Rights
Legal Momentum
Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service
Mennonite Central Committee, Washington Office
Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
National Alliance to Nurture the Aged and the Youth
National Asian Pacific Center on Aging
National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials Educational Fund
National Council of La Raza
National Korean American Service & Education Consortium
National Immigration Forum
National Immigration Law Center
NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby
Organization for Justice & Equality
Organization of Chinese Americans
People For the American Way
Sikh Council on Religion and Education
Sojourners/Call to Renewal
Somali Family Care Network
South Asian American Leaders of Tomorrow
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center
Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations
United Methodist Church, General Board of Church and Society
U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops
World Relief

Local Organizations

Asian American Federation of New York
Asian American Institute, Chicago, IL
Asian Law Caucus, San Francisco, CA

Asian Pacific American Legal Center of Southern California
CASA of Maryland
Causa, Oregon
Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition
El CENTRO de Igualdad y Derechos, Albuquerque, NM
Filipino-American Coalition of Florida
Filipino American Political Alliance of Florida
Fresno Interdenominational Refugee Ministry
Guru Gobind Singh Foundation Sikh Center, Rockville, Maryland
Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights
Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement
Korean Resource Center, Los Angeles, CA
Korean American Resource & Cultural Center, Chicago, IL
La Casita: Servicios Legales para inmigrantes, Trenton, NJ
Latin American Community Center, Wilmington, DE
Massachusetts Immigrant And Refugee Advocacy Coalition
National Capital Immigrant Coalition
New Jersey Immigration Policy Network
New York Immigration Coalition
Northwest Federation of Community Organizations
OCA - South Florida Chapter
Stone Soup Fresno
Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition
The Pyonghoa Gospel Church, Flushing, NY
United Chinese Association of Florida
YKASEC - Empowering the Korean American Community, Flushing, NY