

Immigration

From our founding and at our very core, America has always been a nation of immigrants, documented and undocumented, who have made great contributions to our nation. From their labor building the transcontinental railroad and developing our nation's infrastructure, to their entrepreneurship spurring industry in our early American cities, we should all know by now that 'immigrant' is not a dirty word. Looking toward our future with our aging workforce and social security crisis, we need the contributions of immigrants, now more than ever.

The current immigration system is broken. Because of backlogs and bureaucratic delays, some must wait years, sometimes decades, to reunite with their family members who are eligible to legally immigrate to the United States. Immigrants are often deprived of due process rights that are fundamental to America's notion of liberty.

Those in detention for civil immigration violations often face inadequate medical care, and we have seen many deaths this past year. We need to bring our undocumented population out of the shadows, so that they can contribute and help rebuild America's economy, safely and without fear of being separated from their families.

Reuniting Families Act (H.R. 2709)

Family immigration must remain a cornerstone of our immigration system. That is why I introduced the Reuniting Families Act to reduce the visa backlog for legal immigrants and ensure our families – all our families – can be reunited. [To read more about this legislation and my reasons for introducing it, please click here](#)

Strengthen and Unite Communities through Civics Education and English Skills Act of 2009 (H.R. 3249)

I have introduced legislation to provide opportunities for immigrants to gain the vital English skills needed to succeed, contribute to our economy, and pursue the American Dream. This bill will help our economy remain competitive, protect our workers, and incentivize immigrant integration through English and civics education. To read more about H.R. 3249, its cosponsors and endorsing organizations, please [click here](#).

Comprehensive Reform is Needed

A punitive, enforcement-only approach to immigration reform, such as Arizona's racist and misguided [SB 1070](#), is not the solution. SB 1070 is the harshest immigration enforcement state law in the country, and draws attention to the political and moral imperative for Congress to act swiftly on a comprehensive plan, to avoid a patchwork of state measures.

I believe in humane reform that respects the dignity of immigrant communities and recognizes their contributions to American society, while simultaneously securing our borders. We can make America stronger, not only by protecting our borders, but also by upholding our values and principles and honoring the entrepreneurial spirit of the American dream – with freedom and opportunity on our shores. President Obama has clearly called on Congress to move forward with a comprehensive immigration reform plan, and I will continue to work with my colleagues to ensure a just, humane and workable immigration system that keeps all of America's families safe and thriving.

Comprehensive Immigration Reform for America's Security and Prosperity (H.R. 4321)

In December 2009, I was proud to stand alongside Rep. Luis Gutierrez (IL-04) as he introduced [H.R. 4321](#), a landmark comprehensive immigration reform bill that addresses border security, visa reforms, a pathway to legalization, reuniting our families, and immigrant integration. I was proud of the diverse coalition of people representing Asian American and Pacific Islanders, Latino, Caribbean, Polish, Irish, and African brothers and sisters and all other immigrant communities that make our diverse nation great united in our support of comprehensive immigration reform.

I was particularly pleased that Rep. Gutierrez's bill incorporated my Reuniting Families Act and my Strengthen and Unite Communities through Civics Education and English Skills Act to help end the lengthy separation of families in the immigration system and promote immigrant integration efforts. [To read more about the CIR ASAP bill introduction, please click here.](#)

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