

Why I Support Comprehensive Immigration Reform

Written by Mike Honda

Last week, Rep. Luis Gutierrez introduced landmark comprehensive immigration reform legislation in the U.S. House of Representatives. As chair of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus (CAPAC), I have long been a supporter of reforming our nation's immigration system. We are a nation of immigrants, and we are also a nation of families. Our nation is built on the American Dream of achieving a better, richer, happier life, and we should have policies that further that dream into a reality while simultaneously protecting our economy and our security. Our constituents and our communities demand as much. We can be both a nation of immigrants and a nation of laws.

Immigration reform has been delayed for too many years, and the problems continue to worsen. Our constituents have sent us to Congress to solve tough problems with practical solutions, and the introduction of H.R.4321, the Comprehensive Immigration Reform for America's Security and Prosperity Act of 2009 (CIR ASAP) is a clear statement that together, we intend to meet the challenge.

I am particularly proud that H.R.4321 incorporates my Reuniting Families Act (RFA), which will reduce and eliminate family immigration backlogs and ensure family reunification remains a cornerstone of our immigration system. As CAPAC Chairman, I have worked to ensure that the voices of the 1.5 million undocumented Asian immigrants living in the shadows and the millions of Asian and Pacific Islander family members caught in endless backlogs waiting to reunite with loved ones are heard in the immigration debate, and so the inclusion of RFA provisions in H.R. 4321 is very important to me. Furthermore, I am glad that this bill honors the contributions of World War II Filipino veterans by exempting their children from numerical limitations on immigrant visas.

Immigrants built this country, and their contributions should be recognized with a fair and humane immigration system. I will continue to work closely with President Obama, Congressional leadership, and the Congressional Black, Hispanic, and Progressive Caucuses to enact comprehensive immigration reform.