

## Rep Honda Introduces Immigration Legislation to Reunite Families

Written by Mike Honda

Thursday, 14 February 2013 00:00

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WASHINGTON DC - Today, Rep. Mike Honda (D-CA) introduced the **Reuniting Families Act** in the House of Representatives. Rep Honda's immigration bill helps ensure that visas are allocated efficiently, while alleviating lengthy wait times that keep legal immigrants, and their loved ones overseas, separated for years. The bill also eliminates discrimination in immigration law against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Americans and their foreign-born partners.

"Our family-based immigration system has not been updated in 20 years, separating spouses, children and their parents, who have played by the rules for years," **said Rep. Mike Honda (D-CA), chair emeritus of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus and chair of CAPAC's immigration taskforce**

. "My proposed legislation is in line with American family values and with our need to grow our economy and save taxpayer money. American workers with families by their side are happier, healthier and more able to succeed than those distanced from loved ones for years on end.

Our country deserves an immigration system that honors and supports key family values, like keeping families intact. The Reuniting Families Act represents a giant step forward in that commitment and provides a blueprint that respects families, strengthens our economy and fixes a badly broken system. I urge Congress to forge comprehensive immigration reform. For every day Congress delays, more families face separation."

"As the largest group of new immigrants and the fastest growing racial group in the U.S., Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders must be heard during immigration reform," **said Rep Judy Chu (D-CA), chair of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus.**

"A solution that fails to address backlogs and continues to keep families separated is no solution at all. We must recapture unused visas being lost to bureaucratic red tape, we must set maximum waiting periods to no more than 10 years, and we must recognize the undue pain being caused every day that we do not act on these issues. As Chair of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus, I am determined to ensure the needs of the AAPI community are met as we address this national imperative."

"Family is the universal source of success and happiness for people of all faiths, nationalities, and sexual orientations," **said Rachel B. Tiven, executive director of Immigration Equality.**

"With family by your side, every American and every newcomer can work hard, study, and achieve. Congressman Honda's common sense reforms would ensure that tens of thousands of LGBT couples, nearly half of whom are raising children, have the same legal recognition and protection that all families deserve. He was the first lawmaker to propose including LGBT families within a larger immigration reform framework, and he has been steadfast in his commitment to leaving no family behind. Immigration Equality is proud to support the Reuniting Families Act, and to stand alongside our many allies in the family immigration movement who have worked so hard, for so long, to keep all families together."

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“The American dream was created on the idea that families seeking opportunity could come to the United States and build better lives for their families,” **said Mee Moua, executive director of Asian American Justice Center**

“The family unit is the bedrock of our American society, but for too long our broken immigration system has hurt families by keeping loved ones apart for years, sometimes decades. Too many are living in limbo, waiting for a broken bureaucracy to allow close family members to join their American relatives. We need commonsense solutions like the ones included in Congressman Mike Honda’s Reuniting Families Act to improve and update our family immigration system. A robust family immigration system is good for our communities and our economy. We commend Congressman Honda for introducing this bill and championing family reunification.”

There are currently 4.3 million people in the family immigration backlog waiting to reunite with family members in the United States. The Reuniting Families Act reduces the backlog for families trying to reunite with their loved ones by classifying lawful permanent resident spouses and children as “immediate relatives” and exempting them from numerical caps on family immigration. This legislation sets the maximum wait period for a green card to 10 years, as well as increases per-country limits to 15% so that nations with a higher demand for workers can better equip the American economy with talent.

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