



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 162-A

Resolution calling upon the United States Congress to pass and President Obama to sign a just and humane comprehensive immigration reform bill in 2010.

By Council Members Mark Viverito, Chin, Dromm, Koppell, Rodriguez, Rose, Williams, Foster, Eugene, Jackson, Lander and Van Bramer

Whereas, When first elected, President Barack Obama promised to make comprehensive immigration reform a top priority during his first year as President of the United States; and

Whereas, According to the Migration Policy Institute, as of 2008, there were an estimated 37.9 million immigrants living in the United States; and

Whereas, With approximately 4.2 million immigrants, New York State was home to the second largest immigrant population in 2008; and

Whereas, There are approximately 12 million undocumented immigrants who work in the United States who are easy prey for economic exploitation by immoral employers; this affects the wages and working conditions of everyone, regardless of status; and

Whereas, Current immigration law makes it nearly impossible for undocumented immigrants to obtain student loans for higher education; and

Whereas, As of the 2000 Census, there were an estimated 35,820 binational same-sex couples living in the United States, approximately 16,000 of whom were raising children in their homes; and

Whereas, Current immigration law does not recognize same-sex marriages and, as such, does not provide any avenues for a United States citizen in a same-sex relationship to sponsor his or her foreign-born partner; and

Whereas, There are approximately five million United States citizens whose families contain undocumented immigrants; these families live in constant fear that current immigration law may lead to their families being torn apart; and

Whereas, The United States spends nearly \$2 billion each year to detain more than 350,000 immigrants, including children, too many of whom are kept in poor conditions without access to basic medical care, even though there are safe and effective alternatives to detention that keep families together; and

Whereas, Many provisions of current immigration law and policy should be reviewed including provisions relating to the increased delegation of enforcement to local jurisdictions and detention and deportation of immigrants, including lawful permanent residents, for a broad range of offenses; and

Whereas, According to “The Role of Immigrants in the New York City Economy,” a report issued in January 2010 by the New York State Comptroller’s Office, immigrants accounted for 43% of New York City’s workforce and \$215 billion in economic activity in 2008, which is approximately 32% of New York’s gross city product; and

Whereas, Supporters of comprehensive immigration reform believe that such reform is necessary for the nation’s long term economic success; and

Whereas, On December 12, 2009, Representatives Solomon Ortiz (D-TX) and Luis Gutierrez (D-IL) introduced the Comprehensive Immigration Reform for America’s Security and Prosperity Act of 2009 (“CIR ASAP”), a piece of legislation developed from the work of civil rights advocates, labor organizations and Congressional members; and

Whereas, The CIR ASAP bill includes reforms on (i) border security, detention conditions, and enforcement activities; (ii) employment authorization; (iii) visa processing; (iv) legalization of undocumented immigrants; (v) strengthening America’s workforce; and (vi) integrating new citizens; and

Whereas, The Campaign to Reform Immigration FOR America, a consortium of more than 600 organizations from around the nation supporting comprehensive immigration reform, supports the CIR ASAP

bill; and

Whereas, On March 18, 2010, Senators Chuck Schumer (D-NY) and Lindsey Graham (R-SC) unveiled a bipartisan plan for immigration legislation; and

Whereas, The plan's four pillars are "requiring biometric Social Security cards...strengthening border security and interior enforcement; creating a process for admitting temporary workers; and implementing a tough but fair path to legalization for those already here;" and

Whereas, Although both of these proposed plans for comprehensive immigration reform are a good start, they remain incomplete because of their failure to consider binational couples in same-sex relationships or their families, and failure to address the additional challenges posed to immigrants' and Americans' civil liberties and civil rights under current immigration law; and

Whereas, Many supporters of comprehensive immigration reform believe that it should incorporate the Uniting American Families Act (H.R. 1024/S. 424), which expands the definition of "permanent partner" in the Immigration and Nationality Act to include same-sex couples in order to grant them the same protections under the Immigration and Nationality Act as provided to married opposite sex couples; and

Whereas, Just and humane immigration reform should include a path to citizenship for all people willing to lawfully participate in the citizenship application process; and

Whereas, Immigrant advocates, including the Campaign to Reform Immigration FOR America, are happy that there is bipartisan support for comprehensive immigration reform in the Senate, but want to ensure that this bipartisan effort will include the promotion of family unification, workers rights, economic opportunity, and national security; and

Whereas, It is estimated that tens of thousands of demonstrators rallied in Washington in support of comprehensive immigration reform on March 21, 2010; and

Whereas, On March 21, 2010, President Obama responded to demonstrators by reaffirming his commitment to immigration reform in order to fix problems such as families being separated, employers

abusing the system and police officers struggling to keep communities safe; and

Whereas, Governor Jan Brewer of Arizona signed a draconian measure on illegal immigration into law on April 23, 2010, which, with its goal to identify, prosecute and deport illegal immigrants, is a sign of things to come if Congress fails to enact comprehensive immigration reform; and

Whereas, This law, which appears likely to result in the use of racial profiling by law enforcement, is an affront to all of our civil rights and must be condemned; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the United States Congress to pass and President Obama to sign a just and humane comprehensive immigration reform bill in 2010.