

March 10, 2010

Dear Senator:

The American Jewish Committee has for more than a century been a vocal advocate for a generous and humane immigration system that is also effective and enforceable. As the Senate considers legislation aimed at replacing the current disorganized and dysfunctional immigration system, we urge you to pursue comprehensive reform that regulates immigration in a safe, orderly, legal, and just manner that will also bolster national security.

A comprehensive approach is the only effective way to fix our flawed system and protect our homeland security. There are millions of people currently living in the shadows throughout the United States, unable to gain full access to fundamental needs such as health care and education. Moreover, the fact that we do not know who is entering, and has entered, our country poses obvious security risks. Mass deportations of this population must be rejected out of hand—such actions would violate family unification principles, fail to address security concerns, and run counter to the values of American society.

On behalf of AJC's more than 175,000 members and supporters represented by 27 regional offices, we urge you to support legislation that (i) will allow undocumented immigrants the opportunity to come out of the shadows, pay back taxes and appropriate fines, pass a background check, and ultimately legalize their status, and (ii), on a forward-looking basis, provide for a better organized immigration system that offers legal channels for immigrants to enter the United States, including more legal work visas and more visas for immigrant families. These reforms will be consistent with our democratic values as well as contribute to the economic well-being of the United States.

At the same time that America must work towards better integration of immigrants into our society, we must keep in mind pressing national security concerns, not least the urgent need to prevent entry into our country of those who mean to do us harm. Comprehensive immigration reform would enhance our national security through more effective border security and effective enforcement, giving us better information about and control over who enters our country, while also protecting immigrants and integrating them into our society through earned legalization and increased worker protections.

AJC is encouraged that Congress appears eager to resolve the problems with our current immigration system. We are committed to working with the Senate to reform our immigration system in a manner that treats immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers in a fair, sensible, and safe fashion while addressing national security concerns.

Thank you for considering our views on this important matter.

Respectfully,



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Director of National and Legislative Affairs