



Submitted to the Senate Judiciary Committee Regarding the Hearing on Comprehensive Immigration Reform Legislation

April 19, 2013

HIAS, the global migration agency of the American Jewish community, welcomes the opportunity to submit written testimony regarding reforming our country's immigration system. Throughout its more than 130-year history, HIAS has advocated for just and compassionate immigration laws that honor America's tradition as a welcoming nation. HIAS is also a national resettlement agency and an international refugee services organization with programs around the world.

HIAS welcomes S. 744, which offers a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants, modernizes the immigration system, strengthens our economy, protects families, and treats American and immigrant workers fairly. In particular, HIAS is grateful to see the pathway to citizenship, inclusion of the DREAM Act for undocumented youth, provisions that prioritize immigrant integration and create a pilot program to promote integration at the state and local level, provisions that keep families together, "alternative to detention" programs, increased resources for immigration courts personnel and more training for judges and their staff, and broader exemptions from the English language requirements for naturalization for elderly immigrants.

As the Judiciary Committee meets to consider immigration reform legislation, HIAS urges Congress not to neglect those who come to this country as humanitarian immigrants. HIAS is proud of the United States' strong history of protecting and welcoming victims of persecution, and the U.S. refugee resettlement program reflects our nation's highest values. Refugees and asylees who are given the opportunity to rebuild their lives in the U.S. contribute to the rich diversity and economic vibrancy of communities across the country. The humanitarian act of saving and resettling refugees not only benefits the refugees themselves, but the communities where they resettle and the country as a whole. HIAS believes that in order to ensure that local communities remain welcoming to refugees we need to update our outdated laws, reverse chronic underfunding, better prepare refugees for life in America, demonstrate the benefits of refugee resettlement, and – for the first time – create clear goals and a comprehensive approach for successful refugee integration.

HIAS is particularly encouraged that there are several humanitarian fixes for refugees and asylum seekers in S. 744. Repealing the one-year filing deadline that causes so much unnecessary hardship, eliminating provisions that needlessly separate asylees and refugees from close family members, expediting the process for granting asylum to asylum seekers in expedited proceedings that clearly show they have been or will be persecuted, permitting qualified stateless individuals to apply for green cards, and modifying the procedures for refugee adjudications abroad will make the refugee and asylum systems more efficient and humane.

The bill would also streamline the process for admitting certain high risk refugee groups, including Jews and other religious minorities fleeing Iran. The Senate bill would preserve Senator Lautenberg's legacy of protecting persecuted religious minorities while creating new opportunities for other persecuted groups – with an emphasis on those seeking religious freedom – to receive protection.

As Jews, we support policies that fulfill the Torah's mandate to 'welcome the stranger,' as we know that effective immigration policies have often made the difference between life and death, between oppression and the opportunity for success. It is crucial that we utilize this opportunity to provide safe haven to the persecuted. HIAS looks forward to working with legislators and immigrant communities to revamp and revitalize our country's current immigration system in a way that honors our American and Jewish values.



Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service

Statement of Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service

Senate Committee on the Judiciary

April 19, 2013: “Hearing on Comprehensive Immigration Reform Legislation”

Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS), the national organization established by Lutheran churches in the United States to serve uprooted people, welcomes the introduction of S.744. LIRS is particularly grateful for the way this new Senate bill embodies bipartisan agreement on basic improvements that LIRS has long championed for welcoming newcomers to the United States.

“We’re thrilled that S.744 shows bipartisan agreement on fundamental improvements to America’s immigration process that LIRS has long advocated,” said LIRS President and CEO Linda Hartke. “The majority of Americans are calling for immigration reform that keeps families together and offers a roadmap to earned citizenship – because family unity is vital to our congregations and communities, and because this reform is smart for our economy and our country.”

“It’s no coincidence that 40 Lutheran leaders from across the country were on Capitol Hill this week calling for passage of a bill that creates a fair and humane immigration system,” said Hartke. “Although we’re still analyzing S.744, we are glad that Senate leadership has taken heed of their call for action. Now we’re urging the House of Representatives to show bipartisan leadership like that in the Senate.”

S.744, the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act, aligns with the LIRS Principles for Comprehensive Immigration Reform as follows:

Principle 1. *Provide an earned pathway to lawful permanent residency and eventual citizenship for undocumented immigrants and their families.*

We are overall quite pleased with the creation of a process for undocumented immigrants to eventually earn citizenship in the country they consider home. This pathway towards citizenship must be accessible and fairly adjudicated, and this bill is a positive step towards that outcome.

Principle 2. *Ensure humane and just enforcement of immigration laws by reducing use of immigration detention and expanding community support programs.*

This bill improves access to justice for migrants and refugees navigating our immigration system. LIRS welcomes the increased provision of counsel and legal protections for unaccompanied migrant children and individuals facing deportation and detention. The bill also

recognizes the promise of community based alternatives to detention, which LIRS has begun to cultivate nationwide, as a cost-effective and humane way to promote integration and make our communities stronger.

Principle 3. Protect families from separation and ensure an adequate supply of visas for families seeking to reunite. LIRS remains committed to family unity for all migrants and refugees.

We are encouraged by improvements for refugee children in need of protection and children separated from their parents by immigration detention and deportation. Although this bill does improve the options for family unity for many immigrants who have been seeking to reunite with loved ones in the United States for years, LIRS is disappointed by the creation of an age cap on married children hoping to reunite with their U.S. citizen parents and the proposed elimination of immigration channels for brothers and sisters of American citizens.

Principle 4. Provide adequate resources and protections to ensure the successful integration of refugees, asylees, survivors of torture and trafficking, unaccompanied minors, and other vulnerable migrants.

We welcome the bill's recognition of how essential integration is for new Americans and their communities. Especially exciting are improvements that would better protect refugees, asylum seekers, stateless individuals, and migrants who are victims of serious crimes. These changes bring America closer to fulfilling humanitarian obligations to those seeking a safe haven and new life, while also improving efficiencies in current immigration processes.

Principle 5. Ensure the protection of U.S. citizen and migrant workers.

The bipartisan bill makes changes that would treat workers fairly and recognize the contributions of immigrant workers to this country.

LIRS is nationally recognized for its leadership in advocating on behalf of refugees, asylum seekers, unaccompanied children, immigrants in detention, families fractured by migration and other vulnerable populations, and for serving migrants through over 60 grassroots legal and social service partners across the United States.



OFFICE OF
IMMIGRATION ISSUES
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)

Addressing immigration reform

A STATEMENT FROM GRADYE PARSONS, STATED CLERK OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

APRIL 18, 2013

While the press conference for the release of the Gang of 8—a bipartisan group of eight Senators who were appointed to craft a proposal for comprehensive immigration reform—to officially introduce their proposed legislation* to the American public has been postponed due to the tragedy in Boston on Monday, an outline of the “Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act of 2013” has been released.

The Gang of 8 has negotiated and compromised to come to agreement on this proposed legislation. Their cooperation and hard work to fix our broken immigration system is commendable. We applaud their efforts and join them in the call that this is the time for reform. This is the year for justice and a commonsense immigration plan.

The 17-page memo that was released leaves many questions unanswered, and of those provisions that are explained, many are not perfect. However, it is a start toward the modernization of our immigration laws. The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has set forth elements that should be incorporated into a comprehensive and fair reform. Those elements include a pathway to citizenship for the 11 million people now living and working in the U.S. without authorization, eliminating the backlogs in family and employment-based immigration, maintaining family unity as the foundation of our immigration policy, creating a commonsense workable approach to future flow, and maintenance of our nation’s borders in a way that respects due process and human dignity. These are just a few of the elements endorsed by the General Assembly, others can be viewed at our [website](#).

Some of these goals are shared in the Senators’ memo but the status of others is unclear. In the coming weeks the staff of the office of Immigration Issues will work with our interfaith partners to analyze the legislation. Because staff will be sharing details as they come to light, I invite you to monitor our [website](#).

Now we begin the hard work of mobilizing our communities and working to have our voice heard in Congress. Many Presbyterians will be directly impacted by this legislation and it is up to us to ensure that we improve the bill and that amendments that will undermine the bill’s success are not added. You can help by educating yourself and your community about the need for reform and the plight of our sisters and brothers who suffer most directly the effects of an unjust immigration system.

Join me in the prayer for a reform that recognizes the contributions of the many aspiring citizens who are Americans in every way but on paper. Then join the work to ensure that our prayer is heard by Congress. Our church and country have been built by new immigrants who have worked in partnership with those already here. We want to continue this legacy so that others may be blessed as we have.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 17, 2013

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IWJ Welcomes Senate Immigration Bill
Will continue to work for strong worker protections

National – Interfaith Worker Justice (IWJ) welcomes the Senate “Gang of 8” immigration reform bill as an important and historic first step towards real and humane reform.

“Our elected officials have a great opportunity –and responsibility - to overhaul a broken system that tears families apart and leaves workers vulnerable to abuse,” IWJ Executive Director Kim Bobo said. “Passing comprehensive immigration reform and creating a path to citizenship is clearly the way to “welcome the immigrant” and “love our neighbor.”

The proposed “Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act of 2013” (SB 744) offers a roadmap to citizenship that includes thousands of families torn apart by deportation. The proposal also includes a temporary worker program that extends workplace protection to immigrant workers.

“It’s not a perfect bill, but it’s an important first step and we will continue to push for stronger worker protections,” Bobo said. “Now is the time for all of us to put our faith into action, our feet to the street, and advocate policies that reflect our values of compassion and justice.”

IWJ has a network of more than 27 worker centers around the country that serve as drop-in centers for low-wage workers who experience injustice at the workplace. Many of these centers routinely see wage theft cases that involve immigrant workers.

“Immigrant workers who are forced to live the shadows are more vulnerable to abuse. When we allow immigrant workers to be exploited, we lower the standards for all workers,” Bobo said. “Reforming our immigration system is morally imperative and fundamental to restoring justice and equity in the workplace and the community.”

IWJ is a member of the Interfaith Immigrant Coalition, a coalition of 35 national faith-based organizations calling for a reform of our broken immigration system, and the Alliance for Citizenship.

Interfaith Worker Justice has been organizing, educating and advocating at the intersection of work and faith since 1996. There are 70 affiliated organizations in the



FOR RELEASE: April 17, 2013

CONTACT: Stephanie Niedringhaus, 202-347-9797 x224, sniedringhaus@networklobby.org

NETWORK Responds to New Immigration Bill

Washington DC: NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice lobby, today issued the following statement about the new immigration bill:

We are pleased that the highly anticipated immigration bill has been finally introduced in Congress, and we want to publicly thank the Senate's bipartisan "Gang of Eight," who are responsible (Sens. Charles Schumer, Lindsey Graham, John McCain, Jeff Flake, Dick Durbin, Marco Rubio, Bob Menendez and Michael Bennet.) It is extremely gratifying that they were able to come together to make this happen, especially at a time of such partisan rancor. We are grateful that they were able to remain focused on the task of addressing justice for our eleven million brothers and sisters who presently live in the shadows.

Family unity and diversity remain two key issues for NETWORK, and we intend to review the bill's wording about these issues carefully. We look forward to working with Congress to ensure that the final version includes a reasonable roadmap to citizenship, reunification of families, and the added value of diversity in our nation.

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NETWORK—a Catholic leader in the global movement for justice and peace—educates, organizes and lobbies for economic and social transformation. Founded in 1971 by 47 Catholic sisters, NETWORK is supported by thousands of groups and individuals committed to working for social and economic justice. For more information, see www.networklobby.org.



Reform Movement Welcomes Introduction of Senate Immigration Bill

Laser: "A path to citizenship for the 11 million undocumented immigrants here today, a renewed commitment to clearing systemic backlogs, a plan for processing future flow of immigrants, and a reasonable approach to enforcement are all cornerstones of the Reform Movement's immigration priorities, and we are pleased to see such policies reflected in today's legislation."

Contact: Sean Thibault or Sarah Krinsky
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Washington, D.C., April 17, 2013 - In response to the introduction of the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act of 2013, Rachel Laser, Deputy Director of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, issued the following statement:

"As an historic supporter of comprehensive immigration policies, the Reform Movement enthusiastically welcomes this momentous step toward the long-overdue passage of reform legislation. We applaud the 'Gang of 8' for their tireless work on this crucial issue, and commend their bipartisanship on a topic that so intimately touches the lives of Americans of all ages, races, nationalities, and political parties.

We are encouraged by many of the key provisions in the Senate bill released this morning. A path to citizenship for the 11 million undocumented immigrants here today, a renewed commitment to clearing systemic backlogs, a plan for processing future flow of immigrants, and a reasonable approach to enforcement are all cornerstones of the Reform Movement's immigration priorities, and we are pleased to see such policies reflected in today's legislation.

We understand the nature of compromise and balance, and as such celebrate this bipartisan bill. At the same time, we know we can do better, and call upon our elected representatives to continue to strengthen this bill and to work to ensure justice for our nation's immigrants. That includes justice for *all* family members, including brothers, sisters, and spouses, of all genders; justice for those who must wait too long to become citizens; and justice for contributing members of our economy and society who are denied basic rights and benefits.

Jewish tradition teaches, 'in a place where there is no humanity, strive to be human' (Pirkei Avot 2:6). Today's bill is an important start toward restoring humanity in our immigration system and throughout our nation. We welcome this legislation, and look forward to continuing to work with Congress on its development in the weeks and months to come."

Read

more: http://rac.org/Articles/index.cfm?id=23157&pge_prg_id=16390&pge_id=2541#ixzz2QqV5IJIS

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**SISTERS OF MERCY ENCOURAGED BY SENATE IMMIGRATION BILL,
OPPOSE FURTHER BORDER MILITARIZATION**

April 18, 2013 – While Sisters of Mercy applaud the bi-partisan effort to resolve the broken immigration system with practical solutions, the newly introduced senate immigration bill includes a pathway to citizenship that is dependent on border enforcement triggers and is troubling in that it could continually delay a pathway altogether. Though supportive of many aspects of the bill, the Sisters of Mercy urge elected officials to recognize and affirm that the U.S. border is more secure than ever. The U.S. government has met or surpassed every single border security benchmark within the proposed 2007 Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act. And the Sisters of Mercy remain strong in their stance that Congress should reevaluate continued militarization of the border.

A 180-year history of ministering to and with immigrants in schools, hospitals, parishes and social service centers provides the Sisters of Mercy with an understanding of just how important yesterday's bill is. Just and humane immigration reform is a Critical Concern of Mercy, based on their commitment to serve those who are poor, sick and uneducated. Their response is based on witnessing first-hand the suffering and hardships faced by immigrants, especially undocumented immigrants.

With a presence throughout Latin America and the Philippines, the Sisters of Mercy are keenly aware of the factors that push women, men and children to leave their countries. "We call on the President and Congress to examine the root causes of immigration, says Sister Anne Curtis of the Mercy Institute Leadership Team (ILT) "particularly policies that contribute to poverty and violence and force families to flee their homes in search of economic and physical security," she explained. "We will continue to support positive aspects of the bipartisan immigration bill, while encouraging a more expedited welcome of our immigrant sisters and brothers and sustaining advocacy against further militarization of the border."

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The Sisters of Mercy – an international community of Roman Catholic women – dedicate their lives to God through vows of poverty, chastity, obedience and service. For more than 180 years,

motivated by the Gospel of Jesus and inspired by the spirit of their founder Catherine McAuley, the Sisters of Mercy have responded to the continually changing needs of the times.

Through prayer and service, the sisters address the causes and effects of violence, racism, degradation of the Earth and injustice to women and immigrants. The sisters sponsor and serve in more than 200 organizations that work with those in need in the U.S., Central and South America, Jamaica, Guam and the Philippines.



Franciscan Action Network

Transforming the World in the Spirit of St. Francis and St. Clare

3025 4th Street, N.E. • Washington, DC 20017 • 202-527-7575 • 1-888-364-3388 (toll free) • 202-527-7576 (fax)

FOR REASE: APRIL 18, 2013

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FRANCISCAN ACTION NETWORK ENCOURAGED BY NEW IMMIGRATION BILL

Washington, DC: Franciscan Action Network (FAN), a collective Franciscan voice on U.S. public policy, thanks the bi-partisan group of Senators who labored for several months on a new immigration bill titled “Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act of 2013.” The bill offers hope that Congress can reach an agreement that respects the dignity of all immigrants in our country.

We especially welcome the inclusion of a path to citizenship, with a special provision for Dreamers, and several provisions which promote family unity. In our initial and incomplete assessment, FAN has several concerns about the legislation, including stringent and costly border enforcement measures, the very long path to citizenship, and the elimination of the family sibling category. However, we will continue to work with members of Congress toward a final bill that repairs our broken immigration system and sends a message of welcome to aspiring U.S. Americans. We commend the Senators who introduced the bill for their courage and leadership.

Franciscan Action Network was founded in 2007 to create a unified Franciscan voice for justice by working to transform United States public policy related to peacemaking, care for creation, poverty and human rights. See www.franciscanaction.org.



For Immediate Release

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New Immigration Bill Includes Support for Families and Workers, Yet Would Continue Key Failures of Current System

Quaker Group: Fair Path to Citizenship Must Reflect More Humane Principles

Philadelphia, PA (April 17, 2013) - The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) finds the immigration bill introduced today a modest start on reform, due to provisions that address family unification and workers' rights and create a narrow path to citizenship for some immigrants. But much of the bill reproduces many of the current failed policies – making the overall bill a far cry from the just and humane reforms that immigrant communities, faith, labor and advocacy groups have been calling for.

“The Senate bill makes meaningful improvements for immigrants with temporary protected status, undocumented youth, and agricultural workers by providing a fast track to legal permanent residency. However, it would not end the current cruel, costly and inefficient system of detention and deportation, or the militarization of the border that has devastated communities on both sides of the border,” said Gabriel Camacho, director of AFSC’s Project Voice program in Cambridge MA, and Amy Gottlieb director of AFSC’s immigrants’ rights program in Newark NJ.

The bill not only doubles down on some failed policies. It also elevates them to the status of mandatory measurable triggers, including universal E-Verify, a 90 percent border ‘security’ metric, and a new entry-exit port system. It would waste billions on drones, costly high-tech gadgetry, additional fencing, and personnel.

One part of the bill does offer greater accountability and oversight of border enforcement, a long-standing demand by immigrant communities and their allies, including AFSC. It would establish a task force of border community stakeholders to evaluate and make recommendations regarding immigration policies along the border. Since 2010, the Border Patrol has claimed the lives of 20 unarmed civilians, and no official has been held accountable for these deaths. Federal agents seemingly operate with impunity, systematically violating the human rights and civil liberties of border residents.

The bill also includes the right of due process and worker protections under the mandatory E-Verify provision. However, E-Verify and other employment verification programs remain highly flawed, problematic and costly.

“We are gratified to see that the bill does begin an important conversation about future flows of workers to the U.S., by identifying significant labor and wage standard protections and opportunities to apply for permanent status and supporting family unity,” said Gabriel.

“The bill strives to keep families together by restructuring a fundamentally flawed system with long

waiting periods into one that provides new opportunities for people to migrate lawfully. Still, because of limitations in the bill, there may be many who continue to live in the shadows, subject to the cruelties of a broken system including exploitation and abuse by unscrupulous employers,” Amy said.

The AFSC implores Congress to adopt compassionate and effective immigration reforms that are grounded in the following principles:

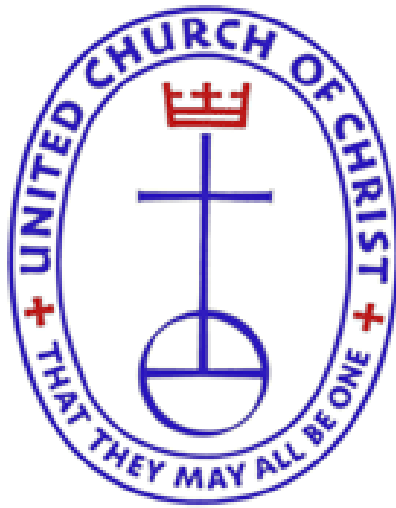
- Develop humane economic policies to reduce forced migration.
- Protect the labor rights of all workers.
- Develop a quick path to legal permanent residency and a clear path to citizenship.
- Respect the civil and human rights of immigrants.
- Demilitarize the U.S.-Mexico border.
- Make family reunification a top priority.
- Ensure that immigrants and refugees have access to services.

AFSC has created [A New Path](#), which lays out policy priorities for humane immigration reform that protects the human rights of all people. These principles are derived from nine decades of work with immigrant communities, whose voices must be heard as we seek meaningful and humane policies.

For more on AFSC’s immigrant rights work, visit <http://afsc.org/project/immigrant-rights> and follow us on Twitter and Facebook.

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The American Friends Service Committee is a Quaker organization that includes people of various faiths who are committed to social justice, peace and humanitarian service. Its work is based on the belief in the worth of every person and faith in the power of love to overcome violence and injustice.



The United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries, celebrates the introduction in the Congress of a long awaited immigration bill. We specially wish to thank the senator members of the "Gang of Eight" for their work and dedication. We look forward to the legislative process and to further congressional action on behalf of the millions of God's children who may finally be able to achieve their dreams and full potential once this bill becomes law.

U.S. JESUIT CONFERENCE GREETES BI-PARTISAN IMMIGRATION BILL WITH OPTIMISM AND CAUTION

April, 17, 2013

Washington—The U.S. Jesuit Conference welcomes today's introduction of a bi-partisan Senate immigration bill. Immigration reform has been a difficult issue to address, and this bill provides hope that an immigration agreement can be reached that respects the human dignity of our undocumented brothers and sisters.

We are especially pleased to see that members of the bi-partisan group of Senators included a pathway to citizenship for those without legal status and special provisions for DREAMers. We join the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in thanking Senators Schumer, McCain, Durbin, Graham, Menendez, Rubio, Bennet, and Flake for their dedicated leadership and courage in introducing this bill. The Jesuit Conference will work with members of Congress to ensure that a final bill includes proper protections and legal relief for all undocumented immigrants.

The Society of Jesus' work with migrants on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border provides us with an important perspective on border security provisions within the bill. Therefore, while we are encouraged by many elements of this bill, we want to ensure proper oversight of immigration enforcement authorities, respect for the due process rights of immigrants, and safe and humane deportation regulations. Additionally, any pathway to citizenship must be realistic and reasonable in light of the social and economic realities faced by immigrants.

Fr. Thomas P. Greene, Secretary for Social and International Ministries at the U.S. Jesuit Conference greeted the Senate bill with approval while cautioning that it will take time to study the bill and clarify its enforcement and eligibility provisions: "We are encouraged by the bill and this first step towards comprehensive immigration reform. However, we need time to assess its provisions and ensure that the pathway to citizenship is indeed accessible to the millions of undocumented immigrants living and working in our midst."



National Council of Jewish Women

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NCJW Applauds Release of Bipartisan Immigration Reform Bill

April 17, 2013 Washington, DC – The National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) congratulates the bipartisan group of 8 US senators who early this morning released the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act of 2013, a comprehensive bill to reform our immigration laws. NCJW CEO Nancy K. Kaufman released the following statement:

“NCJW commends the group of 8 US senators who have introduced a groundbreaking immigration bill after months of deliberation. Although it isn’t perfect, this legislation is an historic step towards addressing our nation’s broken immigration system. It is also an example of much-needed bipartisan cooperation in confronting our nation’s challenges, and for that we congratulate the senators and their staff.

“The bill is a good starting point for the dialogue necessary to overhaul our nation’s broken immigration system with the goal of achieving just, humane and comprehensive reform. We are pleased to see many of its provisions. Its landmark path to citizenship will enable the 11 million undocumented immigrants currently living in the US to emerge from the shadows of our society, and we applaud provisions that expedite citizenship for DREAMers and provide protections for temporary workers.

“However, we are concerned that burdensome fines and requirements for permanent residence and citizenship could prevent many immigrants from participating, and we hope improvements will be made to allow newly legalized immigrants access to critical services including health and nutrition supports. Additionally, NCJW is disappointed by the exclusion of LGBT people from the definition of family – a reminder of ongoing discrimination against this community.

“At this critical juncture, we must remember that immigration reform is about families. Despite provisions to ease applicant backlogs and reduce wait times in the family visa program, we object to proposals that would curtail eligibility and limit the promise of family unity.

“We are heartened at the progress the Senate bill represents, and again congratulate the “Gang of 8” for their perseverance in developing this comprehensive proposal. NCJW pledges to work with members of Congress and coalition partners on this critical issue to achieve just, humane and comprehensive immigration law that reflects our shared values as Americans.”

The [National Council of Jewish Women](#) (NCJW) is a grassroots organization of volunteers and advocates who turn progressive ideals into action. Inspired by Jewish values, NCJW strives for social justice by improving the quality of life for women, children, and families and by safeguarding individual rights and freedoms. Since its founding in 1893, NCJW has worked for immigrant communities in the US and continues to advocate for just and humane immigrant policies.

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Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service

S.744 Offers Historic and Bipartisan Progress on Immigration Reform

WASHINGTON, D.C. April 17, 2013 — Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS) welcomes the introduction of S.744, particularly the way this new Senate bill embodies bipartisan agreement on basic improvements that LIRS has long championed for welcoming newcomers to the United States.

“We’re thrilled that S.744 shows bipartisan agreement on fundamental improvements to America’s immigration process that LIRS has long advocated,” said LIRS President and CEO Linda Hartke. “The majority of Americans are calling for immigration reform that keeps families together and offers a roadmap to earned citizenship – because family unity is vital to our congregations and communities, and because this reform is smart for our economy and our country.”

“It’s no coincidence that 40 Lutheran leaders from across the country were on Capitol Hill this week calling for passage of a bill that creates a [fair and humane immigration system](#),” said Hartke. “Although we’re still analyzing S.744, we are glad that Senate leadership has taken heed of their call for action. Now we’re urging the House of Representatives to show bipartisan leadership like that in the Senate.”

S.744, the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act, aligns with the [LIRS Principles for Comprehensive Immigration Reform](#) as follows:

Principle 1. *Provide an earned pathway to lawful permanent residency and eventual citizenship for undocumented immigrants and their families.* We are overall quite pleased with the creation of a process for undocumented immigrants to eventually earn citizenship in the country they consider home. This pathway towards citizenship must be accessible and fairly adjudicated, and this bill is a positive step towards that outcome.

Principle 2. *Ensure humane and just enforcement of immigration laws by reducing use of immigration detention and expanding community support programs.* This bill improves access to justice for migrants and refugees navigating our immigration system. LIRS welcomes the increased provision of counsel and legal protections for unaccompanied migrant children and individuals facing deportation and detention. The bill also recognizes the promise of community based alternatives to detention, which LIRS has begun to cultivate nationwide, as a cost-effective and humane way to promote integration and make our communities stronger.

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Principle 4. *Provide adequate resources and protections to ensure the successful integration of refugees, asylees, survivors of torture and trafficking, unaccompanied minors, and other vulnerable migrants.* We welcome the bill’s recognition of how essential integration is for new Americans and their communities. Especially exciting are improvements that would better protect refugees, asylum seekers, stateless individuals, and migrants who are victims of serious crimes. These changes bring America closer to fulfilling humanitarian obligations to those seeking a safe haven and new life, while also improving efficiencies in current immigration processes.

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[LIRS](#) is nationally recognized for advocating on behalf of refugees, asylum seekers, unaccompanied children, immigrants in detention, families fractured by migration and other vulnerable populations, and for serving migrants through 60 grassroots legal and social service partners across the United States.

HIAS WELCOMES "GANG OF EIGHT" IMMIGRATION REFORM LEGISLATION, CELEBRATES PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS TO REFUGEE AND ASYLUM LAWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Roberta Elliott, [\(212\) 613-1350](tel:2126131350)

(New York, NY – April 17, 2013) – HIAS, the global Jewish nonprofit that protects refugees, welcomes today's introduction of bipartisan legislation in the Senate to reform the U.S. immigration system. Mark Hetfield, HIAS' President and CEO, said, "We are thrilled that this legislation was introduced and especially pleased that there are several humanitarian fixes for refugees and asylum seekers in this new legislation, which offers a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants, modernizes the immigration system, strengthens our economy, protects families, treats American and immigrant workers fairly, and begins to address the broken refugee and asylum systems. While the bill may not be perfect, it is a comprehensive and common sense approach to immigration reform."

Central to the organization's focus on refugee protection, HIAS is grateful to the "Gang of 8" – Senators Schumer (D-NY), McCain (R-AZ), Durbin (D-IL), Graham (R-SC), Menendez (D-NJ), Rubio (R-FL), Bennet (D-CO), and Flake (R-AZ) – for including provisions such as repealing the one-year filing deadline that caused so much unnecessary hardship for asylum seekers, eliminating provisions that needlessly separate asylees and refugees from close family members, expediting the process for granting asylum to asylum seekers in expedited proceedings that clearly show they have been or will be persecuted, and permitting qualified stateless individuals to apply for green cards. Another important provision makes refugee adjudications abroad more fair and efficient.

The bill would also streamline the process for admitting certain high risk refugee groups, including Jews and other religious minorities fleeing Iran. The Senate bill would preserve Senator Lautenberg's legacy of protecting persecuted religious minorities while creating new opportunities for other persecuted groups – with an emphasis on those seeking religious freedom – to receive protection. HIAS is particularly grateful to Senator Lautenberg for his years of unwavering commitment and leadership in protecting Jews and others who face persecution for their beliefs, and thanks the Senator for ensuring that protecting religious minorities from Iran and other countries that restrict religious freedom is a priority for immigration reform.

Other much needed proposed changes include increases in immigration court personnel and more training for judges and other staff, access to counsel for vulnerable populations to improve efficiency of courts, and "alternatives to detention" programs. The bill would also establish a pilot program to promote immigrant integration at state and local levels, which is in line with the recommendations put forth in HIAS' recent report, [*Resettlement at Risk: Meeting Emerging Challenges to Refugee Resettlement in Local Communities*](#).

Hetfield added, "As an organization deeply rooted in Jewish values, we support policies that fulfill the Torah's mandate to 'welcome the stranger.' We are grateful for the hard work of these Senators and their staff and their acknowledgement that comprehensive immigration reform presents an opportunity to fix a broken system that adversely affects immigrants in the U.S., including refugees and asylum seekers. We look forward to working with legislators and immigrant communities to ensure that our immigration system is reformed in a way that honors our American and Jewish values."

HIAS is the global Jewish nonprofit organization that protects refugees – including women and children, and ethnic, religious, and sexual minorities – whose lives are in danger for being who they are. Guided by our Jewish values and history, HIAS works in 15 countries on five continents, helping refugees rebuild their lives in safety and advocating to ensure that all refugees and displaced people are treated with dignity. Visit HIAS.org to learn more.

AJC Welcomes Introduction of Comprehensive Immigration Reform Legislation

April 17, 2013 – Washington – AJC applauds introduction in the U.S. Senate of the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act of 2013 (S.744). This bipartisan, comprehensive immigration reform legislation offers a roadmap to citizenship for 11 million prospective new Americans.

“The sponsoring Senators have recognized the key role of immigrants in bolstering America's economic strength and democratic pluralism,” said Richard Foltin, AJC Director of National and Legislative Affairs. “AJC looks forward to working with Congress as this legislation moves forward, and to ultimately enacting legislation that will permanently fix America’s broken immigration system.”

The proposed bill creates a much-needed path to earned citizenship for undocumented immigrants in the United States, offers critical reforms to the legal immigration process, and includes measures that will strengthen national security.

AJC finds the proposed reforms to the family and employment visa categories encouraging, and looks forward to continuing to improve these legal immigration categories in the bill. “Just as we, as Americans, have been able to build our lives alongside our brothers, sisters and children, we must preserve that opportunity for new Americans today,” said Foltin. But he expressed concern over proposed cuts to the visa categories for siblings and married adult children over the age of 31 who seek to reunite with their families.

“Regardless of their age or marital status, siblings and children are integral to the American family unit,” said Foltin. “Allowing immigrant families to more easily reunite with their loved ones will enhance a strong social fabric in our communities.”

Foltin praised the bill’s provisions for employment visa categories, saying “they will help to ensure that American businesses have access to labor with needed skill sets to compete in a global economy.” The proposed measure would make it easier for high- and low-skilled immigrant workers to come to the U.S., as well as establish a viable program for temporary immigrant workers and foreign graduate students in science, technology, engineering and math.

While endorsing the need for immigration reform legislation to address issues of border security and enforcement, Foltin cautioned that enforcement enhancements should not hinder the path to legalization for those currently living in the shadows. The bill includes two stages of enforcement and border security operations, and benchmarks that must first be met before eligible individuals would be permitted to adjust their status to become permanent residents and, ultimately, U.S. citizens.

“There is no reason to link a pathway to earned citizenship for hardworking immigrants already living in the United States to border security benchmarks,” Foltin said.

Since its founding in 1906, AJC has been outspoken in support of fair and generous immigration policies, characterized by the rule of law. As American Jews, we recall how our parents and grandparents made their way to this country seeking a better life, and know that we have prospered in and contributed to this country. That same opportunity should be available for others.

Comprehensive immigration reform will strengthen America’s global competitiveness and enhance our national security, as well as allow hard-working immigrants an opportunity to succeed in the United States, for themselves and for future generations.

DATE: April 17, 2013

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BISHOPS' MIGRATION CHAIR WELCOMES INTRODUCTION OF IMMIGRATION PROPOSAL; PLEDGES TO WORK SO FINAL BILL UPHOLDS BASIC RIGHTS, DIGNITY

*Commends senators for leadership
Sees opportunity to improve on initial efforts
Urges respect for migrants' human rights, dignity*

WASHINGTON—The introduction of U.S. Senate bipartisan legislation to reform the U.S. immigration system was welcomed by Archbishop José H. Gomez of Los Angeles, chairman of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) Committee on Migration, April 17. Archbishop Gomez also pledged that the U.S. bishops would carefully examine the legislation and work with Congress to ensure that any final measure respects the basic human rights and dignity of migrants.

“I welcome the introduction of legislation today in the U.S. Senate,” Archbishop Gomez said. “The U.S. bishops look forward to carefully examining the legislation and working with Congress to fashion a final bill that respects the basic human rights and dignity of newcomers to our land—migrants, refugees, and other vulnerable populations.”

Archbishop Gomez commended the so-called “Gang of Eight” senators for their leadership on the issue. He also said that once it has completed its review of the voluminous bill, the USCCB may seek improvements upon the proposed legislation, consistent with principles for reform laid out for decades by the bishops' conference.

“I commend the Senators who have introduced this bipartisan bill, as they have shown leadership and courage in this effort,” he said. “We will look to work constructively with them and other members of Congress to improve upon their proposal, should such improvements prove necessary, so that any final bill creates an immigration system that restores the rule of law in a humane and just manner.”

In their 2003 pastoral letter, “Strangers No Longer: Together on the Journey of Hope,” the U.S. bishops outlined several goals for immigration reform, which include:

- A path to citizenship for the undocumented that is achievable, set within a reasonable time frame and includes the maximum number of persons;

- The protection and enhancement of the family-based immigration system—based on the union of a husband and a wife and their children—including the reduction of backlogs and the shortening of waiting times;
- A program which allows low-skilled migrant workers to enter and work in the United States legally and safely, includes appropriate wage and worker protections, allows for family unity, and provides workers the option to apply for permanent residency and eventual citizenship;
- The restoration of due process protections for immigrants removed by the 1996 Illegal Immigrant Responsibility and Immigration Reform Act;
- The adoption of policies which address the root causes, or push factors, of irregular migration, such as persecution and the absence of living wage jobs in sending communities.
- The protection of other vulnerable populations, including refugees, asylum-seekers, and unaccompanied children.

Archbishop Gomez withheld comment on the specific details of the new legislation until the USCCB has analyzed its provisions.

Editors: USCCB has scheduled a telephonic press conference for April 22 at 1 p.m. to respond to the details of the legislation and to release a new survey of Catholics on immigration reform. For more information, contact Norma Montenegro Flynn at nmontenegro@usccb.org.

Keywords: migrants, immigrants, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, USCCB, Committee on Migration, Congress, Archbishop José Gomez, immigration reform, *Strangers No Longer: Together on the Journey of Hope*, refugees, asylum seekers, unaccompanied children

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CWS Statement on the Border Security, Economic Opportunity & Immigration Modernization Act

CWS applauds the introduction of S.744, the *Border Security, Economic Opportunity and Immigration Modernization Act*, and thanks Senators Bennet (D-CO), Durbin (D-IL), Flake (R-AZ), Graham (R-SC), McCain (R-AZ), Menendez (D-NJ), Rubio (R-FL), and Schumer (D-NY) for their leadership and dedication to shepherding this bill through the process of compromise and bipartisan agreement. The CWS network of 37 protestant denominations and 36 refugee resettlement offices across the country welcomes newcomers by helping them integrate into their new communities. We advocate for immigration reform not only because it is the right thing to do to improve the lives of our immigrant community members, but also because it is the smart thing to do for our economy and country as a whole. There are many provisions in S.744 for which CWS has advocated for years and is pleased to see included. However, there are some provisions we oppose, which we will seek to change as we continue work with the Senate through the legislative process to improve the bill and see that humane immigration reform is enacted.

CWS supports the path to citizenship, but urges a shorter time frame and expanded eligibility

This legislation would create a process by which individuals who entered the U.S. before January 1, 2012 could apply for “Registered Provisional Immigrant” (RPI) status, paying a \$500 fine and processing fees, which would allow them to work and travel legally. After six years, individuals would have to renew their status, and after 10 years in RPI status individuals could apply for lawful permanent resident (LPR) status if they met eligibility criteria and paid another \$500 fine and processing fees. Then, after three years in LPR status, individuals could apply for U.S. citizenship, paying a final \$1,000 fine and processing fees. Individuals who have been deported for reasons only pertaining to their legal status could apply for parole to re-enter the United States. While it will take the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) approximately one year to put the path to citizenship process in place, CWS is supportive that the bill would put in place a stay-of-removal so that individuals do not have to fear being deported. We are hopeful that, as allowed for in the legislation, DHS will extend the application period from the initial one year to the full two and a half years, so that everyone who might qualify has an opportunity to apply.

CWS is pleased to see that individuals who qualify for the pathway to citizenship could include their spouse and children (under 21) in their application, so that families can go through this process together. We also welcome provisions to allow individuals who have been in the United States with Temporary Protect Status, Deferred Enforced Departure, or another legal status for more than ten years to immediately apply for LPR status and apply for citizenship after three years. Another positive provision is that DREAMers – defined by this bill as individuals of any age who entered the U.S. before they turned 16 – and agricultural workers would have a shortened process, where they could apply for LPR status after only five years in RPI status, and then immediately apply for citizenship, with additional streamlined procedure for recipients of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals.

However, CWS urges the Senate to reduce the length of time that individuals have to wait to fully pursue citizenship, from 13 years to 5-8 years instead. We would like the bill to provide additional options for individuals who entered the U.S. after January 1, 2012, and to allow those going through this process to have access to health care and other services. Because it is important to CWS that the pathway to citizenship be workable, timely, and inclusive, we will work during the amendment process to advocate for meaningful waivers to eligibility criteria, including for individuals whose violations would be considered as misdemeanors, but since they are not U.S. citizens, have been unfairly classified as ‘aggravated felonies’.

CWS supports improvements for refugees, asylum seekers and integration assistance

Many provisions in this legislation would improve the lives of refugees resettled in the U.S. and help those who are fleeing persecution seek asylum. If this legislation is enacted, individuals fleeing persecution would no longer be barred from protection if they apply for asylum more than one year after they enter the United States, and those who have previously been denied solely based on this arbitrary one-year deadline would be able to re-open their case for two years following the enactment of this bill. The legislation would also improve the efficiency of the asylum process and improve due process in the refugee resettlement program. We support these provisions, as well as others that would enable the spouse or child of a refugee to remain reunited with their own child (under 21) when they accompany or follow to join the principle refugee applicant, and allow a refugee’s spouse or child (under 21) to continue to apply for refugee status in the unfortunate circumstance that the principle refugee applicant dies while their spouse or child’s application is in process.

The Senate bill would improve the efficiency and process of the Iraqi special immigrant visa application process, and allow the Administration to designate groups of humanitarian concern who share common characteristics that identify them as targets of persecution as eligible for resettlement. The bill would allow the administration to grant conditional lawful status to certain stateless persons in the U.S. with an ability to apply

for LPR. Improvements would also be made to help victims of crimes and children separated from their families. If enacted, S.744 would increase due process and legal orientation for immigrants in detention, require DHS to inform individuals of their rights, mandate that contracted facilities comply with DHS regulations, and expand the use of alternatives to detention.

CWS also appreciates the bill's emphasis on the renamed "Office of Citizenship and New Americans" to provide support local, state and federal entities to help immigrants integrate, and the establishment of a public-private partnership through the U.S. Citizenship Foundation to ensure immigrants can attain the knowledge and language skills necessary to fully integrate and build their lives in the United States.

CWS is opposed to the bill's provisions to eliminate and compromise family visa categories

CWS is strongly opposed to the bill's provisions that would eliminate, 18 months after enactment, the ability for U.S. citizens to sponsor their brothers, sisters, and children who are married and over the age of 30. We will seek to restore both of these categories in the amendment process, as well as advocate for U.S. Citizens and greencard holders to be able to reunite with their same-sex partner. While the elimination of the sibling category and the age-limit on married adult children may be balanced somewhat by provisions in the new merit-based system, we remain concerned about the impact that the emphasis on employment, education and English fluency could have on women, the poor, and individuals from non-English-speaking countries who seek to reunite with family members.

This bill, however, does include many positive provisions that facilitate and promote family unity. CWS supports the bill's provisions to recapture unused visas for the following fiscal year, and categorize spouses and children (under 21) of green card holders as "immediate relatives" to reunite families and prevent future backlogs. We also applaud the bill for allowing the parents of U.S. citizens to bring their minor children with them when they immigrate to the U.S.; permitting families to stay together in the U.S. while some family members await greencards; improving the process for stepchildren (under 21), widows, orphans, separated children, and fiancés of greencard holders and their children; and enhancing the ability of family members, including siblings and married adult children over 30, to visit the U.S. for up to 60 days per year. CWS also applauds the increase in per-country caps that will help reduce the longest wait times for family reunification, expedited processing of family backlogs within ten years, and allowing employment-based immigrants to sponsor their family members without counting against numerical limits. The bill would also help prevent the separation of families by allowing immigration judges and DHS to take into account the hardship that an immigrant's U.S. citizen or LPR parent, spouse or child would experience should an individual be deported or barred from entry.

CWS is against the pathway to citizenship being contingent on border security "triggers"

CWS is opposed to the Senate bill's making the pathway to citizenship contingent upon border and interior enforcement 'triggers.' Within six months of enactment, DHS would have to submit border security plans to achieve 90% effectiveness in apprehensions and returns through additional fencing, surveillance, technology including unmanned and unarmed aerial systems, and additional border patrol and customs agents. This plan must be submitted before the individuals can apply for RPI status. Then, before individuals with RPI status can adjust to LPR status, DHS must certify that both plans have been implemented, an employment verification system is being used by all mandated employers, and an electronic entry/exit system is fully operational.

CWS strongly holds that these provisions, as well as the requirement that the visa backlog be cleared, should not be used to delay the pathway to citizenship, especially as full implementation of the e-verify system will be nearly impossible to achieve. As enforcement provisions will not impact individuals who are already in the U.S., deliberately stalling the pathway to citizenship by making it arbitrarily lengthy and contingent on enforcement 'triggers' is nonsensical and makes for poor public policy.

In addition to our opposition to 'triggers,' CWS is opposed to the bill's provisions to send the National Guard to the border and spend an additional \$4.5 billion on border and interior enforcement – in addition to the \$18 billion already spend in Fiscal Year 2012 alone – given the impact this would have on border communities, vulnerable migrants, religious sites, and the environment. However, we are encouraged by the requirement that DHS collect data and put in place regulations to prevent and stop racial profiling, the creation of a DHS Border Oversight Task Force, provisions to stop lethal force by border agents, the designation of a DHS ombudsman on human rights, and the creation of DHS border community liaisons in every Border Patrol Sector.

CWS is committed to working with members of both the Senate and House to improve and enact this legislation that would greatly improve the lives of so many immigrants and community members. We urge all Senators to support a timely process to consider, improve, and enact this bill.