



IMMIGRATION POLICY CENTER

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For Immediate Release

AILF Lauds Senator Schumer for Beginning Immigration Reform Discussion *Hearings to Discuss Comprehensive Immigration Reform in 2009*

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Washington, D.C. - On Thursday, the Senate Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on Immigration, Border Security and Citizenship will hold a hearing "[Comprehensive Immigration Reform in 2009: Can We Do It and How?](#)" to examine common sense solutions to the immigration system. The following is a statement from Benjamin Johnson, Executive Director of the American Immigration Law Foundation in Washington, DC.

"The American Immigration Law Foundation applauds Chairman Schumer for commencing hearings on immigration reform. For far too long, our state and local governments have been plagued by an out-of-date and broken federal immigration system. Now more than ever, Congress must take the necessary steps to reform our immigration system in a way that honors our laws, rewards honesty and hard work, and fosters economic prosperity.

The upcoming hearing marks a new day in the conversation on immigration. Rather than dwell on the problems of our broken system, we will hear a discussion that focuses on solutions. While the substantive and political challenges are significant, Chairman Schumer and the entire subcommittee are to be commended for tackling those problems in a pragmatic and forthright manner. This is a discussion that must take place throughout the country because resolution of our immigration crisis will require all sectors of American society to work together to create an immigration system that works for our nation.

We eagerly await the testimony from the esteemed panelists, many of whom will be discussing the moral, legal, and economic imperatives for reform. These hearings will provide an important opportunity to hear what the current political and economic environment means for immigration reform. Among the issues likely to be discussed:

Economic Imperative for Immigration Reform: *How can immigration reform become a tool for economic recovery?* Legalizing undocumented workers would improve wages and working conditions for all workers, and increase tax revenues for cash-strapped federal, state, and local governments. Moreover, comprehensive immigration reform that includes a path to legalization for undocumented workers would pay for itself over time through increased tax revenue. Newly legalized workers would be able to move into higher-paying jobs, pay more in taxes, and spend more on goods and services—all of which would increase the already-substantial economic benefits of immigration for the nation.

THE IMMIGRATION POLICY CENTER

1331 G STREET • WASHINGTON, DC 20005 • TEL: (202) 507-7500 • FAX: (202) 742-5619

www.immigrationpolicy.org

Smart-Enforcement Imperative for Immigration Reform: *What type of effective enforcement can we pursue that allows local police and immigration agents to focus on dangerous criminals and doesn't disrupt families and communities?* Since 1993, the annual budget of the U.S. Border Patrol has more than quintupled to roughly \$1.9 billion. Meanwhile, the number of undocumented immigrants in the United States has tripled to approximately 12 million and border violence has reached a fever pitch.

Moral Imperative for Immigration Reform: *How can we advance humane and effective solutions that are in line with our best values, not our worst instincts?* Of the nearly 12 million people now residing in the United States without legal status, about a third have lived here for more than a decade. Approximately 1.5 million are children, and another 4 million native-born, U.S.-citizen children have at least one undocumented parent. The Bush administration pursued aggressive enforcement tactics ranging from large-scale, indiscriminate workplace and residential raids to expansive enforcement agreements with state and local police departments, resulting in demonstrable harm to numerous communities."

For more background see these Immigration Policy Center (IPC) publications:

[What Immigration Reform Could Mean for the U.S. Economy](#) (IPC Fact Check)

[The Economic Impact of Immigration at the State and Local Level](#) (IPC Fact Check)

[Economists and Experts Agree on the National Economic Benefits of Immigration](#) (IPC Quotes Page)

[Immigration Enforcement Without Immigration Reform Doesn't Work](#) (IPC Fact Check)

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For press inquiries contact:

Wendy Sefsaf, 202-507-7524 (office) or email wsefsaf@ailf.org

Andrea Nill, 202-507-7520 (office) or email anill@ailf.org