



GOVERNOR ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER

May 16, 2007

The Honorable Harry Reid
United States Senate
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
United States Senate
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader Reid and Senator McConnell,

I am writing to urge Congress to act this year to pass comprehensive immigration reform. We must find a permanent solution to our broken immigration system, and I believe that this is our chance to restore America's status as both a country of immigrants *and* a nation of laws.

In California, we face a crisis not of our own making. The federal government's failure to pass comprehensive immigration reform legislation is a reality we live with everyday in our schools, workplaces and hospitals. We can no longer ignore this issue or try to solve the problem at the margins. We need federal action to better secure our national borders and to create a temporary worker program that will ensure that every person in our nation is documented. Congress must address the problem head-on by passing comprehensive legislation that secures our border, protects taxpayers and creates a forward-looking labor policy to meet the needs of our economy.

Let there be no mistake: the federal government is responsible for securing our nation's borders. It is a role that cannot, and should not, be abdicated to state and local governments. We have done our part by temporarily deploying California National Guard troops to assist the federal effort. Now, the federal government must do its part, and Congress should provide funding for additional Border Patrol agents and other border security resources.

The Honorable Harry Reid
The Honorable Mitch McConnell
May 16, 2007
Page two

The taxpayers of California and other states are currently burdened with billions of dollars in annual costs for services provided to undocumented immigrants. As Congress considers comprehensive reform measures, I urge that monies collected in fees or fines associated with the process of legal immigration, help offset the financial burdens placed on heavily impacted state and local governments in border states like California. While this step will not eliminate the disproportionate costs California's taxpayers currently bear, it would provide some welcome relief. In addition, I urge Congress to continue its commitment to the State Criminal Alien Assistance Program (SCAAP), which reimburses states for costs associated with the incarceration of criminal aliens, by providing funding at the authorized level of \$950 million.

While immigration is about security, it is also vitally important to the economic health of California and the nation. We need a policy that deals in a realistic way with the millions of people who are in the United States illegally. The current system is failing immigrants *and* employers, in industries as diverse as agriculture, high-technology and health care. Our businesses must have the workers they need, and immigrants should be treated with the respect they deserve. However, it is also important that any new program for immigrant workers not become an endorsement of illegal immigration. While we are a country of immigrants, we are also a nation of laws. People who want to be citizens will also want to follow a clear process. I believe that we should continue to bring immigrants more fully into the fabric of American life, so that they not only live within our borders, but live *as* Americans.

The federal government should take action that puts the interest of taxpayers first, strengthens our borders and embraces the immigrant without endorsing illegal immigration. I believe that a solution modeled on these principles would attain these goals and greatly benefit our nation. I urge you to pass comprehensive reform legislation this year to addresses this critical issue once and for all.

Thank you again for your leadership on this important issue, and I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Sincerely,



Arnold Schwarzenegger

cc: Members, United States Senate