

TALKING POINTS ON COMPREHENSIVE IMMIGRATION REFORM AND OUR COMMUNITY'S RESPONSE

People who care deeply about the future of immigration law are mobilizing all around the country. Throughout the United States, immigrants and their supporters are expressing concern about the divisive nature of the immigration reform debate. A proposal by the U.S. House of Representatives would, among other things, criminalize all undocumented immigrants. Immigrants care about their communities, their families, and the future of this country. Because of their strong desire to become Americans, immigrants are joining rallies, marches, and vigils which are being organized all over the U.S.

In December 2005, the House of Representatives passed one of the harshest immigration bills in decades. This bill does not offer any solutions to the broken immigration system. People fear the consequences for their communities if this troubling proposal were to become law. Consequently, communities – immigrant and citizen alike – are peacefully expressing their objections.

The Senate Judiciary Committee has a proposal that brings solutions to the table. The Judiciary Committee voted on a bill that will soon be discussed on the floor of the Senate. The “Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act of 2006” offers the solutions that we need as a nation to make our country safe, put immigrants on a path to citizenship, reduce family backlogs, and create legal channels for future workers. However, while the bill strengthens immigration enforcement, it also contains some misguided provisions, including proposals to authorize local police to act as immigration agents. Advocates are working to ensure that the Senate addresses these provisions and passes a reasonable, constructive bill.

The voices of immigrants and their supporters are being heard; however, anti-immigrant groups are also injecting their voice into the debate. You must continue to be involved. Call and write your senators today! They need to hear from their constituents about the importance of comprehensive immigration reform and what it means to your families, neighbors, and communities.

Communities will have another chance participate in peaceful demonstrations. People are organizing events which will take place in many cities on April 10, 2006. Events that make use of symbols such as American flags and “legalization” signs send a strong message that we are all united on the issue.

America will be watching, listening, and voting this November. Americans demand real solutions from their elected officials. When we educate ourselves on what Congress is doing about the issues that are important to us and together raise our voices in response, we hold Congress accountable for doing the right thing.