

**Statement of Jeanne Butterfield, Executive Director
American Immigration Lawyers Association**

The American Immigration Lawyers Association applauds Congressman Honda's efforts and leadership in reintroducing his bill, the Reuniting Families Act. The bill aims to help family members reunite in America in a timely manner by reforming America's family-based immigration system to end lengthy separations of loved ones, promote family stability and foster the economic growth.

If passed, this important measure would:

- Recapture immigrant visas lost to bureaucratic delays;
- Reclassify the spouses and minor children of lawful permanent residents as immediate relatives;
- Address country limits and unreasonably long backlogs;
- Increase government discretion and flexibility in addressing numerous hardships caused by a provision that bars individuals unlawfully present in the United States from utilizing our legal immigration system;
- Provide relief for certain orphans and widows of US citizens or lawful permanent residents, and;
- Exempt certain veterans from the Philippines from immigrant visa limits.
- Eliminate discrimination facing same sex partners by permitting U.S. citizens and legal permanent residents to sponsor their permanent partners for legal permanent residence.

If we are truly a nation that supports family values, this measure should pass overwhelmingly since it would reduce immigration processing backlogs that prevent close family members from being together. Not only is the family immigration system broken, our entire immigration system needs to be reformed. Congressman Honda's legislation is an important piece of a comprehensive approach to immigration reform that Congress must begin.