

The Reuniting Families Act (H.R. 2709)

Protecting Family Unity in Comprehensive Immigration Reform

Rep. Michael Honda (CA-15)
Bill Summary

Sec. 101. Recapture of Immigrant Visas Lost to Bureaucratic Delay - This section recaptures unused employment-based and family-sponsored visas from fiscal years 1992-2007. For future fiscal years, unused visa numbers will “roll over” to the next fiscal year.

Sec. 102. Reclassification of Spouses & Minor Children of Green Card Holders as Immediate Relatives

This section helps an estimated 322,000 spouses and children under the age of 21 of lawful permanent residents who are waiting in line to reunite with their families by reclassifying them as immediate relatives.

Sec. 103. Country Limits – This section addresses the decades-long backlogs for certain countries by raising the per-country immigration limits from 7 percent to 10 percent of total admissions.

Sec. 104. Promoting Family Unity - This section increases the government’s discretion and flexibility in addressing numerous hardships, including family separation, caused by a provision that bars individuals unlawfully present in the United States from utilizing our legal immigration system.

Section 105. Relief for Orphans and Widows – This section protects widows, widowers and orphans by allowing them to continue to wait in line for a visa after the death of the sponsoring relative.

Section 106. Exemption from Immigrant Visa Limit for Certain Veterans from the Philippines - This section would honor the contribution of Filipino World War II veterans by reducing their children’s waiting times for an immigrant visa.

Sections 107 and 108. Equal treatment for all stepchildren – Section 107 affords the same protection to children of fiancée’s of U.S. citizens from aging out of the visa application process that other immigrant visa holders have pursuant to the Child Status Protection Act. Section 108 provides equal treatment for stepchildren and biological children by allowing stepchildren under the age of 21 to immigrate upon their parents’ marriage (current age limit is 18).

Title II. Uniting American Families Act – This title serves to eliminate discrimination facing LGBT families throughout immigration law by adding protections for same-sex, permanent partners and their children.