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September 30, 2010

The Honorable Luis V. Gutierrez
U.S. House of Representatives
2266 Rayburn Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Gutierrez:

It was good to see you last Saturday at the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights' One Nation One Dream Unity Rally. I greatly appreciate your leadership in the fight to reform our nation's broken immigration system.

Thank you for supporting Senate Democrats' recent effort to attach the DREAM Act to the Defense Authorization bill. I know you share my disappointment that Republicans prevented the Senate from voting on the DREAM Act. Like you, I remain committed to passing the DREAM Act this year.

This is a matter of simple justice. The DREAM Act would give a select group of immigrant students the chance to earn legal status if they grew up in the United States, have good moral character, and complete two years of military service or college in good standing. These students were brought to the United States as children. It was not their decision to come to this country, but they grew up here, and it is the only home they know.

I also share your commitment to passing comprehensive immigration reform legislation as soon as possible. Congress has an obligation to the American people to fix our broken immigration system, which harms our national security, hurts American and immigrant workers, and falls short of the most basic standard of justice. We must secure our borders, strengthen enforcement of our immigration laws, protect our workers, and give millions of undocumented immigrants who live and work in our country a chance to earn legal status.

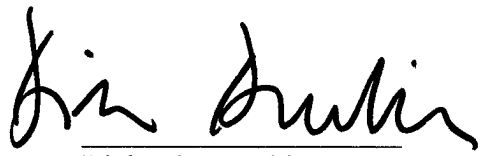
I commend you for the leadership you have shown in introducing the Comprehensive Immigration Reform for America's Security and Prosperity Act (CIR ASAP Act). I strongly support progressive and comprehensive immigration reform legislation like the CIR ASAP Act, which would improve border security and immigration enforcement, provide a path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants, and establish important new labor protections.

I am particularly appreciative that the CIR ASAP Act incorporates key provisions of the DREAM Act and my H-1B and L-1 Visa Reform Act, bipartisan legislation that would protect American and immigrant workers and end employer abuses of the H-1B and L-1 visa programs.

While employers should be able to hire foreign workers when they are unable to find a qualified American worker, we must ensure that temporary worker programs are not exploited to undermine the rights of all workers.

I look forward to continuing to work with you in the coming weeks and months to pass the DREAM Act and comprehensive immigration reform legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dick Durbin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Richard J. Durbin