

I believe we must move forward on fair and humane comprehensive immigration reform. We need to control illegal entry into the United States, both by better security at our borders and by internal enforcement directed at employers.

The pace of audits of businesses suspected of hiring illegal workers has roughly quadrupled under the current administration. However, this emphasis on workplace enforcement must be accompanied by implementation of a secure electronic employment verification system so that our employers have reliable tools to verify the immigration status of workers.

Enforcement efforts alone will not solve our problem. Five percent of our national workforce is undocumented. We must recognize that many industries—construction, farming and hospitality, among others—would grind to a halt if these workers were abruptly to leave the work force. And it is unrealistic to think that law enforcement can identify the 12 million immigrants here illegally and deport them.

Some illegal immigrants should be deported, starting with those convicted of crimes. Others, who have worked hard, paid taxes, are learning English, and otherwise obeyed our laws should have some way to earn a legal immigration status. While I agree we should not repeat the mistake of the Reagan Administration and declare a broad, unconditional amnesty, I believe immigrants who entered the US as a child by no will of their own and have sought to become productive members of our society should be given a pathway to legal status. In the 111th Congress I voted in favor of the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act. The bill would adjust the status of certain unlawful aliens so they can pursue a college degree or serve in our military. The DREAM Act was also narrowly targeted at only immigrants who have been living in the United States for many years and could not be used by immigrants illegally entering the country in the future from gaining citizenship by using provisions of the law. The Congressional Budget Office also estimated that the bill would reduce deficits by about \$2.2 billion over between 2011-2020.

Illegal immigrants who are allowed a legal immigration status should be required to pay fines and fees, make good on any unpaid taxes, and suffer penalties if they do not comply with all legal requirements. But the United States should work for immigration policies that promote reunifying families, and allow the entrance of immigrants who benefit our country, whether academically, commercially, or culturally. Our current family and employment immigration channels are cumbersome, inefficient, and inadequate to address the demands of our economy.

We must understand that how we deal with the complex and difficult issue of immigration is a reflection of our nation's commitment to civil rights and fairness. I have long thought the immigration system was broken, not just since immigration became a hot political issue. We should act to address the problem, even if there is no perfect solution.

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