

February 7, 2014

The Honorable John Boehner
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
522 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
H-204, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: Comprehensive Immigration Reform

Dear Congressional Leaders:

As mayors of major cities, we urge Congress to complete work on broad and meaningful immigration reform and ensure a bill reaches the President's desk by the end of the year. We believe that S.744 The Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act, which passed with bipartisan support, serves as a framework to move forward on common sense reform in the second session of this Congress.

To be effective, immigration reform should strengthen our border security and include workplace verification; establish a coherent process for legalization with a pathway to earned citizenship for the nation's 11 million undocumented immigrants; and facilitate a legal framework for employment immigration that meets our nation's labor needs while protecting American workers as well as ensure the swift reunification of families.

As mayors of diverse cities, we see up close the shortcomings of the current immigration system and we keenly understand the need for significant reform. While reform should continue to increase our border security, it should also strengthen the employer verification system to stop the exploitation of undocumented workers.

Strong families make for strong cities. Long backlogs in the family visa system are keeping families apart. Reform should reunify families who qualify and have been waiting, in some cases, up to two decades. It should not eliminate pathways to immigration for siblings and adult married children of U.S. citizens. Reform must also deal sensibly with the 11 million without status and provide a pathway to citizenship. We recommend that "Dream Act" youth have a clear path to citizenship. Other immigrants without status should participate in a program with strict requirements such as background checks, payment of back taxes, and standing behind those

already in line. Importantly however, we want to encourage the full integration of all newcomers and thus, any legalization program should include an opportunity to earn eventual citizenship.

Current static visa categories are woefully inadequate for our nation's dynamic economy. If we want America to attract the best and the brightest, reform also needs to include a program to admit temporary workers based on the needs of the economy while protecting US workers, and provide visas to highly skilled workers and entrepreneurs. Further, it should provide more fiscal support for city and state governments which have disproportionately borne the costs of our current broken immigration system. The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office estimates that the Senate-passed bill would reduce our deficit by \$135 billion over 10 years and could bring between 336,000 and 470,000 entrepreneurs into the formal economy. That, in turn, could help to generate between 3.7 million and 5.2 million jobs.

As a nation of immigrants, we have a historic bipartisan opportunity to seize both the social and economic benefits of immigration reform. We urge Congress to pass significant, common sense legislation this session.

Sincerely,

Mayor Greg Stanton
Phoenix, AZ

Mayor Eric Garcetti
Los Angeles, CA

Mayor Marty J. Walsh
Boston, MA

Mayor Kevin Johnson
Sacramento, CA

Mayor Ed Lee
San Francisco, CA

Mayor Frank Cownie
Des Moines, IA

Mayor Michael Nutter
Philadelphia, PA

Mayor Michael F. Brennan
Portland, ME

Mayor Bill Harrison
Fremont, CA

Mayor Charlie Hales
Portland, OR

Mayor Todd Gloria
San Diego, CA

Mayor Jonathan Rothschild
Tucson, AZ

Mayor Marie Lopez Rogers
Avondale, AZ

Mayor Betsy Hodges
Minneapolis, MN

Mayor Pedro E. Segarra
Hartford, CT