



December 11, 2007

Dear Member of Congress,

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On behalf of the National Immigration Forum, I urge you to oppose the Secure America through Verification and Enforcement Act, introduced in the House by Representatives Heath Shuler, Brian Bilbray and others as H.R. 4088, and in the Senate by Senators Mark Pryor and Mary Landrieu as S. 2368 and by Senator David Vitter as S. 2366.

For the past twenty years our government has failed to control immigration through an enforcement-only approach. The fact of the matter is, enforcement of our current immigration laws is frustrated by our out-dated admissions laws that are clearly unenforceable. Many of the workers our economy relies on—at least one in twenty—are unauthorized. They are here because we have jobs for them, and they want to work. Yet this country provides such a narrow legal avenue for workers to come and fill available jobs that legal options are not available for many. Until we recognize this reality and get serious about reforming our immigration laws, no amount of money thrown at the border or funneled into a flawed worker verification system will fix the problem.

The Shuler-Pryor legislation would direct even more resources at the government's failed enforcement-only strategy, instead of proposing a real solution to the problem. It will result in the separation of U.S.-citizen children from their parents, and U.S. employers from their immigrant workers, although it will certainly fail to expel all 12 million undocumented immigrants from this country. The reality is, if this legislation becomes law, the vast majority of undocumented immigrants who need to provide for their families will simply move further underground, and employers who need these workers will either close their doors, go abroad, or move into the cash economy to stay alive.

Congress needs to reform our immigration system so that we can effectively control illegal immigration in the future, by providing sufficient legal channels coupled with sufficient enforcement resources, and by offering a means for the 12 million undocumented immigrants already here to fully integrate into our society. Such a comprehensive approach is supported by the American people, according to public opinion polls conducted over the last year and a half.

H.R. 4088/S. 2368 would only guarantee that we will be mired in the broken status quo until sometime in the future, when Congress decides to do the right thing and finally fix our broken immigration system.

Sincerely,

Frank Sharry
Executive Director