

Note: This is a rush transcript.

NATIONAL IMMIGRATION FORUM

Moderator: Angela Kelley
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Operator: Good day; welcome to the National Immigration Press Briefing Conference Call. Today's call is being recorded.

At this time, I'd like to turn the conference over to Miss Angela Kelley of the Center for American Progress. Please go ahead, ma'am.

Angela Kelley: Thank you and thank you everybody for joining the call and I'd like to thank the National Immigration Forum for hosting this call. As everyone, I believe, is aware, the President of the United States is hosting a meeting tomorrow afternoon with several members of Congress from both chambers, both parties, and a range of perspectives on the issue of immigration reform.

The purpose of this press conference is to give those who are covering this issue closely a chance to hear from the range of stakeholders and leaders in the communities who are following this, what their hopes and aspirations are for the meeting and how they're going to be judging what comes out of the meeting and some of the principles by which they'll be judging the meeting.

There's been an increased amount of attention to this issue, as early as just yesterday Senator Reid reiterated that he thinks he has the votes to pass immigration reform in the Senate. We

heard, really for the first time, Representative Hoyer talk about the House that it will be turning to immigration. Certainly Speaker Pelosi has talked about immigration many times and Senator Chuck Schumer has just completed a very comprehensive speech at the Migration for – the Migration Policy Institute’s Conference at Georgetown University where he laid out seven principals for immigration reform that he (say) was going to guide the debate and guide the legislations and where he expressed an extraordinary amount of optimism that this would be a bill that would get started, that would move, and that would get past this session.

And very briefly, before I turn to the speakers so people know what Senator Schumer was thinking, his seven principals were one, that illegal immigration is wrong and that the goal of compressive immigration reform is to significantly curtail illegal immigration.

Two, that we must have operational control of the boarder.

Three, that we must have a biometric federal employment verification system.

Four, that a program must be created whereby all undocumented people in the U.S., by date of enactment of the legislation must quickly register and get status or face deportation.

Next, that there must be family reunification.

Then he said that there has to be visas for the best and the brightest who seek to bring their skills and talents to the United States.

And the seventh principal was that there must be a system so that future low skilled, would be undocumented people coming to this country have legal avenues for coming to the U.S., which currently don’t exist.

So that's the framework that Senator Schumer, who is of course the subcommittee chairman in the Senate laid out just a few minutes ago. And so with that, also in mind, I'm going to turn to our first speaker to share his thoughts going into this White House meeting tomorrow, and that's the most reverend Jaime Soto, he is the Bishop of Sacramento – sorry, and a member of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops Committee on Migration. Bishop Soto?

Jaime Soto: Yes, thank you and good morning to everyone. I think many of us have been looking to this meeting, we see this as really a critical moment of truth on immigration. Tomorrow's meeting will tell us whether the administration is serious about enacting comprehensive immigration reform this year or is perhaps getting timid and abandoning the commitment that it made during the campaign.

Delaying immigration reform we think would be a mistake. It would only prolong the suffering of many of our fellow human beings, our brothers and sisters who are experiencing at the hands – who are experiencing the very negative consequences of an unjust and a failed immigration system that is in place now.

Delaying immigration reform will only be further undermine the economy and delaying immigration reform, I think, will also undermine our security. So I think that there's a lot of good reasons for the administration or the Congress to take up this issue and I am hopeful that tomorrow's meeting will set that kind of a tone.

Our society can no longer tolerate the status quo that perpetuates, (permanent upper class) of individuals, families, people while the society in general benefits from the labor and yet they are offered no legal protections.

Bringing these hardworking individuals out of the shadows and resolving their status will – does not hurt the country overall, but in fact, I think, makes us stronger economically and socially.

They will be fully able to contribute their talents and their energy and their taxes to building up American society.

So on behalf of all the U.S. bishops who we have been working on this issue for a long time, I together with my brother bishops and so many others in the faith community and other allies urge President Obama and the Congressional leaders to announce a timetable and plan for enacting comprehensive immigration reform this year.

Angela Kelley: Thank you, Bishop Soto. Our next speaker is Tamar Jacoby. Tamar is the President and CEO of Immigration Works U.S.A. Tamar?

Tamar Jacoby: Thank you, (Angie). Immigration Works USA is a national federation of employers concerned about immigration law and I'm here to make the point that it's not only immigrant advocates and immigrant rights advocates who are pleased that the President is kicking off the Congressional debate about immigration; employees also applaud this start to the debate.

No one has more of a stake than employers who rely on immigrants to keep their businesses running in immigration reform. No one had more of a stake in legality, no one has more of a stake in a level playing field, and no one has more of a stake in a way for the workers we're going to need eventually to grow the economy, to man the economic recovery and to the country legally.

Right now the (fair market) workers is less acute with the stubborn unemployment rates we're seeing, but the downturn has done nothing to change the fundamental demographics of the country that could generate our need for immigrant workers both at the top and the bottom of the economy, both the best and brightest and in unskilled jobs. And when the recovery starts to kick in those demographics are going to kick in again, we're going to need those workers again at both the top and bottom of the economy, and we need a legal way for them to enter the country.

The employers are pleased that the President is kicking this off. We've got the right people in the room. This is going to take republicans as well as democrats, despite large democratic majorities in both houses, we're still going to need republicans in both houses. So the President has the right people in the room, the challenge is obviously to get them started now, but this is the time to do it. This is the time to start preparing for the economic recovery.

Angela Kelley: Thank you, Tamar. Our next speaker is Mark Lauritsan, he's the Vice President of the United Food and Commercial Worker's Union. Mark?

Mark Lauritsan: Well, thank you, everyone, and good day. The United Food and Commercial Workers, we represent 1.3 million members, but specifically we represent over 250,000 workers in food processing and meat packing plants across the country where immigrant workers play a key role in these businesses. And I would tell you, our members, like the rest of the labor movement, they expect action and they expect action on immigration reform now. And our members, they know our position, the UFCW's position. We've been in the center of this storm for years.

The one thing that we know and the one thing I hope that Congress and the White House take out of what starts tomorrow is that for years we've been promised that bold action would be taken to fix this system and quite honestly, it hasn't happened. Congress and the past administration, they failed to live up to those promises that they made us.

Now, here's the thing, this is an economic issue and every job in this country is affected by this inattention that they're paying – or they have paid to this problem. And working people in this country deserve better and they deserve answers and they deserve it now. They need to know you know when we (made) immigration reform that employers like agro processors, these rogue employers that game the system to exploit workers, they're going to be held accountable for the systematic abuse of our nation's laws, not just immigration laws, but all laws. They need to know

that you know we're not going to allow workers to be held hostage when immigration and customs enforcement agents decide to detain them without due process and lock them into plants and now allow them to make any contact with anybody. And our members and working people in this country really want to know that we're not going to be criminalized for going to work and that the criminals who do violate the laws are going to pay the price for their crime. Workers are not the criminals in this case and work is not a crime.

We have a lot of economic issues that are directly impacted by immigration, or I should say the misguided application of immigration enforcement. We have communities that get thrown into turmoil whenever ICE conducts these raids as our union has learned when the swift raids took place or those dramatic raids at ((inaudible)). We see how they terrify workers, we see how they terrify communities and worker's families and these employers that game the system, they pay the – they make the responsible employers pay the price because the responsible ones have to compete with these that are gaming the system.

So employers that thumb the law and game immigration systems is wrong. Our members, the workers in this country, we can't wait any longer, in fact the country can't wait any longer. It's just time to pass comprehensive immigration reform and it's time to do it now and I thank you.

Angela Kelley: Thank you, Mark. Our next speaker is Janet Murguia. Janet is the President and CEO of National Council of La Raza. Janet?

Janet Murguia: Thanks, (Angie) and thanks to everyone for joining us on this call today. We certainly welcome the White House meeting with leaders from the Senate and the House chambers and expect it to be the first in a series of steps toward laying the groundwork for a successful legislative debate this fall.

America wants solutions and comprehensive immigration reform is a viable solution and it's time to provide the roadmap for action and we see this meeting as a key opportunity to do just that.

You know some like to use immigration as a wedge issue, but immigration is in reality a (centrus) of debate in which there is much consensus. Poll after poll shows that the vast majority of Americans are in a much more pragmatic place than Congress has been on this issue. They support a comprehensive overhaul of our broken system and one that restores the rule of law through earned legalization and smart enforcement.

There has been corroborated – this has been corroborated further in the last election cycles where we saw voters rejecting key leading anti immigrant candidates who offered rhetoric but not solutions. So while this issue has not mobilized the general electorate against candidates with moderate or pro immigration reform views as some wrongly predicted it would. What we have seen is that it has definitely rallied Latinos, the fastest growing segment of the electorate against anti immigrant rhetoric and those who wield it.

So our community, the Latino community understands the consequences of – the very painful consequences of allowing this issue to fester and to go unresolved. It's manipulation by fringe elements in our society has opened a door to intolerance, fueling an increase in hate crimes and hate groups. Lives have literally been at stake here and this has no place in America. For far too long the voices of division and intolerance have been allowed to lead on this issue, even though they do not represent the will of the American public and have no solutions. You know we have a moral imperative to put hate in check by addressing immigration effectively and humanely. And we have an urgent policy need to fix the system that tramples our values and fosters illegality and exploitation and we have the public support and momentum to arrive at a solution because comprehensive immigration reform is smart politics, it's the right thing to do as well as smart politics.

On the road to his presidency, President Obama said that it was time to rise above the fear and the demagoguery and enact comprehensive immigration reform. Our communities are organized to help the President and Congress to get this passed and move us forward together. We need Presidential and Congressional leadership to usher in a new kind of debate and actions. It's time for our leaders to issue a call for comprehensive immigration reform and to provide this roadmap for action and we see that opportunity tomorrow. Thank you.

Angela Kelley: Thank you, Janet. Our next speaker is Ali Noorani, Ali's Executive Director of the National Immigration Forum. Ali?

Ali Noorani: Great. Thank you, (Angie). The National Immigration Forum on June 1st of this year joined over 450 organizations from across the country representing labor, faith, the immigrant community, and labor – or I'm sorry, business, to launch the campaign to reform immigration for America. This campaign to reform immigration for America's broad constituency from across these perspectives pushing for immigration reform that treats people fairly, that legalized families and their – and workers and establishes a system that immigrants can go through and not go around.

This campaign is particularly important because it is a new unprecedented show of strength and sophistication so that this broad constituency is voting, it is meeting with members of Congress, this constituency and this network is holding members of Congress accountable for what the American people want to see, not just what immigrants want to see and it's increasingly clear that the American people want to see immigration reform that serves the interest of families, of workers and of our economy.

So as a campaign, we are confident, just like Senator Reid, just like Speaker Pelosi, just like Representative Hoyer, that we can reach the 279 votes that we need to win immigration reform. 60 votes for the Senate, 218 votes from the House and the signature of our president. So that

tomorrow's meeting, we see tomorrow's meeting saw President Obama ringing the opening bell so that from tomorrow forward, it is – the pressure is on Speaker Pelosi and Senator Reid to start to turn the wheels within the House and Senate so that as healthcare and energy are resolved, immigration reform is in the pipeline and ready to go.

Angela Kelley: Thank you, Ali. Our final speaker is Frank Sharry. Frank's the Executive Director of America's Voice. Frank?

Frank Sharry: Thanks, (Angie) and thanks to all my colleagues. Couple of quick points and I know there's a lot of questions, understandably about if this is going to happen, and when, and will it move this year, or will it not. But those process questions, I think, are not as important as the stark policy choices facing lawmakers and the huge political consequences that are confronting lawmakers and it's for those reasons that I think immigration reform will move forward this year, in fact, will be enacted in the coming months.

The policy choices are between continuing with a failed system or fixing it. It's as simple as that. The system isn't going to get better, it's going to continue to have the kinds of effects that others on this call have talked about, trampling of labor rights, people dying in the desert, communities being frustrated and roiled by this issue. The only way to fix this system is if Congress and the White House work together to step up and fix it and if they do, they will be rewarded by a public who wants solutions to tough problems. That's what people voted for last November, that's what people are – that's why people are pushing Congress.

I mean the only people in the country who seem to think that the Congressional plate is too full are the people inside the beltway. That argument does not fly with the American people who are hungering for political leadership that will tackle and solve these tough problems, including illegal immigration, which has been identified as a top three issue now by the White House and Congressional democratic leadership.

On the politics you know what is the imperatives for both parties to actually get this issue done? I would argue the following, that democrats got elected, in large part, because they won independent and swing voters who were tired of the way republicans were polarizing and politicizing issues rather than solving them. So they have given democrats a chance to step up and do a job that they didn't think republicans were doing. And illegal immigration is one of those issues with the independent voters that really frustrates them and they are tired of politicians who debate the issue rather than address it affectively. And I think that if democrats think that they can continue to go back to voters, particularly independent voters and say it was too tough, we didn't get to it, our plate was full, that it's going to be one of the issues that's going to hurt their chances with such a key swing constituency.

On the other hand, republicans who might think well if we can block reform it would be good politics because we could blame Obama and the democrats and in fact we'll have a huge price to pay if they are once again identified as the obstacle to the Latino community wanting the respect and recognition that will come with comprehensive immigration reform. And so they have a huge political incentive in getting this issue off the table so that they can once again be competitive with a community of voters who just 4 years ago, George Bush won almost half the votes of Latino voters and they have dropped more than half in four years with a fast growing electorate.

So if democrats are going to deliver for independents who have given them a chance to leave and republicans are going to get this issue off the table so they can once again compete for majority status in this country by dealing respectfully with this issue and helping Latinos get on the path to citizenship, then I think that's the kind of political turbo charger that will make immigration reform happen in the next few months. (Angie)?

Angela Kelley: Thank you. Thanks, Frank.

Let me turn it over to James now. If you could give instructions to participants on how they may open up their lines to ask a question.

Operator: Thank you, Miss Kelley. At this time if you have a question, press the star key followed by the digit 1 on your touchtone telephone. Please make sure your mute function is turned off to allow (you signal) to reach our equipment. Once again, that's star 1 if you have a question and we'll pause for a moment to assemble the roster.

Angela Kelley: Thank you.

Operator: We'll take our first question from Scott Horsley with National Public Radio.

Scott Horsley: Thanks. Bishop Soto talked about this ((inaudible)) tomorrow as a moment of truth and maybe he or others can comment on what – what would constitute success out of this meeting and what would be sort of less than what you'd like to see from the White House tomorrow?

Jaime Soto: I'll go ahead and make a couple of remarks on that. I think ...

Scott Horsley: I'm sorry, is that – this is ...

Jaime Soto: Yes, this is Bishop Soto. Yes.

Scott Horsley: OK.

Jaime Soto: Bishop Soto and I'll make a couple remarks on that. One is that I do – I am hoping for and I – the Bishops – we continue to hope for a comprehensive bill as opposed to you know breaking this up into pieces. We would like to try to address the matter of immigration reform in a

comprehensive fashion. We do think that one thing that I was very heartened by Senator Schumer's remarks is that the importance of family unification.

That is a fundamental principal for us in immigration law. We don't want to see that diluted, we want to see that protected and we know in many cases the backlogs in immigration visas are oftentimes most grievous in the family visa categories and trying to bring reform that can really allow families to be unified in a timely manner will be not only good for families but I think it will also be good for society and for the economy.

I do think that there – you know we're hoping for a path to permanent residency and citizenship that is doable, that is generous and really helps the undocumented population that is currently in the country today move with confidence from the shadows and more – more actively engage America's society and...

Scott Horsley: I guess I mean, not so much – I'm not talking so much about the shape of the legislation, but when you talked about the signal that the White House is sending, whether they're going to be serious or timid, what are you looking for them – I mean is tomorrow's meeting enough or do you need more than that, or ...

Jaime Soto: I you know I would like to – what I'm afraid of is the tendency to want to put this off into the future and in a certain sense kind of the manana syndrome and what we need to see is – what I want to hear is that this – that they are ready to negate this issue and to move it now. I realize that that will take time to build the consensus as necessary, but if that makes it even more important that that conversation begin now.

Angela Kelley: This is (Angie) and I'm sure you would agree, Bishop Soto, that the clear guidelines that were set out by Senator Schumer today I think are just that sort of one two punch that we need with tomorrow's meeting, which is the opening bell. And then Schumer, I think, indicating you

know very clearly that this is serious. Here you know my seven principles for immigration reform. I want to make this bipartisan and I want to get started. So that is a level of specificity which I think has been missing that he's just offered.

Now, there's a lot of people who want to ask questions and we have a lot of speakers, but because this is such an important one that you're asking, are there other speakers that'd like to chime in? All right. Why don't we go then to the next question?

Operator: Next we'll hear from Sam Youngman with The Hill.

Sam Youngman: Hey, folks. Good afternoon. Thanks for doing this call. Apologies to Frank, but this is one of those process questions. (Robert Gibbs) taught us (spry) they don't have the math and then he said – or they don't have the – they don't have the votes on this right now. Then he said again on Monday that the math just doesn't look good. I appreciate y'all's confidence and your optimism but it doesn't seem like the White House shares those feelings. I'm curious if you – how you respond to that and what you think – if you think the White House is making this enough of a priority. If you could identify yourself when answering I'd appreciate it.

Frank Sharry: (Angie), I know I (dissed pass) this question so I'm happy to answer.

Angela Kelley: Why don't you – you want to get ...

Frank Sharry: OK, this is Frank Sharry. When it comes to voting, counting votes in the U.S. Congress, we tend to look to people like Harry Reid before we look to – with all due respect to Robert Gibbs. And Harry Reid said yesterday that he is committed to moving on immigration reform, the votes are there, he said, the real challenge is to find the floor time. Look, we've been working on this issue for a very long time. There is no question that there are solid majorities in both the House and the Senate that are easily imagined for the right bill to be enacted and the question is really

one of are we going to have sufficient presidential leadership, many of us are optimistic on that front. Are we going to have congressional democrats step up to propose legislation and make it a priority to put it on the calendar, we're getting increasingly optimistic about that in the Senate of course. The House we'd like to see a little bit more certainty from some of the leaders and then, finally, are there going to be republicans who are willing to stand up and cooperate with democrats in the White House to get this done and there are some positive signs on that.

So from our point of view, this is a matter of creating the political momentum and will to get it done and once that happens we are confident that there will be strong majorities in the House and Senate for a good bill. So you know this isn't just campaign spin, this is the school of hard knocks, of vote counting, of seeing who's gettable and knowing that enough democrats want to get this done and enough republicans want to get this off the table that the time to do it is actually in the next few months.

Tamar Jacoby: This is Tamar Jacoby, if I can just say a word about republicans. You know people think well the democrats are paying attention to the Latino vote and republicans are not yet, that's not the case. Republicans are increasingly – republicans have had their – to many republicans have had their head in the sand about the Latino vote, but more and more republicans are starting to see the writing on the wall. Republicans in districts that would astound you are starting to say – and I'm not going to name names, but are starting to say well well wait a minute, don't we want to get elected yet another few times?

The demographics in our districts are changing, we'd better start to pay attention this and republicans are also paying attention to those independent and swing voters that Frank was talking about earlier who want to see it solved. Who understand that employers in their district need this solves, who understand that independent voters want this solved and who see the democratic (get rapid) changes among Latino voters. So this is not – republicans are waking up to this, there will be republican votes.

Angela Kelley: Thanks Tamar and Frank. Next question please?

Operator: Move on to Antonietta Cadiz with Opinion.

Antonietta Cadiz: Yes, thank you very much for taking my question. I was in the Senator Schumer speech today and he emphasized a lot the word illegal and he said that when undocumented immigrants cross the boarder that is an illegal activity and that's the ground where he stands on negotiating in Congress. He also said that he found a different tone in (advocate) and he emphasized advocates accept the word illegal to (refer) to this issue. So my question is, what's your position on this (topic) to you agree with Senator Schumer comments and how do you see this specific issue in his speech today?

Angela Kelley: Janet, I don't know if you want to take that. And then, just to add a little bit since I was there as well, Senator Schumer did indicate this was something he was emphasizing to his democratic colleagues, his recommendation that there be a more direct use of illegal immigrant to describe folks who are here without status and he talked about it in terms of demonstrating to the American public that there was a seriousness about trying to restore the rule of law. Just a little bit of background. So Janet, what are your thoughts on that?

Janet Murguia: Well you know I think you know it's very important to listen to Senator Schumer and his leadership has been incredibly helpful and we see him as a leader, able to make a difference on this. So we obviously are listening very carefully. I have to tell you thought, it's been an interesting phenomenon for us in the Latino community and for those who work closely with the immigrant community because it's only been during this debate, in the last 3 to 4 years where we've seen the rhetoric around immigration develop new words and the fact that for the first time we saw illegal used as a noun versus a verb is a phenomenon as a result of what had been the divisive nature of this debate.

But we want to be strategic and we want reform and we're going to listen carefully and we're going to figure out what makes sense going forward. But you know we want to be respectful ultimately of you know of the process and of our community. I think we'll be able to find a way to do both.

Jaime Soto: If – this is Bishop Soto, can I add a few comments?

Angela Kelley: Please, Bishop.

Jaime Soto: Yes I just would – I underscore what Janet has said and I don't want to get into a semantics debate on this, but I think it is important to – I know for many of us who work with the immigrant communities, it is – has been important for us to really emphasize that these are people. These are hard working people who have taken tremendous risks to come to this country and who bring you know – their hopes, their dreams you know and their ambitions and they want to be part of the American dream and to – in a certain sense to kind of harshly label all that as they're illegal immigrants, I'm very uncomfortable with that.

I recognize that – I recognize that laws have been broken, that they – in coming here that they have entered illegally. But then to – then label that person as illegal, I'm uncomfortable with that. But again, I think we – it is important to move strategically on this and I – you know I'm not (connect well) over labels, what we need is good effective legislation.

Angela Kelley: Thank you, Bishop. Next question?

Operator: Next we'll hear from Jeffrey Kaye with the NewsHour.

Jeffrey Kaye: Hi, thanks very much for taking my question. Question for either or both Tamar Jacoby and Mark Lauritsan. There's a clear split between some in labor and business over the temporary visa issue and the marshal plan and I wonder if either one of you can put that in perspective and how important is the temporary visa, temporary worker issues to this whole comprehensive immigration reform?

Tamar Jacoby: Sure, I'll start. It's absolutely essential to employers who rely on immigrants that there be a way for the workers that we're going to need to grow the economy to enter the country legally. That's – that there be a time effective legal way is really non-negotiable from a business point of view.

Exactly what the mechanism is, there's certainly room for improvement. The arbitrary tax that timer's puts on – has put on the flow, the quotas that Congress legislates, quotas that haven't changed in nearly 20 years, that's not a very effective system.

What employers want is a more market based system. So if there can be some sort of mechanism, whether it's a commission or some other new mechanism that makes the legal system more responsive to the market employers will embrace it.

This doesn't mean, of course, everyone recognizes that the jobs have to be offered to Americans first, that there have to be searches for American workers, that any immigrants that come have to be treated with – have to be afforded a full array of rights. We're not talking about the labels often ((inaudible)) and I think the labels really ought to be taken out of the debate because it's inappropriate, ((inaudible)) conservatude. Nobody wants that. Employers do not want that. Employers want a legal system. But we're open to a discussion of what that legal mechanism should be. If a commission can be created that makes the legal system more responsive to the market, great. If not, let's have a debate about what that can be. But we agree with the unions that the system that we've got is not very effective, let's get to work on looking for a better one.

Mark Lauritsan: Well, let me tell you, here's the way I see it. You know we're all pretty smart folks, and you know it's failed in the past, these you know guest workers and things like that. So any bill that comes through that's got these guest worker schemes that it just – it's not going to work, it's going to create another problem.

And the other thing is, if one of my brothers or sisters you know travels you know high low to get to this country and if they're good enough to come into this country and get a job, then you're good enough to have a job and participate in the full array of everything our society offers, all rights and all responsibilities that go with living in this country. So it's just going to fall on its face to say you know we need workers so we're going to bring you in, but we only want you for a year. We're going to use you up and burn you up and throw you out. It's not going to work.

You know what we need and I would you know just echo some of the statements that, you know, there could be a commission that's created to study the labor situation in this country and say you know we've got to have a way to bring people into this country at the lower end of the economic spectrum to help grow our economy. Let's get this commission together, but once they come in, let's let them stay. Let's let them be full participants in our society. That's what makes our country great.

And again, we just have to remember, it's failed in the past and so these temporary guest worker programs, they're bound to fail, they're creating a whole nother problem. Let's just, you know, figure out how many we need, what's future flow going to look like and then let's let them be full participants in our society.

Jeffrey Kaye: With all due respect, if two of the participants in this call can't agree on one key issue, how do you expect Congress to come to a resolution?

Mark Lauritsan: I don't think we disagreed that much.

Tamar Jacoby: And no (predicts) this is going to be an easy issue. There are many different constituencies in American life that have a stake in this and the job of politics is to negotiate the differences between them and come up with an answer that – where everyone gets enough. No one expects to get exactly everything they want but the job of politics is to help people come to an agreement where everybody gets enough and they can go away from the table satisfied. It's mutually supportive of the deal. That's what we're all anticipating the President is kicking off. No one presents it's going to be easy and that the package is all warped up and ready to go. This is the beginning of what will obviously be a difficult political process with a number of fronts. With the front that you've just opened and variety of other fronts. But that doesn't mean it can't be done and it doesn't mean we shouldn't get started on it.

Mark Lauritsan: And I would add that you know just from listening to my comments and Tamar's comments, we can start by saying look what we agreed upon in our comments. We agreed upon you know a lot of things. I heard the work indentured servitude ...

Tamar Jacoby: I said don't use it. I said let's not use ((inaudible)) indentured servitude.

Mark Lauritsan: Well, the point is, we agreed on things. You know we said there's ways to make this work, we just have to sit down and have a logical and political discussion about the ways to make this work and there are ways to make this work, and I – from listening to the comments, I think that we could – I think we can get there.

Angela Kelley: Thank you Mark and Tamar. Next question please.

Operator: Edward Sifuentes with North County Times has our next question.

Edward Sifuentes: Thank you. It's a two part question. It's regarding the Department of Homeland Securities report last week, apprehensions saw a significant drop. Question is why do you – what do you think that is attributable to? And two, will that have any significant affect in this debate about reform?

Tamar Jacoby: Yes, again – this is Tamar Jacoby again and excuse me for hogging the microphone but this is – that's evidence that the market works to regulate the flow. The number of Mexican census reports that in the year that ended in August, half the output – the outflow from Mexico is down by half. Immigrants respond to market conditions. If there's no job here they don't bother to risk their lives trying to come here. Or don't try to – those ((inaudible)) come legally. That drops as well.

This is driven – immigration is driven – modern day immigration is driven by economics and when the economics change the flow changes and that's why we need a system that's responsive to that flow and to our economic needs.

Angela Kelley: This is (Angie); I'll just add that this has been well documented by lots of researchers but one that occurs to me is Wayne Cornelius of EC Davis who's been studying illegal migration flows for decades and has reached exactly the same conclusion that Tamar just laid out. Very sensitive to our economic condition, who comes and who goes.

Ali Noorani: This is Ali. One thing I would add here is that it's great to have the Obama administration focusing on border issues and border enforcement, however enforcing the border separate from reforming the immigration system will not solve the problem, so it ant be first enforce the border, then fix the immigration system. To really make sure that we do have a strong border means that we have a comprehensive immigration reform package moving through the House and Senate that as a part and parcel to that strengthens the boarder but actually creates a legal immigration system that people are able to navigate in a fair and reasonable way.

Angela Kelley: Great, thanks Edward. Are there any more questions, or James, do you want to just give folks a quick reminder of how they might queue up to ask a question.

Operator: Yes, as a reminder, that is star 1 if you have a question or comment. And we do have a question from Katie Davis with NPR Latino USA.

Katie Davis: Yes, I just wonder if you guys could try to imagine this roadmap a little bit more. I heard that you were saying something could happen in 2 or 3 months. That's September. What has to happen before you have some sort of bill in September? And is that realistic, given that it's been pushed off a few times and there's quite a bit else going on?

Angela Kelley: Frank, I think that might have been you, if you want to elaborate on your comments, or Janet or others.

Frank Sharry: Yes, sure. Yes, I'll take a crack. I mean look, none of us know. The first big decision has to be the President and Congressional leader is going to step up and lead and tomorrow is going to be a very significant moment of truth and I believe a turning point where the answer coming out of that meeting is going to be a yes.

Then the question is OK, how do you move it. Let me just paint a scenario that we can imagine. So for example, the House leadership has said that climate change, legislation and healthcare reform are first up and then immigration reform. Well climate change legislation is going to the floor this Friday. Healthcare reform, the timeline is to try to get something signed by early October.

So we could imagine a House process and a Senate process, at the committee level, starting in September. We could see a Senate – a House vote rather where you have a controlled process

and timing is more at the – is more under the control and command of the leadership. You can have a vote in the House on immigration reform as early as November or December. The Senate, of course, with its procedures tends to take longer. So if the committee process is proceeding and a house bill is passed it would be imaginable that either right before Christmas or perhaps in January, but you could imagine bills clearing both chambers by early next year, going into conference and being signed you know by February or March. So you know I'm just imaging a possible scenario that comports with the so called busy congressional agenda and the priority that this has been assigned by the leaders. I'm not saying that will I happen; I'm saying that that's an easily imaginable scenario.

Janet Murguia: And I would just add (Angie) – this is Janet Murguia with NCLR that you know I think there's a lot of work happening behind the scenes right now, already. Not just out in the field as Ali Noorani talked about, but really in the Congress you've got the Congressional Hispanic caucus very engaged, Congressman Luis Gutierrez has been combining field work with work, I think, in the Congress. There've been a lot of meetings, I think, happening quietly across the aisles and I think folks are really – I mean there's no secret that there's a list of about 25 republicans that's floating around out there that people want to look at and examine and certainly figure out the best way to engage folks, but it's also looking at a key democrats. But you've got a lot of activity led by the congressional Hispanic caucus in the house. I think carrying a lot more weight to the voice of the caucus – the Latino caucus caring a lot more weight in the house, but really trying to be very strategic. (Javier Desera) working within the leadership and (Nidia Velasquez) as the chair of the caucus. You've got a number of folks trying to be very strategy on how we're working and looking at this.

And then, of course in the Senate, obviously you know Harry Reid and Senator Reid and Schumer, but in addition to that you know we've gotten commitments from Mel Martinez and I know that McCain I think, was as eager for this meeting to occur as anyone else. I think he understood the importance of President Obama and others having this kind of convening and

wanting to hear clearly from them. So I think there's a lot of great interest in wanting to get a solution on this, and not just interest, but there's been a lot of steps happening behind the scene that I think concur with Frank's sort of efforts to lay that out there for you. So it's not like we expect this just to happen, there's a lot of hard work and people have already been doing a lot to lay the ground work, but we need this meeting tomorrow, I think, to get that starting bell going and have this work continue in earnest.

Jaime Soto: This is Bishop Soto and just to add a little bit more. I think that you know given some of the agenda – some of the important policy issues that are on the plate already, healthcare and economic stimulus that these – that to deal with those two issues and not deal with immigration reform I think will shortchange the outcomes that Americans expect. And I think making immigration reform part of one of these key initiatives that moves forward in this first year, I think, is – makes good political and social sense.

Angela Kelley: Terrific. Next question please.

Operator: We'll hear from Dina Bunis with Orange County Registry – Register, excuse me.

Dina Bunis: Thanks. First one comment to Bishop Soto, we miss you in Orange County.

Jaime Soto: Well, I miss Orange County, but I'm enjoying Sacramento.

Dina Bunis: Oh good. Well, we're glad. A couple of questions and this goes back to the guest worker issue. I remembered at a forum that both Frank and (some ionist) commissioner were at – you both talked about the possibility or the probability that a guest worker program wouldn't be included in a comprehensive immigration reform bill this time around. Most – the reason being mostly because of what's going on with the economy. Do you still see that – and I didn't see that in those 10 principles you know specifically there being a guest worker program. Do you think

that the – that the law makers will use the economy as a reason and excuse to say that we're not going to have a guest worker or any kind of new worker program in this bill and will that make it easier to pass?

And also kind of getting back to tomorrow's meeting and what you need to see. Do you need them to actually lay out the kind of the timetable that Frank described or make a commitment that we'll get this on the floor at a certain time? I mean how far do they have to go for you to say OK, this is the signal that we need.

Angela Kelley: OK, why don't we break your questions up Dina? Let's start first ...

Dina Bunis: Sorry.

Angela Kelley: No, they're good. You know this issue well. Why don't we start first with the worker program? In or out, and Tamar, I know you have a strong view on that.

And then Frank, I think that Dina was recalling a comment you had made before. So why don't I hear from you two first.

Tamar Jacoby: Sure you know look, again from the point of view of employers who count on these workers to keep their businesses open, who are going to count on an increased flow of workers when the economy picks up to grow their businesses who count on having these workers to sustain jobs for the Americans who work in those businesses, it's going to be absolutely essential that there be some kind of legal pipeline for workers to come – for workers to come to the country legally. Employers want that. We as a nation need that.

Obviously in this current climate there's going to be serious thought given to how to protect American workers and that's a good thing. There's going to be rethinking of the way this was

reformulated in the past. But a bill that doesn't include some kind of legal pipeline or capacity to open a legal pipeline down the road when the economy improves is really not worth the paper it's written on. It's making the same mistake we made in 1986 where we didn't take account of the economy's real need for these workers. So you know is it going to be exactly the same as it was in 2006 and 2007, no. Is the debate going to be different because we're in a recession, of course it will be and it should be? But that doesn't mean that we can't come together around some kind of mechanism that allows us to create a pipeline that can be open in the future when there's a legitimate bona fide and need for foreign workers to do jobs Americans are either too educated or not educated enough to do.

Mark Lauritsan: Can I jump back because I want to point out there, see here's the area of agreement.

Angela Kelley: Sure, Mark. Go.

Mark Lauritsan: It is – it is important that we don't repeat the mistakes of the past as we will have to figure out the mechanism to supply labor when it's needed in the United States. And Senator Schumer mentioned it in his speech today that you know our immigration cannot be just for those that have the – you know the PhDs. We're going to have to be able to figure out that mechanism that brings people in at the lower end of the economic scale when they're needed and that's when I said, we could develop – I'm sure we could hash out you know a way to trigger this mechanism where those that do come in get full participation and full rights in the American society, the American dream.

Tamar Jacoby: Just one more phrase for me, I mean the point – the human cost, the human and social costs that are of such concern to everyone on this phone call, they're created because we don't have a system that recognizes our labor needs and creates an adequate pipeline for them. So we all have a shared concern about creating an adequate system because this is an economically driven phenomenon, creating an adequate system to take account of those

economics, to make those economics work so that we don't have the human and social costs that in – for the past 20 years has come with an inadequate system.

Frank Sharry: And this is Frank, let me just say – to say – talk about guest workers generally, I think we need to start getting more specific now as we move into the legislative debate. Look, there's – it's clear that as part of any immigration reform package, something called ag jobs is going to be in the base bill. And that is an agreement between labor, united farm workers, and business, the agricultural employers who negotiated over many years an agreement in which they balance the rights of workers with the desire of employers to have access to workers. And they now stand shoulder to shoulder pushing for comprehensive immigration reform with ag jobs being a part of it. That is, I think, the model that you will see unfolding in the debate. What do we do at the high end? Well you know Dick Durbin and others have been in negotiations with worker representative and with high tech companies on how you combine sufficient labor protections with sufficient visas in a way that's workable. I can imagine some sort of agreement being struck as the debate heats up on that score.

And then the question of service workers, or lower skilled workers. I mean Tamar and Mark are right. I mean we're not going to have the same debate we had before in the McCain Kennedy debate. The economy is very different and the debate, I think, is going to be less on what are the numbers and more on what are the mechanisms. How do you adjust up and down based on market conditions, based on labor – how workers are being treated and quite frankly, I think that's a much better 21st Century approach to balancing these – so there's broad agreement on the principals.

There is – but we have an antiquated system that doesn't work and we need to have reforms that balance employer and labor interests, not just for political purposes, but for good policy purposes, so I'm actually encouraged that while there's you know some preseason trash talking going on in some quarters, I actually think that business and labor are both committed to seeing immigration

reform done. Therefore, we'll figure out how to make sure that they're interests are represented in a final package that truly balances what they all agree on in principal.

Dina Bunis: And the issue of the – what needs to happen tomorrow?

Frank Sharry: Yes, I mean look, what we want is a roadmap and what we mean by that is very clear next steps. So we're looking for what kind of – you know what is the White House role going to be working with Congressional committee chairs who are developing legislation? Does that begin to get clear? What is the timeframe where bills are going to start to be presented and marked up in the fall?

Those are going to be some of the things we look but what we're – but even before that, what we're looking for is a clear statement from the President, which I think we've had in the past, I'm sure we'll get it reiterated, but from the President and the White House, from House leaders, from Senate leaders from democrats and republicans that this is the year we come out of this meeting and we're committed to making it happen. That's what we want. That's the purpose of the meeting, a clear commitment by the major leaders of this issue, saying let's get it done. And then starting to detail the next steps. I think that would be a very successful meeting indeed. A specific timeline like the one I mentioned, no. That's – it's too early for that coming out of this meeting tomorrow. But certainly next steps and who's going to do what to make those next steps happen will be very important.

Dina Bunis: OK, thank you.

Angela Kelley: Great. And just to reiterate again Dina, that you know certainly Senator Schumer did some of that today when he indicated that he's going to do two more hearings, here are the principals and guidelines for legislation and that he wants to get working very quickly, so I thought

that was a pretty clear signal of you know his roadmap for moving forward which is of course important.

Folks, we are at an hour right now so I'm afraid that we're going to have to wrap up. I am going to let the speakers, though, make any closing comments, if they would like to do so. And if there are people who didn't get to ask a question or who would like to ask a question, I would recommend that you direct your calls to Doug Rivlin who's the Communications Director at the National Immigration Forum and Doug can be reached at 202 383-5989, 383-5989. And Doug can get in touch with any of us.

Also we'll be following the meeting aftermath very closely tomorrow and a number of us will be available for comments and questions before and during and after the meeting. And you can also go to any of our Web sites for detailed information on our organizations positions on immigration.

Are there any closing comments that any of the speakers would like to make?

All right. I think everybody has said enough. Again, my thanks to the forum and to all the speakers for putting this even together today. Thank you.

Operator: That does conclude today's conference call, thank you for your participation.

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