



HR0377

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1 HOUSE RESOLUTION

2           WHEREAS, The United States was founded as a nation of  
3 immigrants, a place where people could find economic  
4 opportunity and a better life, or escape persecution in their  
5 home country, and fulfill their hopes of a brighter future  
6 based on freedom and democratic ideals; and

7           WHEREAS, The cultural diversity of immigrants to the United  
8       States adds to the social fabric of this nation, and the new  
9       ideas and energies immigrants contribute to the economy  
10      strengthen the nation as a whole; and

11           WHEREAS, There are currently over 11 million undocumented  
12 immigrants residing in the United States, the vast majority of  
13 whom abide by the laws, work hard, and pay taxes; and

14            WHEREAS, Comprehensive immigration reform must provide  
15 law-abiding, tax paying immigrant workers and their families  
16 with an opportunity to obtain legal permanent residency and  
17 eventually United States citizenship through fair and  
18 reasonable requirements; and

WHEREAS, Undocumented immigrants are at risk of abuse by employers and live in fear of arrest and deportation; and

1           WHEREAS, Any new worker visa program must provide workers  
2 with all rights afforded by the Constitution of the United  
3 States, portability of visas so that workers can change jobs,  
4 and the ability for workers to petition for permanent  
5 residency; and

6           WHEREAS, The Diversity Visa program was established by  
7 federal law in 1990 to provide an opportunity for 55,000  
8 immigrants each year from countries that send smaller numbers  
9 of immigrants to United States to immigrate legally; and

10          WHEREAS, The Diversity Visa program has truly diversified  
11 the range of countries from which immigrants come to the United  
12 States and is one of the few options for African immigrants to  
13 come to the United States, as shown in many years where as many  
14 as half of all Diversity Visas are issued to immigrants from  
15 Africa; and

16          WHEREAS, Abolishing the Diversity Visa program would limit  
17 the opportunities for many immigrants, especially from Africa,  
18 to come to the United States lawfully; and

19          WHEREAS, The nation's immigration system is laden with  
20 backlogs and as a result, legal immigrants may wait decades for  
21 family reunification; and

1           WHEREAS, At present, the "line" for legal immigration is  
2 about 4 million people long; and

3           WHEREAS, Family unity is a component of a strong economy,  
4 and reunification of families has been a key part of federal  
5 immigration policy for almost 50 years; and

6           WHEREAS, It is our country's best interests to create a  
7 streamlined process to resolve the backlog of existing visa  
8 applications and develop methods to ensure the efficient  
9 processing of future immigration applications in a timely  
10 manner, which will expedite reunification of families; and

11          WHEREAS, Keeping families, which includes husbands and  
12 wives, sons and daughters, and brothers and sisters, together  
13 not only is the correct and moral thing to do but is also good  
14 for the economy because families provide a base of support that  
15 increases worker productivity and spurs entrepreneurship; and

16          WHEREAS, Illinois recognizes that immigration reform must  
17 protect the right of all families to stay together, regardless  
18 of immigration status, family structure, sexual orientation,  
19 gender identity, or marital status, and provide sufficient  
20 family-based channels for migration in the future; and

21          WHEREAS, The State of Illinois is home to 1.8 million

1 immigrants, the sixth largest immigrant population of any state  
2 in the nation; and

3 WHEREAS, Immigrants make up 13.5% of Illinois' population  
4 and 17.5% of Illinois' workforce and accounted for half of the  
5 State's population growth over the last decade; and

6 WHEREAS, Illinois has a special pride as being one of the  
7 most immigrant-friendly states in the country, as evidenced by  
8 its deep commitment to successful programs such as the New  
9 Americans Initiative & Refugee and Immigrant Citizenship  
10 Initiative, Immigrant Family Resource Program, Parent Mentor  
11 Program and Uniting America Program; and

12 WHEREAS, Illinois believes in the human dignity of all  
13 Illinois residents, regardless of immigration status, and  
14 recognize the importance of immigrants' many contributions to  
15 the social and economic fabric of the state of Illinois; and

16 WHEREAS, Illinois, therefore, has a strong interest in  
17 immigration policy and the impact it has on immigrants seeking  
18 a new life in the United States; and

19 WHEREAS, Immigration reform must occur in a comprehensive,  
20 thoughtful manner that builds the strength and unity of working  
21 people, keeps families together wherever possible, and

1        guarantees the same rights, obligations, and basic fairness for  
2        all lawful workers, no matter where they come from; and

3           WHEREAS, The federal government has the exclusive  
4        authority to develop, implement, and enforce immigration  
5        policy under the United States Constitution, and the regulation  
6        of immigration is solely the responsibility of the federal  
7        government; therefore, be it

8           RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE  
9        NINETY-EIGHTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that  
10      the President of the United States and the United States  
11      Congress are urged to enact comprehensive immigration reform  
12      and provide a practical and inclusive path to permanent  
13      citizenship that promotes fairness and justice, while also  
14      protecting and valuing families and upholding human dignity and  
15      mutual respect; and be it further

16           RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be  
17      transmitted to the President of the United States, the Speaker  
18      of the United States House of Representatives, the President of  
19      the United States Senate, members of Illinois' Congressional  
20      delegation, the Illinois Coalition of Immigrant and Refugee  
21      Rights, and Asian Americans Advancing Justice-Chicago.