

## Taking Action on Immigration Reform on Behalf of Immigrant Survivors

### Legislative Background and Update:

- During NNEDV's last advocacy day in June 2013, immigration reform was included among the legislative priorities and coalitions urged members of Congress to support comprehensive immigration reform.
- On June 27, 2013, the Senate passed a bi-partisan comprehensive immigration reform bill (S.744), by a vote of 68-32, which included a pathway to legal work authorization and citizenship for undocumented individuals, an increase in the U visa cap, and many other significant improvements in protections for immigrant survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault and victims of trafficking. (See summary of Senate provisions for DV/SA advocates).
- In October of 2013, a comparable bill (H.R. 15) was introduced in the House of Representatives (with all the same provisions/protections listed above, though with some changes in the border security provisions). That bill has 199 co-sponsors (including 3 Republican co-sponsors). Many other Republican members of Congress have openly expressed support for immigration reform legislation. Nonetheless, House leadership has not allowed H.R. 15 to come to the floor for a vote and has not provided a strategy or commitment to move forward on any alternative immigration reform legislation.

### Immigration Reform Cannot Wait

- **There is Bi-partisan Support for Immigration Reform.** Congress must improve our broken immigration system, a necessity that is acknowledged on both sides of the aisle. Speaker John Boehner recently urged the House to act on immigration reform and to work towards improving our broken immigration system. "[John Boehner says the Right Thing on Immigration](#)" Washington Post March 3, 2014.
- **The Current Immigration System is Critically Broken.** Former Immigration Judge John Gossart states, "The current backlog of 360,000-plus cases [in Immigration Court] means an average wait of 573 days before a case is resolved, and the majority of people coming into immigration courts do so without lawyers, despite the high stakes and incomprehensible nature of our immigration law." "[Immigration Reform Can't Wait.](#)" Baltimore Sun, March 12, 2014.
- **The American Public Supports Immigration Reform.** According to a [CNN/ORC Poll](#) in February 2014, 81% of Americans believed that unauthorized immigrants who have been in the country for years and are employed, speak English, and would pay back taxes should be allowed to become citizens.
- **Immigration reform will have significant positive economic benefits for the nation,** including growth of the GDP, reduction in budget deficits, and the promotion of job growth and

innovation. The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office last year found that the Senate bipartisan immigration reform bill (S.744) would increase GDP by 3.3% and help drive down the federal debt by \$200 billion in the first 10 years, and reduce the debt by an additional \$700 billion in the second ten years. Check out [this article in the Washington Post](#).

### **Immigration Reform is a critical issue to prevent gender violence and improve protections for survivors**

- 75% of undocumented immigrants are women and children. It is estimated that there are approximately 4 million undocumented immigrant women in the United States, many working under circumstances vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. One example was highlighted in the PBS Frontline documentary, "[Rape in the Fields.](#)"
- This year, [USCIS met the annual U visa cap](#) of only 10,000 visas within two months of the start of the new fiscal year. (The U visa, which is for victims of certain designated crimes, is also considered an important law enforcement tool).
- The U.S. government estimates that 14,500-17,500 individuals are trafficked into the United States each year, the majority being women and children.
- It has long been recognized that immigration status can be used as a tool of abuse to prey upon those who are undocumented and keep victims in the shadows, too afraid to contact the police or seek help.
- In 2012 the National Domestic Violence Hotline partnered with Casa de Esperanza, the national Latina resource center on domestic violence, to conduct [a survey](#) of callers to the national Hotline who identified as being of Latina/Hispanic origin.
  - Of the 1,305 Latina callers over the six-week period who participated in the survey, 45% said that they had been born in a foreign country, and 39% of foreign-born Latinas reported that they were afraid of calling the police or going to court for help as a result of the general immigration situation.
  - One caller stated: "Yes, I'm afraid because I have heard many cases of people reaching out for help and being deported instead." Survivors stated that abusers often threaten them that they will be deported if they call the police. They also feared being separated from and losing custody of their children if they are put into detention. While this survey focused on Latinas, we know that immigrant survivors in the U.S. from many other countries and regions of the world are also experiencing these negative effects.
- Deportations have increased significantly over the past five years, averaging nearly 400,000 deportations each year, reaching a total of [2 million deportations](#) this past March, 2014 under this administration. Hundreds of thousands of children, the majority of whom are U.S. citizens, have been separated from their parents.
- Increased entanglement between local law enforcement and federal immigration enforcement weakens proven community policing efforts [by undermining the trust and cooperation](#) with immigrant communities, diverting scarce resources, detracting local police from the core mission to create safe communities, and silencing victims from coming forward to seek help. See press release by Major Cities Chiefs Association entitled "[Police Chiefs from Nation's Major Cities Object to Legislative Proposals Requiring Local Police to Enforce Federal Immigration Laws](#)"

- Thomas Manger, the police chief in Montgomery County, MD spoke out against proposed legislation that would further involve local police in immigration enforcement efforts, citing examples of victims of crime too afraid to contact the police. “The reluctance of folks to come forward because they are undocumented and fear deportation is a much greater public safety problem than having people here who may be undocumented but are not committing other crimes,” Manger said in an interview. “Criminals thrive in neighborhoods where people don’t trust the police. This is a daily struggle for us.” See “[For Immigrant Women, Domestic Violence Creates a Double Shadow](#),” Washington Post, December 2, 2013.
- While existing VAWA immigration protections are important, they reach a limited number of victims. Immigration reform that provides a pathway to legal status and work authorization will significantly enhance prevention and intervention efforts, by providing an opportunity for millions of vulnerable immigrant women to pursue a pathway to safety, stability, and economic self-sufficiency for themselves and their children.

**Key Message to Members of Congress:**

- It is urgent that Congress pass immigration reform this year. The status quo is unacceptable since it heightens vulnerability to abuse and exploitation for millions of women and children.
- Immigration reform that provides a pathway to legal status and work authorization will significantly enhance prevention and intervention efforts, by providing an opportunity for millions of vulnerable immigrant women to pursue a pathway to safety, stability, and economic self-sufficiency for themselves and their children.
- The House needs to pass immigration reform legislation that will strengthen the health and well-being of millions of families and communities and strengthen our nation’s economy.
- For Republican members of Congress who voted for the bipartisan VAWA Reauthorization, share this message: “Thank you for voting to support the bipartisan VAWA legislation last that passed last year. We urge you to support bipartisan immigration reform efforts that will help reduce vulnerabilities to abuse and exploitation for millions of undocumented women and their children and advance safety and economic opportunities.” (See attached list of Members of Congress)

## **Take action during the week of Advocacy Day (June 2-6):**

To find contact information for your representative, go to [www.contactingthecongress.org](http://www.contactingthecongress.org)

1 - Call your representative and share one of the key messages above

2- Email your representative and share one of the key messages above.

3- Meet in district with your representative and share a copy of the one-pager on why Immigration Reform is a critical issue to prevent and address domestic violence, sexual assault, and trafficking. Also, share a story of how immigrants you serve are impacted by the lack of immigration reform.

4 – Tweet your representative. See some suggested tweets below:

- We Can't Wait: Reform immigration NOW to prevent violence agnst women and girls. #immigrationreform #yesallwomen #endVAW
- Reforming immigration will protect girls and women in the US. Take Action! We can't wait any longer. #immigrationreform #yesallwomen #endVAW
- Congress: Help us stop violence against girls and women and reform our broken immigration system. We can't wait any more. #immigrationreform #yesallwomen #endVAW
- HELP! Our immigration system is broken. Thousands of women are suffering violence as a result. Congress: We can't wait any more. #immigrationreform #yesallwomen #endVAW
- Immigrant victims are often threatened with deportation by their abusers. Urge Congress to pass reform to stop exploitation of immigrants. #immigrationreform
- Many undocumented ppl have US citizen kids & face threats of deportation. This means kids are forced to live in foster care or w/ an abuser. #immigrationreform
- Abused immigrants should be able to apply for their own immigration status w/o choosing between deportation or abuse. #immigrationreform
- Support immigrant survivor self-sufficiency & remove vulnerabilities from more victimization. Urge Congress to pass Immigration Reform. #immigrationreform
- Ensure communities that support survivors of violence not be criminally penalized for being good Samaritans who help the undocumented #immigrationreform
- Many undocumented face poor working conditions, sexual abuse, harassment, & wage theft because they cannot obtain work authorization. #immigrationreform

For more information, please contact:

- Grace Huang, Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence, 206-389- 2515 x 209, [grace@wscadv.org](mailto:grace@wscadv.org)
- Rosie Hidalgo, Casa de Esperanza: National Latin@ Network, 703- 942-5582, [rhidalgo@casadeesperanza.org](mailto:rhidalgo@casadeesperanza.org)
- Royce Bernstein Murray, National Immigrant Justice Center, 312-718-5021, [rmurray@heartlandalliance.org](mailto:rmurray@heartlandalliance.org)

List of House Republicans who voted in support of the final bipartisan VAWA bill to approach for support of Immigration Reform:

<b>Representative Name</b>	<b>Party</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>District #</b>	<b>Vote on VAWA</b>
Bachus, Spencer	R	AL	6	Y
Issa, Darrell	R	CA	49	Y
Royce, Edward	R	CA	39	Y
Hunter, Duncan D.	R	CA	50	Y
McKeon, Buck	R	CA	25	Y
McCarthy, Kevin	R	CA	23	Y
Nunes, Devin	R	CA	22	Y
Denham, Jeff	R	CA	10	Y
Valadao, David G.	R	CA	21	Y
Cook, Paul	R	CA	8	Y
Gardner, Cory	R	CO	4	Y
Coffman, Mike	R	CO	6	Y
Tipton, Scott R.	R	CO	3	Y
Crenshaw, Ander	R	FL	4	Y
Diaz-Balart, Mario	R	FL	25	Y
Buchanan, Vern	R	FL	16	Y
Ros-Lehtinen, Ileana	R	FL	27	Y
Webster, Daniel	R	FL	10	Y
Collins, Doug	R	GA	9	Y
Simpson, "Mike" Michael	R	ID	2	Y
Kinzinger, Adam	R	IL	16	Y
Shimkus, John	R	IL	15	Y
Davis, Rodney	R	IL	13	Y
Walorski, Jackie	R	IN	2	Y
Brooks, Susan	R	IN	5	Y
Messer, Luke	R	IN	6	Y

Rokita, Todd	R	IN	4	Y
Young, Todd	R	IN	9	Y
Buschon, Larry	R	IN	8	Y
Barr, Garland "Andy"	R	KY	6	Y
Rogers, Harold	R	KY	5	Y
Benishek, Dan	R	MI	1	Y
Rogers, Mike	R	MI	8	Y
Camp, Dave	R	MI	4	Y
Upton, Fred	R	MI	6	Y
Paulsen, Erik	R	MN	3	Y
Kline, John	R	MN	2	Y
Cramer, Kevin	R	ND	AL	Y
Terry, Lee	R	NE	2	Y
Runyan, Jon	R	NJ	3	Y
Frelinghuysen, Rodney	R	NJ	11	Y
Lance, Leonard	R	NJ	7	Y
LoBiondo, Frank	R	NJ	2	Y
Amodei, Mark	R	NV	2	Y
Heck, Joseph	R	NV	3	Y
Grimm, Michael	R	NY	11	Y
Gibson, Chris	R	NY	19	Y
Hanna, Richard	R	NY	22	Y
Turner, Michael R.	R	OH	10	Y
Stivers, Steve	R	OH	15	Y
Joyce, David	R	OH	14	Y
Gibbs, Bob	R	OH	7	Y
Cole, Tom	R	OK	4	Y
Walden, Greg	R	OR	2	Y
Dent, Charles	R	PA	15	Y
Fitzpatrick, Michael	R	PA	8	Y
Gerlach, Jim	R	PA	6	Y
Thompson, Glenn	R	PA	5	Y

Shuster, Bill	R	PA	9	Y
Farenthold, Blake R.	R	TX	27	Y
Poe, Ted	R	TX	2	Y
Rigell, Scott	R	VA	2	Y
Reichert, Dave	R	WA	8	Y
Herrera Beutler, Jaime	R	WA	3	Y
McMorris Rodgers, Cathy	R	WA	5	Y
Duffy, Sean	R	WI	7	Y
Ryan, Paul	R	WI	1	Y

Second list:

<b>Representative Name</b>	<b>Party</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>District #</b>	<b>Vote on VAWA</b>
Calvert, Ken	R	CA	42	Y
Nugent, Richard	R	FL	11	Y
Latham, Tom	R	IA	3	Y
Jenkins, Lynn	R	KS	2	Y
Yoder, Kevin	R	KS	3	Y
Boustany, Charles	R	LA	3	Y
Harper, Gregg	R	MI	3	Y
Miller, Candice	R	MI	10	Y
Daines, Steve	R	MT	AL	Y
McHenry, Patrick	R	NC	10	Y
Pearce, Steven	R	NM	2	Y
Tiberi, Patrick	R	OH	12	Y
Renacci, Jim	R	OH	16	Y
Meehan, Patrick	R	PA	7	Y
Barletta, Lou	R	PA	2	Y
Capito, Shelley Moore	R	WV	2	Y
McKinley, David	R	WV	1	Y