



July 17, 2013

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

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

Dear Speaker Boehner and Leader Pelosi,

We are writing to add our names to the growing list of civic leaders who support commonsense immigration reform. Now that the Senate has done its work, the House of Representatives should act without delay to pass similar legislation so that we can begin to build an immigration system that reflects our nation's values and strengthens our economies.

As reflected by the strong vote in the Senate, there is widespread support for an immigration bill that provides a fair, realistic pathway to earned citizenship for undocumented individuals currently in our country while, at the same time, securing our border. Recognizing that with rights come responsibilities, we agree that individuals who wish to take advantage of this pathway must first pay taxes and a penalty. They are reasonable requirements to ensure that everyone plays by the same rules in order to access the opportunities our nation has to offer. At the same time, however, this pathway must not be impassable. We should avoid and reject any requirements that litter the pathway with insurmountable obstacles.

We support replacing the H-2A agricultural "guest worker" visa program with a new program to ensure farmers have the labor force they require to meet the growing need.

Agriculture is one of the backbones of our country's economy. Many of our farms, especially small family farms, will go out of business unless they are given access to a reliable workforce.

We also support an immigration plan that provides visas to foreign graduate students in science and math who came to this country for an education. Our nation and states work hard to attract these talented students. We should give them the opportunity to stay so that they can contribute to our economies and access the American dream. In addition, we encourage you to increase STEM education funding to states to augment our efforts to meet the long-term need for high-skilled labor.

Finally, this is not only the right policy for our nation, it also makes sense economically, as noted by the Congressional Budget Office's report that the bill would decrease the federal deficit by \$175B over ten years after enactment. Given the clear benefit to the federal budget and mindful of the constraints on our state budgets, we are hopeful that any immigration reform plan avoids shifting unduly burdensome costs to the states.

We all recognize that immigrants contribute a great deal to our economy and our culture. We should make sure they are fully integrated into the social, civic and economic fabric of American life and have access to the same opportunities to succeed as everyone else. As Governors, we encourage you to adopt bipartisan, comprehensive immigration reform legislation that reflects the values of our nation and contributes to the growth of our economies.

Sincerely,



Governor Mike BeeBe
State of Arkansas



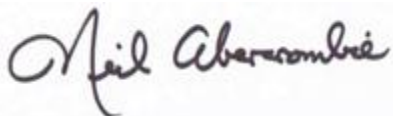
Governor John Hickenlooper
State of Colorado



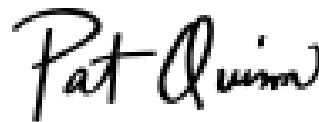
Governor Dannel P. Malloy
State of Connecticut



Governor Jack Markell
State of Delaware



Governor Neil Abercrombie
State of Hawaii



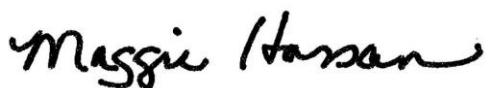
Governor Pat Quinn
State of Illinois



Governor Steve Beshear
Commonwealth of Kentucky



Governor Deval Patrick
Commonwealth of Massachusetts



Governor Margaret Hassan
State of New Hampshire



Governor Lincoln Chafee
State of Rhode Island



Governor Jay Inslee
State of Washington



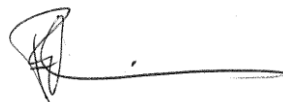
Governor Martin O'Malley
State of Maryland



Governor Mark Dayton
State of Minnesota



Governor John Kitzhaber
State of Oregon



Governor Peter Shumlin
State of Vermont