



October 30, 2009

[INSERT ADDRESS FIELD]

RE: Employers Supporting Comprehensive Immigration Reform

Dear Senator/Representative:

Immigration Works Washington is a coalition of employers and their representatives from virtually every sector of the economy in our state. Our members include farmers, small employers, high tech companies, restaurants, hotels, biotech companies and institutes, the construction industry, hospitals, staffing professionals, the retail industry, attorneys, and many more. We collectively applaud the renewed focus of Congress and the president on immigration reform, and we write to provide our shared vision, and offer our support, in this vital process.

Immigration policy must reflect the core values of our nation and our democracy – we are a nation that welcomes immigrants, but we are also a nation of laws, and a place where all people are expected to willingly follow our laws. Our immigration policy must also serve our national interest in a competitive global market. As the gap between developing nations and developed nations shrinks, and the workforce ages in much of the industrialized world, we find ourselves competing for talented workers across a broad spectrum of industries. Economists and policy analysts agree that our aging and shrinking workforce has and will create long term needs that can best be addressed through our immigration system.

In this struggle to attract workers we have a decided advantage: our nation was built on immigration. Talented and hard-working people from nations throughout the world are attracted to America, and immigrants will provide us a competitive advantage throughout the 21st century – if we offer them, in return, the opportunity to prosper and live in freedom.

The best way to achieve our goals and to grow our economy is to create timely and practical pathways for employers to recruit workers from throughout the world, while respecting American workers who want to work hard and have much to contribute to our nation's prosperity.

Our current immigration system is not working. This has led to frustration by many who are trying to gain legal residence, and may be a factor contributing to unauthorized immigration. We understand that these issues are among the many that make immigration reform difficult and divisive. But we must deal with all of the issues – they are not going to go away, and they will not resolve themselves unless we act.

The common wisdom is that immigration reform should not be undertaken during a recession, or when unemployment in our country is high. We respectfully disagree. We believe instead that providing access to talented workers will create more jobs and fuel our recovery – from both the

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high tech and low tech parts of the economy. As an example from the high tech sector, immigrant software developers who come as guest workers to create products here also bring their entrepreneurial attitudes and start new high tech companies. And from the low tech sector, each seasonal worker toiling in the apple harvest in our state harvests approximately 150 tons of apples in a 70 day season, creating family wage jobs in the transportation, processing, and the export industries. As our economy grows, the need for workers will also grow.

Like any major policy initiative, immigration reform will require cooperation from all sectors and both sides of the aisle. We ask that you negotiate and compromise with legislators who do not share your view, and we are prepared to support you in this. Working together, we can create a system that assists talented and hard working individuals, be they farm workers or computer engineers, doctors or dishwashers, all of whom ask nothing more than the opportunity to share in our freedom and contribute to our prosperity.

Comprehensive immigration reform has been too long in coming. We look forward to helping you achieve it.

Sincerely,