

*Administration of Barack Obama, 2013*

## **Remarks at a Roundtable Discussion on Immigration Reform and an Exchange With Reporters**

*June 24, 2013*

*The President.* Hello, everybody. I want to welcome these extraordinary business leaders who are here today in support of comprehensive immigration reform. As all of you know, we are at a critical point in the debate that's taking place in the Senate.

All these business leaders recognize the degree to which immigration is a contributor to growth, a contributor to expansion, a creator of jobs, but they also recognize that the immigration system that we currently have is broken.

We have a system in which we bring outstanding young people from all across the world to educate them here, and unfortunately, too often, we send them right back so that they can start companies or help to grow companies somewhere else instead of here.

We have a situation in which millions of individuals are in the shadow economy, oftentimes exploited at lower wages, and that hurts those companies that are following the rules because they end up being at a disadvantage to some of these less scrupulous companies.

And so all of us, I think, recognize that now is the time to get comprehensive immigration reform done: one that involves having very strong border security; that makes sure that we're holding employers accountable to follow the rules; one that provides earned citizenship for those 11 million so that they have to pay back taxes, pay a fine, learn English, follow the rules, get to the back of the line, but ultimately can be part of the above-board economy, as opposed to the below-board economy; and a system that fixes and cleans up our legal immigration system so that we can continue to be a nation of laws and a nation of immigrants.

The good news is, is that we've got a strong bipartisan bill that meets many of those principles. As I've said before, it's not a bill that represents everything that I would like to see; it represents a compromise. And I think all the business leaders here recognize that there are elements of it that they might want to tweak one way or another. But it does adhere to the core principles that we need for a comprehensive immigration reform, and now is the time to do it.

Just this past week, the Congressional Budget Office noted that this would end up bringing more money into the Federal Government. It would reduce our deficits; people would be paying taxes. It would end up strengthening our economy, growing our economy. And so you've got a broad consensus all throughout the country, not just business leaders who are represented here today—many of whom are immigrants themselves, many of whom started businesses and are now creating opportunity all across the country—but we're also seeing labor leaders, we're seeing clergy, we're seeing people from all different walks of life saying now is the time to get this done.

So I very much appreciate all the business leaders who are here for making this push. And I know they're going to be talking to various Senators and Members of Congress over the next several days. I would urge the Senate to bring this to the floor, and I hope that we can get the strongest possible vote out of the Senate so that we can then move to the House and get this done before the summer break.

And if we get this done—when we get this done—I think every business leader here feels confident that they'll be in a stronger position to continue to innovate, to continue to invest, to continue to create jobs, and ensure that this continues to be the land of opportunity for generations to come.

So thank you very much to all of you for being here. And thank you guys in the press.

*Former National Security Agency Contractor Edward J. Snowden*

*[At this point, several reporters spoke at once.]*

*Q.* Mr. President, have you spoken to Mr. Putin, and are you confident that they'll expel—he'll be expelled?

*The President.* What we know is, is that we're following all of the appropriate legal channels, and working with various other countries to make sure that rule of law is observed. And beyond that, I'll refer to the Justice Department, that has been actively involved in the case. All right?

Thank you, guys.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:10 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. A reporter referred to President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia.

*Categories:* Addresses and Remarks : Immigration reform, roundtable discussion; Interviews With the News Media : Exchanges with reporters :: White House.

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