

Statement on Senate Passage of Immigration Reform Legislation

June 27, 2013

Today, with a strong bipartisan vote, the United States Senate delivered for the American people, bringing us a critical step closer to fixing our broken immigration system once and for all. I thank Majority Leader Reid, Senator Leahy, Senator Schumer, and every member of the Gang of Eight for their leadership, and I commend all Senators who worked across party lines to get this done.

The bipartisan bill that passed today was a compromise. By definition, nobody got everything they wanted: not Democrats, not Republicans, not me. But the Senate bill is consistent with the key principles for commonsense reform that I and many others have repeatedly laid out.

If enacted, the Senate bill would establish the most aggressive border security plan in our history. It would offer a pathway to earned citizenship for the 11 million individuals who are in this country illegally, a pathway that includes passing a background check, learning English, paying taxes and a penalty and then going to the back of the line behind everyone who's playing by the rules and trying to come here legally. It would modernize the legal immigration system so that it once again reflects our values as a nation and addresses the urgent needs of our time. And it would provide a big boost to our recovery by shrinking our deficits and growing our economy.

Today the Senate did its job. It's now up to the House to do the same.

As this process moves forward, I urge everyone who cares about this issue to keep a watchful eye. Now is the time when opponents will try their hardest to pull this bipartisan effort apart so they can stop commonsense reform from becoming a reality. We cannot let that happen. If you're among the clear majority of Americans who support reform—from CEOs to labor leaders, law enforcement to clergy—reach out to your Member of Congress. Tell them to do the right thing. Tell them to pass commonsense reform so that our businesses and workers are all playing by the same rules and everyone who's in this country is paying their fair share in taxes.

We have a unique opportunity to fix our broken system in a way that upholds our traditions as a nation of laws and a nation of immigrants. We just need Congress to finish the job.

NOTE: The statement referred to Sens. Marco A. Rubio, Jeffrey L. Flake, John S. McCain III, Lindsey O. Graham, Richard J. Durbin, Robert Menendez, and Michael F. Bennet. It also referred to S. 744.

Categories: Statements by the President : Immigration reform legislation, Senate passage.

Names: Bennet, Michael F.; Durbin, Richard J.; Flake, Jeffrey L.; Graham, Lindsey O.; Leahy, Patrick J.; McCain, John S., III; Menendez, Robert; Reid, Harry M.; Rubio, Marco A.; Schumer, Charles E.

Subjects: Congress : Bipartisanship; Congress : Senate :: Majority leader; Defense and national security : Border security; Immigration and naturalization : Citizenship; Immigration and

naturalization : Reform; Legislation, proposed : "Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act".

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