



PRESS RELEASE

Dec. 15, 2009

Contact: Nicole Duran

Tel: 202-296-2300 ext. 144

Email: nduran@advancingequality.org

www.advancingequality.org

BROAD, DIVERSE COALITION KEEPS PROMISE: COMPREHENSIVE IMMIGRATION REFORM BILL BEFORE CHRISTMAS

CIR-A.S.A.P. Outlines a Progressive Vision and Workable Solution

WASHINGTON – Today, Rep. Luis Gutierrez (D-Ill.) took the first real step toward fixing our broken immigration system. Months in the making, the Comprehensive Immigration Reform for America’s Security and Prosperity Act of 2009 addresses the concerns of the Asian American and other immigrant communities, reunites families, restores fairness to our labor markets, recognizes the contributions of immigrant workers and families and helps get the economy back on track.

“We commend Rep. Gutierrez for his leadership and believe his legislation provides the right framework for comprehensive immigration reform,” said Karen K. Narasaki, president and executive director of the Asian American Justice Center. “It is more imperative than ever that we fix this broken system in a way that helps to strengthen our economy and our communities.”

Stewart Kwoh, executive director of the Asian Pacific American Legal Center, added: “Every day that we delay progress on moving forward with comprehensive immigration reform legislation is a day where the immigration situation grows increasingly difficult for our Asian and Pacific Islander immigrant communities. APIs came out in strong numbers in 2008 to elect representatives to solve tough problems with practical solutions, and we expect our leaders to lead.”

Gutierrez was joined by representatives of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus, the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, the Congressional Black Caucus and the Congressional Progressive Caucus in introducing this landmark legislation. Although the details of the bill have yet to be analyzed, today marks the first step toward real progress for common sense immigration reform.

“Family-based immigration has long created the foundation for strong, entrepreneurial communities across the country,” said Tuyet Le, executive director of the Asian American Institute. “This bill will reunite immigrants with their loved ones and will also provide some increases in high-skill temporary worker visas,” Le added.

Americans have been mobilizing and pressing for comprehensive immigration reform since the summer. Last month, at least 60,000 Americans participated in more than 1,000 house parties in 45 states to show their support for reform. Asian American and Pacific Islanders have been making their voices heard by texting “AAPI” to 69866 and connecting to the Reform Immigration FOR America campaign. Next month, AAPIs will reinforce their commitment to immigration reform by participating in the second major Asian American “week of action.”

“Fundamental reforms to our immigration system are long overdue,” said Titi Liu, executive director of the Asian Law Caucus. “We look forward to standing together with all immigrant communities to ensure that any key changes uphold our nation’s core values of democracy and compassion.”

#

The Asian American Justice Center (www.advancingequality.org) is a national organization dedicated to defending and advancing the civil and human rights of Asian Americans. It works closely with three affiliates – the Asian American Institute of Chicago (www.aaichicago.org), the Asian Law Caucus (www.asianlawcaucus.org) in San Francisco, and the Asian Pacific American Legal Center (www.apalc.org) in Los Angeles – and 102 community partners in 47 cities and 25 states in the country.