

October 24, 2013

The Honorable John A. 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 Minority Leader Pelosi:

The undersigned 132 organizations, including immigrants' rights, civil rights and faith-based organizations, write concerning H.R. 15, the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act of 2013. We commend you for asserting leadership and appreciate your commitment to making commonsense immigration reform a reality. We recognize that H.R. 15, which does contain some much-needed improvements to our family-based immigration system, reflects difficult compromises. However, we are deeply concerned that some of the other proposed changes will undermine our long-held values of family unity.

H.R. 15 includes changes that would dramatically alter our family immigration system, denying the siblings and many married adult children of citizens – immigrants who can immediately contribute to our economy – a definite way to reunite with parents or siblings in the U.S. As an alternative, H.R. 15 creates an experimental “points”-based system that may not allow these family members to reunite in the U.S. Even having the “right” attributes, such as a college degree, verifiable employment history, and being the sibling of a citizen, do not necessarily result in a points-based visa. In addition, the merit-based system could disadvantage women, who do not have the same educational or career opportunities as men in many countries around the world and disproportionately rely on family visas to reunite with their loved ones.

Our nation has always recognized that family plays a critical role in helping new Americans build communities and become part of our national fabric. Protecting and strengthening the family-based immigration system is good economic policy. Family immigration has significant economic benefits, especially for long-term economic growth. Family-based immigrants foster innovation and development of new businesses that create jobs for American workers. Family members also care for young children and elderly parents while other family members work and build businesses.

Improving our family-based immigration system will make the U.S. even more attractive to employment-based immigrants who may want to bring close loved ones to the U.S. once they are established here and become citizens. Americans should not have to choose between living and working in the U.S. with no family support and living in a country that offers few economic opportunities for families. Brothers and sisters and children of all ages are an inextricable part of any family, particularly those with less traditional composition. A narrow concept of family downplays the valuable contributions to this nation made by all family members.

For these reasons, we urge you to ensure that any final legislative solution includes meaningful and realistic opportunities for siblings and all adult married children to be reunited with their citizen relatives. It is in our nation's best interest to craft a fair and humane immigration system that prioritizes

immigrants and their families. We look forward to working with you and all of your colleagues towards a bipartisan solution for comprehensive immigration reform.

Sincerely,
The Undersigned Organizations

National Organizations

Adorers of the Blood of Christ	NAAPIMHA
Adrian Dominican Sisters	NALEO Educational Fund
Office of Global Mission, Justice and Peace	National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (NAPABA)
Advocacy for Justice and Peace Committee of the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia	National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum (NAPAWF)
AFL-CIO	National Center for Lesbian Rights
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)	National Council of Jewish Women
American Immigration Lawyers Association	National Council of La Raza (NCLR)
American Jewish Committee	National Federation of Filipino American Associations (NaFFAA)
America's Voice	National Gay & Lesbian Task Force Action Fund
Arab American Institute	National Immigrant Justice Center
Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum	National Immigration Forum
Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund	National Immigration Law Center
Asian Americans Advancing Justice-AAJC	OCA – Asian Pacific American Advocates
Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations	Office of Peace, Justice and Ecological Integrity, Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth
Campaign for Community Change	Sai Sharran Inc.
CASA in Action	Sai Super Software Solutions Inc
Christian Reformed Church Office of Social Justice	Service Employees International Union (SEIU)
Conference of Major Superiors of Men	Sinsinawa Dominicans
Congregation of St. Joseph Peace and Justice Team	Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill
Congregation of the Humility of Mary	Sisters of Mercy of the Americas
Council on American-Islamic Relations	Sisters of Charity of Nazareth
Fair Immigration Reform Movement (FIRM)	Sisters of St. Joseph of Rochester
First Focus	Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia
Friends Committee on National Legislation	Sisters of St. Francis, Sylvania, OH
Hamdard Center for Health and Human Services	South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT)
Immigrant Legal Resource Center	Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC)
Jewish Council for Public Affairs	The Episcopal Church
KAYA - Filipino Americans for Progress (National)	The Hat Project
Korean Churches for Community Development	Union for Reform Judaism
Leadership Conference of Women Religious	United Food & Commercial Workers Intl. Union
Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service	United Methodist Church, General Board of Church and Society

State and Local Organizations

Arizona

Asian Chamber of Commerce of Arizona	Phoenix, AZ
Asian Pacific Community in Action	Phoenix, AZ
Japanese American Citizens League, AZ Chapter	Phoenix, AZ
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum AZ Chapter	Phoenix, AZ
OCA Tucson Chapter	Tucson, AZ

California

API Equality-LA	Los Angeles, CA
Asian Americans Advancing Justice Los Angeles	Los Angeles, CA
Asian Law Alliance	San Jose, CA
Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, Los Angeles Chapter	Los Angeles, CA
Asian Pacific Policy & Planning Council	Los Angeles, CA
Filipino Migrant Center	Long Beach, CA
KAYA - Filipino Americans for Progress, Los Angeles Chapter	Los Angeles, CA
KAYA – Filipino Americans for Progress, San Francisco Chapter	San Francisco, CA
Religious Sisters of Charity	Culver City, CA
South Asian Network	Artesia, CA
Thai Community Development Center	Los Angeles, CA

Colorado

Asian Pacific Americans for Progress - Colorado	Denver, CO
Mile High Japanese American Citizens League	Denver, CO

Connecticut

Justice and Peace Committee, Sisters of St. Joseph of West Hartford	West Hartford, CT
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D.C./Maryland/Virginia

OCA-DC Asian Pacific American Advocates	Rockville, MD
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Illinois

AFIRE Chicago	Chicago, IL
Asian Americans Advancing Justice-Chicago	Chicago, IL
Benedictine Sisters of Chicago	Chicago, IL
Cambodian Association of Illinois	Chicago, IL
Chinese American Service League	Chicago, IL
Chinese Mutual Aid Association	Chicago, IL
Coalition for a Better Chinese American Community	Chicago, IL
Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights	Chicago, IL
KAN-WIN	Chicago, IL
Korean American Resource and Cultural Center	Chicago, IL
South Asian American Policy & Research Institute (SAAPRI)	Chicago, IL
Lao American Community Services	Chicago, IL
Lao American Organization of Elgin	Elgin, IL
Project IRENE	Wilmette, IL

Florida

Asian American Federation of Florida	Miami, FL
Florida Chinese Federation	Miami, FL
Miami Chinese Welfare Council	Miami, FL
National Alliance to Nurture the Aged and Youth (NANAY)	North Miami, FL
OCA South Florida Chapter	Miami, FL
Pax Christi Florida	St. Augustine, FL

South Florida Interfaith Worker Justice	Miami, FL
United Chinese Association of Florida	Miami, FL

Georgia

Asian American Legal Advocacy Center, Inc. of Georgia (AALAC)	Atlanta, GA
Center for Pan Asian Community Services, Inc. (CPACS)	Atlanta, GA

Iowa

La Luz Hispana	Hampton, IA
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Maine

Immigrant Legal Advocacy Projcet	Portland, ME
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Massachusetts

Asian American Civic Association	Boston, MA
Justice and Peace Committee, Sisters of St. Joseph of Springfield	Holyoke, MA
Sisters of Saint Anne Social Justice Committee	Marlborough, MA

Michigan

APIAVote-MI	Detroit, MI
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Missouri

Sisters of the Most Precious Blood, O'Fallon, MO	O'Fallon, MO
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Montana

Montana immigrant justice alliance	Helena, MT
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Nebraska

Sisters of Mercy West Midwest Community	Omaha, NE
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New York

Adhikaar for Human Rights & Social Justice	Woodside, NY
Chhaya CDC	Jackson Heights, NY
Chinese American Planning Council, Inc.	New York, NY
Korean American Lawyers Association of Greater New York	New York, NY
MinKwon Center for Community Action	New York, NY
Richmond Hill EDC	Richmond Hill, NY
Sisters of Saint Joseph, Brentwood, New York	Brentwood, NY

Ohio

Asian Services In Action, Inc	Cleveland, OH
Federation of India Community Associations of NE Ohio	Cleveland, Ohio

Oregon

PCUN	Woodburn, OR
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Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania Council of Churches
Srs. of the IHM, Immaculata

Harrisburg, PA
Immaculata, PA

South Carolina

Lowcountry Immigration Coalition

Bluffton, SC

South Dakota

Presentation Sisters

Aberdeen, SD

Texas

Dominican Sisters of Houston
JACL Houston Chapter
Justice For Our Neighbors DFW
WIN - The Welcoming Immigrants Network

Houston, TX
Houston, TX
Grapevine, TX
Dallas, TX

cc: Members of the House of Representatives