



For Immediate Release

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Immigration Reform Bill Welcomed by The Advocates for Human Rights

"This is a major step forward with positive steps for people," says organization

The Advocates for Human Rights welcomes today's introduction of bipartisan, comprehensive legislation in the United States Senate reforming the U.S. immigration system. The bill, the "Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act," shifts the focus of immigration from a punitive, enforcement-only model to one that begins to use a humane approach.

"We are pleased to see the introduction of this legislation, responding to some of the most pressing human rights concerns facing immigrants, refugees, and asylum-seekers in the United States," said Robin Phillips, executive director of The Advocates.

As the main provider of free legal services to asylum seekers in the Upper Midwest, The Advocates is particularly pleased the legislation begins to address the broken asylum system in addition to including a roadmap to citizenship for people who are in the U.S. without documentation. The proposal includes common-sense fixes to the asylum system, including provisions 1) repealing an arbitrary one-year filing deadline for asylum seekers; 2) eliminating provisions needlessly separating refugees and people granted asylum from close family members; and 3) allowing asylum officers to grant asylum to arriving asylum seekers, rather than referring them to immigration judges for that decision.

"While not perfect, the bill is an important starting point for creating an immigration policy that protects the human rights of all people in this country," said Phillips. The bill would establish a roadmap to citizenship for the estimated 11 million people in the United States without documentation. It would also strengthen due process protections, including providing additional training and resources for immigration courts and appeals board, and provide much-needed reforms to the detention system.

In addition, the legislation provides for a pilot program to promote immigrant integration. The Advocates is in the final year of its monitoring project to assess how Minnesota promotes and protects the human rights of immigrants, refugees, and all Minnesotans.

"As an organization dedicated to protecting the human rights of all people, regardless of where they were born, we look forward to working with U.S. Congress and Minnesota's congressional delegation to create a just and humane immigration system that reflects our most deeply-held American values that everyone is equal in dignity and rights," said Phillips.

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The Advocates for Human Rights, a nonprofit organization headquartered in Minneapolis, Minnesota, is dedicated to the promotion and protection of internationally-recognized human rights. To learn more about The Advocates' local, national, and international work, visit theadvocatesforhumanrights.org.