



Washington State Legislature

March 18, 2010

Dear Senator Murray and Senator Cantwell:

For years, the federal government has failed to address the broken immigration system and left our communities to deal with the effects. As state legislators, we have worked to fill in the vacuum created by the lack of reform. In the first quarter of 2009, state legislatures in all 50 states introduced 1,040 bills and resolutions relating to immigrants, refugees, migrants and seasonal workers. In Washington, we discussed bills that centered on immigration and post-secondary education, health care, firearms licenses, voting, and agricultural labor. We know that the issue of immigration touches every issue that we care about.

We live in a state where a significant proportion (12 percent) of residents immigrated from abroad, where 23 percent of Washington's children are in immigrant families, and where immigrants comprise 14 percent of our labor force—all of which makes immigration reform of crucial importance to this state.

Washington State recognizes the clear contributions immigrants make to the U.S. economy and society in all sectors; that undocumented workers fill positions in key industries such as agriculture, which contributes greatly to the gross product of our state; and that Washington's economy is reliant on immigrants as workers, consumers, and business owners.


We endorse the need for comprehensive immigration reform, which promotes the reunification of families, provides legal status to undocumented individuals with a path to earned citizenship, addresses current and future worker flows, provides due process and civil liberty protections, and encourages immigrant integration. The United States urgently needs legislation to correct the failings of our immigration system and to recognize the crucial contributions immigrants make to our nation. The United States need legislation to enable employers to legally hire needed immigrant workers; to protect all workers, regardless of immigration status, from mistreatment by employers; to facilitate family reunification; and to restore due process protections within the immigration legal system. Legislation must also support the full integration of newcomers by providing immigrants with quality English instruction, the tools necessary for meaningful citizenship, and opportunities to move up the economic ladder.

We respectfully urge the Congress of the United States to address comprehensive immigration reform this year. We need you to ask Senator Schumer to introduce immigration reform legislation early enough this year that it has time to move forward. Our state's economy and families are counting on Congress to work together across party lines to find workable solutions to our broken system. It is urgent to act today.

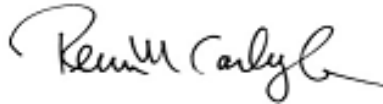
Sincerely,



Speaker of the House, Frank Chopp



Rep. Sherry Appleton



Rep. Reuven Carlyle



Rep. Maralyn Chase



Rep. Judy Clibborn



Rep. Eileen Cody



Rep. Steve Conway



Rep. Jeannie Darneille



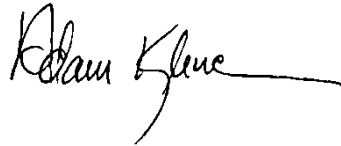
Senator Darlene Fairley



Senator Claudia Kauffman



Senator Karen Keiser



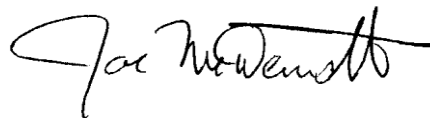
Senator Adam Kline



Senator Jeanne Kohl-Welles



Senator Rosemary McAuliffe



Senator Joe McDermott



Senator Ed Murray

Mary Lou Dickerson

Rep. Mary Lou Dickerson

Margarita Prentice

Senator Margarita Prentice

Hans Dunshee

Rep. Hans Dunshee

Kevin Ranker

Senator Kevin Ranker

Mark Ericks

Rep. Mark Ericks

Debbie Regala

Senator Debbie Regala

Roger E. Goodman

Rep. Roger Goodman

Paul Shin

Senator Paul Shin

Bob Hasegawa

Rep. Bob Hasegawa

Zach Hudgins

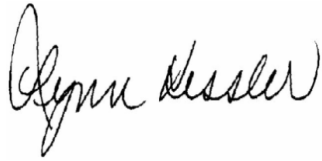
Rep. Zach Hudgins

Ruth Kagi

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Phyllis Gutierrez Kenney

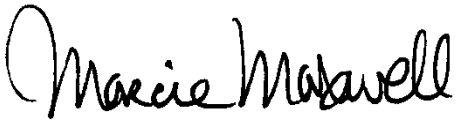
Rep. Phyllis Gutierrez Kenney



Rep. Lynn Kessler



Rep. Marko Liias



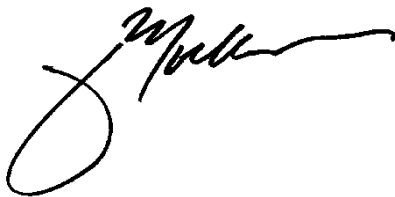
Rep. Marcie Maxwell



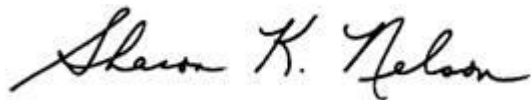
Rep. John McCoy



Rep. Mark Miloscia



Rep. Jim Moeller



Rep. Sharon Nelson



Rep. Tina Orwall



Rep. Jamie Pedersen

Rep. Dave Quall



Rep. Eric Pettigrew



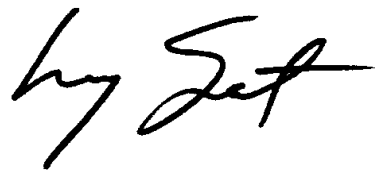
Rep. Mary Helen Roberts



Rep. Christine Rolfes



Rep. Sharon Tomiko Santos



Rep. Larry Seaquist



Rep. Mike Sells



Rep. Geoff Simpson



Rep. Dave Upthegrove



Rep. Kevin Van De Wege



Rep. Scott White



Rep. Brendan Williams

CC: Representatives Inslee, Smith, Reichert, McDermott, Baird, Hastings, Dicks, Larsen, McMorris-Rodgers

President Obama

Senators Schumer & Cornyn, Senate Judiciary Committee

Representatives Lofgren & King, House Judiciary Committee