

Immigration Policy Separates Legal Immigrants from Spouses and Children

Unitefamilies.org urges Congress to save families of legal immigrants by acting upon House bill HR 1823

Washington, D.C. (PRWEB) May 12, 2005 -- Unitefamilies.org, an organized group of legal residents (website: www.unitefamilies.org), is urging congressional representatives to support HR 1823 proposed by Rep. Robert Andrews (NJ) and Rep. Sheila Jackson-Lee (TX). This bill will amend provisions of the V-visa – a temporary, non-immigrant visa type - and help unite spouses and minor children of legal immigrants.

Many legal permanent residents (green card holders) are currently living in the United States, separated from their spouses and infant children. They are waiting for their I-130 petitions (immigration application for spouse and minor children) to be approved. Statutory numerical limitations on available visas, coupled with immigration backlogs and bureaucratic delays, causes waiting times of 5 years or more. Legal immigrants feel that it is unfair and cruel to break up nuclear families.

During this long wait, the foreign resident spouse and young children are not allowed to enter the United States, even for a brief visit. The permanent residents, on the other hand, must reside predominantly in the United States and thus the web of US immigration laws ruthlessly separates married couples from each other and from young children.

Legal immigrants feel that the existing restriction on V-visa is arbitrary and obsolete as it ensures family separation of immigrants who got married after December 2000. Unitefamilies.org is supporting house bill HR 1823, which will amend the outdated restrictions on V-visa and make it usable by foreign resident spouses and minor children of legal immigrants to enter and live in the US temporarily while their I-130 petitions are pending with the Immigration department.

Acting on this bill will fulfill the promise President Bush made during his 2000 campaign: “If we are a nation that believes in family values, we need to help husbands and wives and children of permanent residents be allowed to visit while the INS is handling their paperwork.” A group of legal immigrants stated today “four years and a reelection later, we are still waiting for President Bush to deliver on his promise”.

“Amending provisions of V-visa need not necessarily be the only solution; Amending Immigration and Nationality Act to extend the definition of ‘immediate family’ to include spouses and minor children of legal immigrants and US citizens will also serve as a complete solution. This will enable spouses and minor children of legal immigrants to make use of existing non-immigrant K-visa category”, states unitefamilies.org. Group members have already requested offices of Senators John McCain and Edward Kennedy to address family unification issue of legal immigrants in their upcoming bipartisan immigration reform bill. Both offices, however, failed to provide any sort of assurance to the suffering immigrants.

Unitefamilies.org urges its members and concerned citizens to write and call their congressional representatives to act on the proposed bill. Keeping husbands and wives separated from each other and from young children is sending wrong messages about American family values. Group members point out the contradiction that is in the current political atmosphere: (a) the claims to promote family and moral values, yet having policies that break up immediate families of law abiding, taxpaying legal immigrants (b) the rush by Washington lawmakers to help and save families of undocumented workers, completely ignoring devastated families of legal immigrants.

“Our Immigration laws and procedures are very complicated and they even appear tough. However, divided families and forcefully separated couples talk of the ugly and inhumane side of our Immigration Laws. We seldom hear or think of the Legal Immigrants - those who became immigrants through legal procedures, those who never broke any law. Recent debates on the hill are intended to help illegal immigrants only. Congress ignores the suffering of taxpaying, law-abiding legal immigrants”, the group says.

The nucleus of Legal Permanent Residents’ families is shattered due to separation from spouses and minor children – thanks to contradictions in the current immigration law. All types of temporary guest workers and even students are allowed to bring their spouses, children and even parents to the US without any delay. However, the same immigration law forces a taxpaying, legal immigrant to wait for a minimum of five years to be united with his/her foreign resident spouse and infant child. “It is appalling that such contradictions within the law have so far escaped notice. It is time Washington lawmakers took a good look at the heartbreaking stories coming from legal immigrants of this country”, says Unitefamilies.org.

Unitefamilies.org is a volunteer group and is growing strong. New members, mostly victims of family separation caused by unfair immigration laws, are joining this group every day.

Group’s website can be found at www.unitefamilies.org. Contact: email protected from spam bots

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