



New York
330 7th Avenue, Suite 1902
New York, NY 10001
phone: (212) 213 2113
fax: (212) 213 2233

Philadelphia
8459 Ridge Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19128
phone: (215) 483 4004
fax: (215) 483 4429

Baltimore
3600 Clipper Mill Road, Suite 228
Baltimore, MD 21218
phone: (410) 366 4151
fax: (410) 366 4083

Los Angeles
2433 Main Street, Suite C
Santa Monica, CA 90405
phone: (310) 450 3390
fax: (310) 450 2390

website: www.jewishjustice.org **blog:** www.jspot.org

May 21, 2007

For Immediate Release
Contact: Mik Moore
(646) 670 8249

JEWISH FUNDS FOR JUSTICE NOT SATISFIED WITH CURRENT VERSION OF COMPROMISE IMMIGRATION BILL IN SENATE

Dismantling of family-based preference system, emphasis on skilled English speaking workers, temporary worker program are top concerns

NEW YORK CITY-- The Jewish Funds for Justice released the following statement today regarding the U.S. Senate's move toward comprehensive immigration reform in recent days:

We thank the Senate for turning once again to the pressing issue of immigration, and for working around the clock to craft a comprehensive bill. We applaud the inclusion of a provision for a path to citizenship for most of the twelve million immigrants who are currently living undocumented lives in the United States and who already contribute enormously to the economic and cultural life of this country. The first priority of immigration reform is a humane resolution for those who are already here, and this bill puts us on a path toward doing so.

We are also pleased that the bill will make available an increased number of visas for those who wish to come to the United States in order to work and to support themselves and their families.

Nonetheless, we are deeply concerned that many other provisions of this bill value economic needs over human concerns. This bill will effectively dismantle the family-based preference system, which has been the basis of U.S. immigration policy for most of the last century. Family-based immigration allows families to stay together, and helps immigrants to build strong communities in their new homeland. The elimination of this preference system threatens to break up families. The emphasis, instead, on awarding "points" for job skills, education, and English-language ability will reward immigrants who already have greater opportunities while punishing low wage workers who have the greatest needs and who fill a vital role in our economy.

Also of concern is the inclusion in this bill of a program to provide temporary work visas, but which offers no chance to apply for permanent residency. This program would likely become a boon to unscrupulous employers who could take advantage to mistreat or underpay immigrant workers, knowing that these workers will be unlikely to risk losing their work visas by reporting employer abuses. The requirement that workers return to their home countries every two years

further threatens to destabilize immigrant communities by making it more difficult for many immigrants to set down permanent roots in a community.

The Jewish community is grateful that the relatively open border policies of the last two centuries allowed our own families to flee economic and religious hardship, and to establish a new life in the United States. Today's immigrants have similar longings. We hope that the Senate will amend the current compromise legislation to address the concerns we share with many Americans about its dismantling of our family-based preference system, emphasis on already skilled workers, and the temporary worker program.

####