

December 10, 2009

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer, Chairman  
Senate Subcommittee on Immigration, Refugees and Border Security  
313 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Cornyn, Ranking Member  
Senate Subcommittee on Immigration, Refugees and Border Security  
517 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Schumer and Cornyn,

We write as leaders of Jewish community organizations who strongly believe that our country would benefit from improvements to our immigration system. Our views are shaped by the teachings of our Jewish religious and ethical traditions, as well as our core American values. With this background, we call on our leaders to reform our immigration laws to “welcome the stranger” and to provide an effective immigration system characterized by the rule of law, national interest, and compassionate treatment of newcomers.

We urge you to introduce legislation that will accomplish the following:

- Reform our family-based immigration system to significantly reduce waiting times for separated families who currently must wait many years to be reunited. Family is a cornerstone value for the Jewish community. According to Jewish tradition, “Kin and family resemble a heap of stones; if one stone is taken out of it, the whole collapses.” (Genesis Rabbah). Immigration laws that separate families fail to honor this basic principle of family unity;
- Provide an opportunity for hard-working immigrants who are already contributing to our country to come out of the shadows, regularize their status upon satisfaction of reasonable criteria, and become lawful permanent residents and eventually United States citizens;
- Offer legal avenues for workers and their families who wish to migrate to the U.S. and work in a safe, legal, and orderly manner with their rights fully protected;
- Financially support local governments and community organizations that provide classes and services that assist immigrants with full integration into society; and
- Protect our border and enforce immigration laws in a manner that bolsters our national security, while balancing enforcement priorities with economic development and human and civil rights protections, including due process.

We realize the deliberations on immigration reform will be difficult, but we firmly believe that with your leadership, Congress can ensure that our country's immigration laws are reformed in a comprehensive manner that will make the United States stronger and safer while honoring family values and our tradition as a nation of immigrants.

The organizations signed on this letter are committed to working with you to achieve comprehensive immigration reform in 2010. Please let us know how we can support your efforts in Congress this year.

Sincerely,

*National Organizations*

Rabbi Abba Cohen, Director and Counsel, Washington Office  
Agudath Israel of America

David A. Harris, Executive Director  
American Jewish Committee

Deborah Lauter, National Director for Civil Rights  
Anti-Defamation League

Daniel S. Mariaschin, Executive Vice President  
B'nai B'rith International

Gideon Aronoff, President and CEO  
Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS)

Rabbi Steve Gutow, President & CEO  
Jewish Council for Public Affairs

William Daroff, Vice President for Public Policy and Director of the Washington Office  
The Jewish Federations of North America

Rosalind Spigel, Acting Director  
Jewish Labor Committee

Rabbi Shawn Zevit, Director of Outreach and Tikkun Olam  
Jewish Reconstructionist Federation

Cecille Allman Asekoff, Executive Director  
National Association of Jewish Chaplains (NAJC)

Nancy Ratzan, President  
National Council of Jewish Women

Rabbi Jeffrey Wohlberg, President  
The Rabbinical Assembly

Rabbi David Saperstein, Director  
Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism

Rabbi Arthur Waskow, Rabbinic Director  
The Shalom Center

Shelley Lindauer, Executive Director  
Lynn Magid Lazar, President  
Women of Reform Judaism

Robert Kaplan, President  
Workmen's Circle/Arbeter Ring

*Local Organizations*

Rabbi Maynard Bell, Director  
American Jewish Committee- Arizona

Judy Marx, Director  
American Jewish Committee- Atlanta

Lois Rosenfield, Director  
American Jewish Committee- Baltimore

Rob Leikind, Director  
American Jewish Committee- Boston

Emily Soloff, Director  
American Jewish Committee- Chicago

Barbara Glueck, Director  
American Jewish Committee- Cincinnati

Lee C. Shapiro, Director  
American Jewish Committee- Cleveland

Don Schlesinger, Director  
American Jewish Committee- Colorado

Kim Kamen, Director  
American Jewish Committee- Dallas

Kari Alterman, Director  
American Jewish Committee- Detroit

Randall Czarlinsky, Director  
American Jewish Committee- Houston

Marvin Szneler, Director  
American Jewish Committee- Kansas City

Caroline Levy, Director  
American Jewish Committee- Long Island

Seth Brysk, Director  
American Jewish Committee- Los Angeles

Brian Siegal, Director  
American Jewish Committee- Miami & Broward County

Allyson Gall, Director  
American Jewish Committee- New Jersey

Diane Steinman, Director  
American Jewish Committee- New York

Rabbi Marc Dworkin, Director  
American Jewish Committee- Orange County

Rachel Miller, Director  
American Jewish Committee- Palm Beach County

Ilana Wilensik, Director  
American Jewish Committee- Philadelphia

Nancy Lisker, Director  
American Jewish Committee- St. Louis

Mervyn Danker, Director  
American Jewish Committee- San Francisco

Wendy Rosen, Director  
American Jewish Committee- Seattle

Melanie Maron Pell, Director  
American Jewish Committee- Washington, DC

Scott Richman, Director  
American Jewish Committee- Westchester

Brian Lipton, Director  
American Jewish Committee- West Coast Florida

Judy B. Wortman, Executive Director  
Central Kentucky Jewish Federation

David Zverow, Director  
HIAS Chicago

Vic Rosenthal, Executive Director  
Jewish Community Action, St. Paul, Minnesota

Lauri Lowell, Director  
Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater New Haven, Connecticut

Luis E. Fleischman, Executive Director  
Jewish Community Relations Council, Jewish Federation of Palm Beach County

Ronald Halber, Executive Director  
Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Washington

Jonathan Rothschild, Chair  
Brenda Landau, Director  
Jewish Community Relations Council, Jewish Federation of Southern Arizona

Jane Ramsey, Executive Director  
Jewish Council on Urban Affairs, Chicago

Judith A. Saks, Community Relations Director  
Jewish Federation of Nashville

Jacob Feinspan, Executive Director  
Jews United for Justice, Washington, DC

William E. Rapfogel, CEO/Executive Director  
Metropolitan Council on Jewish Poverty, New York

Elissa Barrett, Executive Director  
Progressive Jewish Alliance, California

Ronald Soloway, Managing Director of Government and External Relations  
UJA-Federation of New York