

SEPTEMBER 20, 2005 SCHAKOWSKY CALLS FOR REAL IMMIGRATION REFORM

SAYS SYSTEM SHOULD BRING IMMIGRANTS OUT OF SHADOWS, KEEP FAMILIES TOGETHER, REWARD HARD WORK

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) today joined a bi-partisanship coalition of Members of Congress including Sen. John McCain (R-AZ), Rep. Jeff Flake (R-AZ), Rep. Luis Gutierrez (D-IL), Rep. Jim Kolbe (R-AZ), immigrant workers and families, and labor and religious leaders today at a rally in support of H.R. 2330, the Secure America and Orderly Immigration Act. On the steps of the Foundry United Methodist Church in Washington, Representative Schakowsky joined her colleagues to support an immigration reform plan which would give the millions of undocumented immigrants in this country legal options to work their way towards citizenship. The rally kicked off a day of lobbying on Capitol Hill by the coalition of groups advocating for immigration reform.

Representative Schakowsky's statement is below:

We are a strong and broad coalition of labor, business, civil rights, and religious organizations, and we mean business. This rally will be followed by a lobby day tomorrow with advocates from 30 states and town hall meetings throughout the country. Our message will be heard loud and clear in Washington this week.

Comprehensive immigration reform is a must for this Congress and it must be done right.

The vast majority of the 11 million undocumented immigrants in this country are law-abiding, hard-working individuals who pay their taxes and are contributing to our society. They are our neighbors, fellow worshippers, and friends. They want to stay in this country, to continue their part to making it better, and they want to do so legally. They want their children to share in the opportunity of American and to help make this country even stronger and better.

We want solutions. Every day someone dies in the desert. Every day in America, there are millions of immigrants working to provide services but living in fear, afraid to seek health care and educational opportunities for their children. Every day immigrant families remain separated. Every day local communities struggle to deal with the consequences of our failed federal immigration policies. This is un-American, unsafe and unjust. We want viable, real solutions and we need them today.

We need an immigration system that welcomes well-intentioned, hard-working people to this great country.

We need an immigration system that keeps families together. And we need one that helps re-unite them faster when they have been torn apart.

We need an immigration system that brings people out of the shadows, and puts them on a path toward living the American dream.

We need a realistic system - and a workable system that will make America more secure and immigration more orderly and fair. One that rewards hard work with earned legalization.

We need improved immigration services so that paperwork does not get held up in backlogs that take years to process.

That cycle must be broken.

That's why I strongly support H.R. 2330. It's a comprehensive, bipartisan immigration reform bill.

H.R. 2330 offers immigrants a clear route to citizenship and new opportunities as Americans.

It will help immigrants to this country continue to contribute to it in so many valuable ways.

It will lift the cap on family visas to help families who have waited up to ten years to reunite in this country.

It will protect workers' rights, protect wages and benefits, and allow workers to change jobs and join unions to bargain for their rights.

We need real and comprehensive immigration reform now.

The McCain-Kennedy, (Colby-Flake-Gutierrez) bill will make overdue and commonsense improvements to our immigration system. And, working together, I know we are going to get it passed

Congresswoman Schakowsky speaks at the Foundry United Methodist Church.

Congresswoman Schakowsky addresses the crowd about H.R. 2330, the Secure America and Orderly Immigration Act