

OCTOBER 15, 2002

SCHAKOWSKY SCORES A- FOR WORK ON BEHALF OF IMMIGRANTS

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) scored an A- from the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights for her continued leadership on behalf of immigrant rights. The scorecard was released during a rally to kickoff the "New Americans Action Day," a coordinated national outreach campaign calling on members of Congress to support fair policies for immigrants.

"Your voices and your passion are invaluable," Schakowsky told the advocates during today's event. She added that she will continue to fight to reform immigration laws to ensure that poor immigrants have access to welfare benefits and Food Stamps and that those who have been living and working here for years have an opportunity to become legal permanent resident.

Schakowsky also announced her strong support for The Earned Legalization and Family Unification Act, legislation introduced by Democratic Leader Gephardt It would allow undocumented immigrants who have been in the U.S. for at least five years, worked in the U.S. for 2 years, and met all other background checks to apply for legal permanent resident (LPR) status. It also allows spouses and children of eligible persons to apply for adjustment to LPR status.

Furthermore, the bill allows children up to 25 years old who do not have eligible parents, but who have been in the U.S. for at least five years and are in 7th grade or higher or are applying for college, to apply for adjustment of status (a parent could not adjust their status based on the child). Finally, the bill would ensure availability of visas to qualified family members and remove immediate relatives from the world-wide cap - freeing approximately 250,000 to 300,000 visas.