

SCHAKOWSKY HAILS EFFORTS TO REFORM 1996 IMMIGRATION LAW

WASHINGTON, D.C. U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) issued the following statement in support of efforts to reform current immigration laws. Groups from across the nation held a news conference in Washington, D.C. last week to bring attention to the harsh effect current immigration laws have on U.S. citizens and legal immigrants.

"Chicago is a city of immigrants and we are proud of our diversity. My district serves as a gateway to America for immigrants from all parts of the globe. That is why, on behalf of my constituents, I want to congratulate the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights and the National Immigration Forum for their work to right the wrongs of the 1996 immigration law. This misguided law continues to harm the lives of many hard working people, who contribute greatly to our nation.

"In 1996, with the passage of this new immigration law, our nation saw the beginning of an unprecedented attack on immigrants in this country. Almost immediately upon enactment, a bipartisan majority in Congress joined forces with the Administration to begin to correct some of the most egregious excesses. We will continue our push in Congress to halt the attacks and restore our nation's tradition of embracing its immigrants.

"I will soon be introducing the Battered Immigrant Women Protection Act of 1999, along with Representatives Sheila Jackson-Lee and Connie Morella. The bill would restore and expand access to a variety of legal protections for battered immigrants so they may flee violent homes, obtain court protections, cooperate in the criminal prosecution of their abusers, and take control of their lives without the fear of deportation.

"Recently, in response to pressure, we have seen some positive changes in the treatment of immigrants on the local level. The Chicago INS has begun to take step to eliminate the 'customer is always wrong' culture. Also, 88 Chinese asylum seekers will be paroled or moved from a maximum-security prison in southern Illinois. Now is the time to translate those local victories to the national stage."