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For Immediate Release

April 18, 2013

Contact: Jane Yoo, NAKASEC, 202.630.4013

Full Bill Text: <http://www.schumer.senate.gov/forms/immigration.pdf>

Attached: Bill Summary

This is the Year for Immigration Reform
NAKASEC, KRCC and KRC Ready to Organize Communities

Bill is a Mixed Bag. Aiming to Advocate for Improvements through Legislative Process while Supporting Positive Provisions.

Washington D.C. – On Wednesday, April 17, the U.S. Senate introduced the Border Security, Economic Opportunity and Immigration Modernization Act of 2013. The National Korean American Service & Education Consortium (NAKASEC) and its affiliates the Korean American Resource & Cultural Center (KRCC) in Chicago and the Korean Resource Center (KRC) in Los Angeles are encouraged by these first steps from the Gang of 8, and have outlined aspects of the bill that we support and areas that need improvement. We are rapidly gearing up to organize our communities throughout the legislative process to pass an inclusive, fair and humane immigration reform bill this year.

Legalization

“We must first recognize that this bill comes after years of organizing and building power and voice in our communities. We now have an unprecedented opportunity to pass legislation that will modernize the immigration system,” said Son Ah Yun, executive director of NAKASEC. “The new roadmap to citizenship for 11 million undocumented immigrants is the centerpiece of this bill. While we are encouraged by this provision, the road to citizenship is long (13 years) and arduous with arbitrary triggers that may thwart the path to citizenship for this group of hardworking, aspiring Americans. What is more, the cut off date of December 31, 2011 to be eligible is troublesome as it leaves many immigrants out. What our communities need is a clear, direct and affordable path to citizenship that is inclusive of as many families and immigrants.”

DREAM Act

“NAKASEC and affiliate centers have been working with young people on the DREAM Act for over a decade. Here in Los Angeles, our undocumented youth group, AKASIA, has conducted numerous AB540 (California’s in-state tuition) consultations and workshops, and most recently coordinated Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival (DACA) clinics that helped thousands of young people through the process,” said Dae Joong Yoon, executive director of KRC. As of April 10th, 5,476 people from South Korea have been approved for DACA. From what we understand, DACA recipients will be grandfathered into Registered Provisional Immigrant (RPI) status. “We welcome and support the provisions for undocumented youth, or DREAMers, which establishes a faster path to citizenship (5 years), regardless of their age.” Continued Yoon, “Our undocumented youth have always worked alongside the broader immigrant community and we will continue to work together to improve the path to citizenship for their parents, older siblings and hardworking immigrants.”

Family Unity

“When reports first came out that some members of the Gang of 8 would significantly cut the family visa program, we organized actions that included civil disobedience in downtown Chicago and a rally in front of Senator Feinstein’s office in Los Angeles. Our efforts culminated to a national petition drive where in just two weeks, we collected 1,267 signatures in support of protecting family unity within comprehensive immigration reform,” said Sik Son, executive director of KRCC. “Despite our efforts to protect family unity, the current bill, while including positive provisions such as elimination of backlogs and allowing spouses and minor children of green card holders to reunite without delays, has capped the adult children category to those under 31 years old and eliminates the sibling category altogether. This is not acceptable to our community. We are committed to improving the bill to ensure that these categories and all families are ultimately included in the immigration reform discussions.”

Other provisions of the bill that poses much concern include:

- Harsh enforcement measures on the border and implementation of e-verify, which is expensive and has known to be error ridden
- Prohibiting taxpaying immigrants from accessing healthcare and benefits

There is strong support for immigration reform in this country. A bipartisan [Hart/Public Opinion Strategies poll](#) found 80% of Americans support broad reform with a path to citizenship – including a strong majority of Republican voters. During the 2012 elections, 72% of Asian American voters stated they support passage of comprehensive immigration reform legislation. This is the year that immigration reform must happen. While the legislation is a good start to address our broken immigration system, we must work to improve it so that it is more inclusive and reflective of our values.

Upcoming Actions & Getting Involved

NAKASEC, KRC and KRCC plan on holding community meetings and townhalls to discuss the immigration reform bill in the coming weeks and encourage community members to participate. Please contact 202-299-9540 for more information.

Community members are also encouraged to participate in the “We Are America, America is Home” photo contest (<http://weareamericaishome.tumblr.com/> -- deadline April 30th) that aims to put the focus on families in the current immigration debate. Photo submissions will be part of a national family album with the goal of community members leading efforts to advocate for reform.

NAKASEC is also organizing a national mobilization of Asian Americans in Washington D.C. on June 5th.

Finally, community members are encouraged to share their immigration stories and submit questions on the comprehensive immigration reform bill to cirinfo@nakasec.org. These questions will be compiled and efforts will be made to answer these questions in a timely basis through both online and offline means.

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The National Korean American Service & Education Consortium (NAKASEC) was founded in 1994 by local community centers to project a national progressive voice and promote the full participation of Korean Americans as a part of a greater goal of building a national movement for social change. NAKASEC is based D.C. and Los Angeles. NAKASEC also has affiliates in Chicago (Korean American Resource & Cultural Center) and Los Angeles (Korean Resource Center).