

2013-K1169

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION memorializing the United States Congress to pass and the President to sign a comprehensive immigration reform bill in 2014

WHEREAS, Immigrants often struggle to thrive in this country and may face significant hurdles when pursuing U.S. citizenship; and

WHEREAS, Many undocumented immigrants are employed by employers that violate federal and state labor laws, which can lead to unpaid or subminimum wages, lack of overtime pay, and poor or unsafe working conditions; and

WHEREAS, Many undocumented immigrants become victims of fraudulent immigration services; and

WHEREAS, Higher education is often impossible for undocumented immigrant youth to afford because their undocumented status makes them ineligible for many forms of financial aid; and

WHEREAS, 4.5 million U.S. citizen children with at least one undocumented parent are at risk of being separated from that parent; and

WHEREAS, Congress has for many years considered legislation to address the needs of immigrant families; and

WHEREAS, The Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors ("DREAM") Act, introduced for the first time in 2001, would allow states to provide higher education benefits and a pathway to citizenship for eligible undocumented immigrant youth; and

WHEREAS, Attracting the Best and Brightest Act was introduced in Congress in 2012 to grant visas for immigrants who receive advanced degrees in the science, technology, engineering or mathematics fields; and

WHEREAS, The Protect our Workers from Exploitation and Retaliation (POWER) Act, introduced in Congress in 2011, sought to expand the U-visa

program to give immigrant victims of labor law violations the opportunity to apply for legal status if they participated in the investigation of their employer; and

WHEREAS, In January 2013, a group of U.S. Senators and President Barack Obama proposed comprehensive immigration reform frameworks to address the needs of immigrants living in the United States; and

WHEREAS, These proposals seek to establish a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants; end the unlawful hiring of undocumented workers; provide visas for immigrants who receive advanced degrees in the science, technology, engineering or mathematics fields; provide incentives to undocumented youth who want to pursue higher education; and promote family unification; and

WHEREAS, An effective comprehensive immigration reform bill should also modify immigration court proceedings to provide judges increased discretion and provide defendants with a right to counsel, recognize and prevent the crime of immigration service provider fraud, and preserve family unity by eliminating family numerical visa categories; and

WHEREAS, None of these or other significant immigration reform measures have been enacted into law; and

WHEREAS, Enactment of comprehensive immigration reform could benefit the 475,000 undocumented immigrants in the New York State's labor force, the 400,000 undocumented children in New York State's public schools, and thousands of U.S. citizen children who have at least one parent who is an undocumented immigrant; and

WHEREAS, In 2011, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, 27.3% of the State's workforce was comprised of immigrants; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Congress of the United States be and hereby is respectfully memorialized by this Legislative Body to pass and the President to sign a comprehensive immigration reform bill in 2014; and be it further

RESOLVED, That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be tran-

mitted to the President of the Senate of the United States, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and to each member of the Congress of the United States from the State of New York.