An Open Letter to President Obama and to All Members of Congress

We urge you to create a humane and just immigration process that provides a clear roadmap to citizenship for the 11 million aspiring citizens and dignifies the individual and our nation by ensuring access to affordable health care and needed nutrition assistance. We believe that reform of our immigration system is a moral and economic imperative. This is true for the millions of aspiring citizens caught in the morass of a broken system; for those of us whose family, friends, neighbors, schools, congregations and communities include these individuals; and for achieving a stronger, more prosperous nation.

It is well established that immigrants help fuel the U.S. economy with their hard work and entrepreneurship. They contribute to the national treasury and are needed to shore up Social Security and Medicare. Our population is aging and our labor force increasingly depends upon immigrants and their children.

A new immigration system with a roadmap to citizenship will bring aspiring citizens out of the shadows so that they and their families may fully and equally participate in the life of our nation. Doing so not only will help immigrants but will profoundly benefit the community at large. It will enable economic growth and ground our national policy in the values we cherish. This is our opportunity to live up to our nation's promise of the unalienable rights of "Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

To acknowledge the inherent value and dignity of all human beings and to invest in our future, we must commit to ensuring their health and wellbeing. We ask our leaders to pass a national immigration law grounded in our most cherished principles. Such a policy will provide equal responsibility, and an equal opportunity to meet that responsibility, to all individuals living in the U.S.

Immigration reform that reflects America's values and priorities will provide equality and dignity and will:

- Help lift families out of poverty and promote economic security for all low-income families. This investment in human capital will make for a stronger, more secure nation.
- Reaffirm our nation's long-standing tradition of providing a core safety net for citizens and immigrants residing in the U.S. which will reinforce efforts to achieve national progress in health and nutrition.
- Ensure access to key programs and public services that meet basic human needs, including health services and insurance, education, nutrition assistance, and working family tax credits.
- Invest in robust efforts to integrate immigrants into their communities.
- Ensure that all individuals have access to and pay their fair share for quality, affordable health care and receive medical care when they need it.

National Groups

Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum Church World Service CLASP Coalition on Human Needs First Focus National Immigration Law Center National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health

605 CITIZENSHIP PROJECT 9to5 Advocacy and Training Center Advocates for Youth AFL-CIO **AIDS Community Research Initiative of America** AIDS United Alliance for a Just Society Alliance for Children and Families Alliance of Baptists American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) American Federation of Teachers American Medical Student Association American Sexual Health Association America's Voice Anti-Defamation League Arab American Institute Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum Asian American Justice Center, Member of Asian American Center for Advancing Justice Asian Pacific American Medical Student Association (APAMSA) Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations Black Alliance for Just Immigration (BAJI) Bread for the World Breakthrough The CA Endowment Campaign for America's Future Campaign for Community Change Campaign to End AIDS CANN -Community Access National Network The Center for APA Women Center for Medicare Advocacy, Inc. Change Matrix LLC Children's Advocacy Institute Children's Health Fund Children's HealthWatch The Children's Partnership Church World Service **Civil Liberties and Public Policy Program** CLASP Coalition on Human Needs Committee of Interns and Residents - SEIU Healthcare **Community Action Partnership Community Catalyst** Congregation of St.Joseph David Ostrow & Associates **Democratic Socialists of America Dignity Health** The Episcopal Church The Episcopal Network for Economic Justice First Focus Food Research and Action Center **Gilbert Law Office Hispanic Federation** HIV Prevention Justice Alliance (HIV PJA) **Hmong National Development Immigrant Legal Resource Center**

Immigration Equality International Union, UAW Jewish Council for Public Affairs Justice and Peace Center- A Ministry of the Sisters of St. Joseph-Concordia Keshet Khmer Health Advocates, In. Labor Council for Latin American Advancement (LCLAA) The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights Leadership Conference of Women Religious Legion of Marv LULAC Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service Main Street Alliance **Migrant Clinicians Network** National Asian American Pacific Islander Mental Health Association National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum National Association of Council for Children National Association of Public Hospitals and Health Systems National Association of Social Workers National Black Gay Men's Advocacy Coalition National Center for Law and Economic Justice National Center for Transgender Equality National Community Tax Coalition National Council of Jewish Women National Council on Aging The National Crittenton Foundation National Education Association National Gay and Lesbian Task Force National Health Law Program National Hispanic Media Coalition National Immigration Law Center National Korean American Service and Education Consortium National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty National Minority AIDS Council National Senior Citizens Law Center National Women and AIDS Collective (NWAC) National Women's Health Network NETWORK, a National Catholic Social Justice Lobby Office of Immigration and Refugee Resettlement (ABHMS) Office of Social Justice, Christian Reformed Church in North America Positive Women's Network- United States of America **Project Inform** Provincial Council of the Clerics of St. Viator (Viatorians) Raising Women's Voices for the Health Care We Need **Research Institute Without Walls** RESULTS Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law Service Employees International Union (SEIU) SFNewsfeed.us Single Stop USA Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia Sisters of the Holy Cross - Congregation Justice Committee South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT)

Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC) Treatment Action Group U.S.-El Salvador Sister Cities UAW Union of Reform Judaism United for a Fair Economy United Mine Workers of America United Neighborhood Centers of America United Steelworkers United We Dream Viatorians Voices for America's Children World Education, Inc.

State/Local Groups

9to5 Atlanta 9to5 California 9to5 Colorado 9to5 Milwaukee Action for Children North Carolina Advocacy for Justice and Peace Committee of the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia Advocates for Children and Youth Advocates for Women African Services Committee AFSCME3299 **AIDS Foundation of Chicago AIDS Legal Council of Chicago AIDS Resource Center Ohio** Alameda Health Consortium Alianza del Pueblo Alivio Medical Center All Saints Episcopal Church, Pasadena, CA Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment Alliance of Filipinos for Immigrant Rights and Empowerment American Citizens for Justice/Asian American Center for Justice American Friends Service Committee of Western Massachusetts Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families Arkansas Marshallese Community Asian American Community Services Asian Counseling & Referral Service Asian Health Coalition Asian Human Services Family Health Center Asian Law Alliance Asian Law Caucus, member of Asian American Center for Advancing Justice Asian Pacific American Legal Center Asian Services In Action, Inc. Asian-American Community Service Council Association for Latino American Studies (ALAS)

Bay Area Immigration Taskforce Bay Clinic, Inc. Berkshire Immigrant Center California Church IMPACT California Immigrant Policy Center California Latinas for Reproductive Justice California Pan-Ethnic Health Network California Primary Care Association Cal-Islanders Humanitarian Association **Canal Alliance** CASA de Marvland Casa Latina **Cascade AIDS Project** Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago Center for Advocacy, Rights and Engagement Center for Civil Justice Center for Independent Living of South Florida, Inc. Center for Interfaith Encounter Center for Latino Progress - CPRF Center for Public Policy Priorities **Central Ohio Immigrant Justice CEO Pipe Organs/Golden Ponds Farm** Children Now Children's Alliance Christie's Place CIR NOW- Comprehensive Immigration Reform Citizen Action of New York City of Hope Cleveland Chinese students and professional group **CLUE** Santa Barbara Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles (CHIRLA) CodePink - Wichita Collaborative Center for Justice Colorado Center on Law and Policy **Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition** Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity and Reproductive Rights **Communications Workers of America Communities Creating Opportunity** Community Action Partnership of Utah Community Legal Services, Inc. **Community Of Friends In Action** Community Service Society of New York Comunidad Liberación/Liberation Community **Connecticut Multicultural Health Partnership** CT Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission **Dallas Fort Worth Pride Movement**

Denali Family Services Developing & Empowering Latinos In America Dominican Development Center Dominican Sisters of Houston DRUM - Desis Rising Up & Moving Earth Mama Healing, Inc. East Central Illinois Refugee Mutual Assistance Center El CENTRO de Igualdad y Derechos El Quinto Sol De America Elba Central School **Empire Justice Center** Encuentro Entre Hermanos Episcopal Church of Our Saviour/Iglesia de Nuestro Salvador Faith Caucus - IL CBHC Farmworker Association of Florida Filipino Advocates for Justice First Mexican Baptist Ch. Florida Legal Services, Inc. GALAEI Georgia Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition Georgia Rural Urban Summit Grace Lutheran Church Gray Panthers of San Francisco Greater Rochester Coalition for Immigration Justice **Guam Communications Network** The Hat Project Health Care For All New York **HIAS** Chicago HIAS Pennsylvania Hispanic Alliance of Tampa Bay Hispanic Community Dialogue Organization **Hispanic Ministry Office HIV Law Project** Housing Works Houston Community Services Iglesia Bautista Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights Illinois Conference UCC Immigration Task Force Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota Immigrant Service Providers Group/Health **Immigration Advocacy Matters** Immigration Rights Task Force of the Unitarian Society of New Haven Immigration Service and Aid Center (ISAAC) Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement Jewish Community Action

Jones and Chao, P.C. Kentucky Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights Kentucky Equal Justice Center Kentucky Youth Advocates **Kitsap Immigrant Assistance Center** Kokua Kalihi Valley Ko'olauloa Community Health and Wellness Center Korean Community Center of the East Bay Korean Resource Center L.A Community Legal Center and Educational La Esperanza Las Americas Immigrant Advocacy Center Latin American Association Latino Coalition for a Healthy California Latino Community Roundtable Latino Education & Training Institute Libreria Del Pueblo, Inc. Lifelong AIDS Alliance Lifting Latina Voices Initiative Little Sisters of the Assumption Family Health Service Lowcountry Immigration Coalition LULAC Council # 7226 LULAC- TAMPA Lupus Foundation of Northern California Make the Road New York Maria Sanchez-Ley Law Office Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition Massachusetts Law Reform Institute Maxwell Street Legal Clinic Migrant Support Services of Wayne Co. NY Minnesota AIDS Project Mississippi Immigrants Rights Alliance Modesto Peace/Life Center My Language link National Council of Jewish Women, Concordia Section National Council of Jewish Women, Los Angeles Section National Council of Jewish Women, Cleveland Section National Council of Jewish Women, Greater Houston Section National Council of Jewish Women, Illinois State Policy Advocacy Chair National Council of Jewish Women, Long Beach Section National Council of Jewish Women, Missouri State Policy Advocacy Chair National Council of Jewish Women, Peninsula Section National Council of Jewish Women, Rhode Island Section National Council of Jewish Women, Texas State Policy Advocacy Co-Chair National Council of Jewish Women, Utah Section National Council of Jewish Women, Valencia Shores Section

National Council of Jewish Women, Greater Detroit Section National Council of Jewish Women, California National Council of Jewish Women, St. Louis Section National Immigration Reform Advocates National Latino AIDS Action Network National Tongan American Society Nations of Micronesia Committee New Haven Peoples Center New Mexico Center on Law and Poverty New York Immigration Coalition New York Lawyers for the Public Interest New Yorkers for Accessible Health Coverage NH Alliance for Immigrants and Refugees NM Asian Family Center (NMAFC) NOELA Community Health Center North Carolina Council of Churches Northwest Immigrant Rights Project Ohio AIDS Coalition Ohio Asian American Health Coalition OneAmerica **Open Door Clinic Oregon New Sanctuary Movement** Pacific Islander Cancer Survivors Network Pacific Islander Health Partnership Pax Christi DuPage County Pennsylvania Council of Churches **PICO** California **Pilgrim Congregational UCC Prevention Point Philadelphia** Reformed Church of Highland Park, NJ The River Fund San Diego Hunger Coalition San Ysidro Health Center Services for the Advancement of Women-SEPA Mujer Servicios de La Raza Sierra Italia, Inc. Silicon Valley Alliance for Immigration Reform Sisters of Mercy West Midwest Justice Team Skagit Immigrant Rights Council Social Justice Ministry of Sacred Heart Catholic Church St Louis Inter-Faith Committee on Latin America Street Level Health Project Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition **Triumph Treatment Services** Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the Lowcountry United Church of Christ

Unity Fellowship of Christ Church NYC in Brooklyn University of Colorado University of Hawaii **UNO Federation Community Services** Virginia Organizing Vision y Compromiso Voces de la Frontera Waimanalo Health Center Washington Community Action Network! Washtenaw Interfaith Coalition for Immigrant Rights Wayne Action for Racial Equality Weber County Democrats Westchester for Change Western Center on Law and Poverty Wisconsin Council on Children and Families WV FREE Advocates for Reproductive Health, Rights and Justice Xaverian Brothers Yakutat Healthy Community Coalition YWCA Tulsa-Immigrant Program

May 8, 2013

The Honorable Patrick Leahy Chairman, Senate Judiciary Committee 437 Russell Senate Office Building Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Charles Grassley Ranking Member, Senate Judiciary Committee 135 Hart Senate Office Building Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: Women's Health in Immigration Reform and the Five Year Bar to Affordable Health Care

Dear Chairman Leahy and Ranking Member Grassley,

We welcome Senate consideration of comprehensive immigration reform – an issue that is greatly in need of attention. As advocates for women's health, however, we have concerns about provisions in the "Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act" that would be deleterious to the health of women and their families. We urge the Senate Judiciary Committee to lift prohibitions on access to health coverage in the bill and affirm equitable access to health care for all. As a critical first step, we ask the Senate Judiciary Committee to remove the five-year bar on immigrant's access to vital health care and family economic support programs. Women comprise the majority – 51% – of the immigrant population, yet issues of concern to women, particularly the need to advance access to quality and affordable health coverage and care have not been adequately addressed in this legislation.

Immigrant women are important contributing members of society who promote success at the workplace, in the home, and in their communities. Yet current federal policies governing immigrant women's access to health care and family economic supports, like the five-year bar, defy sound public health policies; are based on harmful myths and stereotypes; and undermine immigrant women's ability to fully contribute to the success of their families, communities, and our nation's economy.

As such, we are concerned that the immigration reform bill produced by the bipartisan group in the U.S. Senate does nothing to address the current restrictions and will leave many immigrant women without access to affordable and quality health care. As currently written, an undocumented immigrant woman coming forward to obtain citizenship is barred from meanstested federal benefits like Medicaid for the minimum 10-year period she is a registered provisional immigrant (RPI). In addition to this 10-year restriction, she will also face an additional five-year wait under current law if she does not naturalize. As a registered provisional immigrant, she will also be ineligible for premium tax credits and subsidies to facilitate her participation in the health insurance marketplaces, placing these new health plans out of reach for many immigrant women. As such, an immigrant woman may have to wait up to15 years or more before she can access affordable health coverage options.

This proposal is short-sighted and jeopardizes the health of women and their families. Health coverage for women can mean the difference between preventing and managing a treatable condition or, facing barriers to care, having those conditions exacerbated while going undetected and untreated. The latter circumstance can jeopardize a woman's health and well-being across her lifespan. In addition, providing low-income immigrant women with Medicaid coverage will also help increase access to pregnancy-related services and family planning services, which are fundamental to improving maternal and infant health. For a woman without access to routine care for 15 years, for example, an undetected, untreated sexually transmitted infection may cause infertility. Tragically, for a woman with undiagnosed breast or cervical cancer, 15 years can be the difference between life and death.

Beyond the human costs associated with delaying health coverage for a decade or more, the health coverage exclusions in the bipartisan immigration reform bill are fiscally short-sighted and impact immigrant women's ability to live as fully productive and independent members of society. Immigrant women are more productive when they have access to health care and are better able to work, care for their families, and pursue educational and employment opportunities. Additionally, when immigrant women and families don't have health coverage, the need for medical attention does not go away. Immigrant women without health insurance may either delay treatment for a preventable disease like cervical cancer, leading to higher costs and greater suffering, or seek care through under-resourced and expensive emergency systems. This undermines immigrant women's financial stability and increases health costs for the entire system. Expansions in health coverage have alleviated the costs of such emergency care by promoting preventive measures, detection, and early treatment; to exclude immigrants on the roadmap to citizenship is not only unfair, but fiscally irresponsible.

As such, we urge you to lift the five-year bar to accessing critical federal benefit programs such as Medicaid imposed on lawfully present immigrants. Doing so will improve immigrant women's access to health coverage, utilization of preventive care, and management of health conditions — outcomes that serve to benefit immigrant women and families as well as the health and economic well-being of our communities.

Immigrant women and families on the path to citizenship are committed to being in America. They should have the same responsibilities, and access to supports for which they are eligible, as other Americans.

We thank you for your time and consideration to these issues.

Sincerely,

List of signatories on following pages

CC:

Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee

National Organizations

9to5 Abortion Care Network Advocates for Youth **AIDS** United Alliance for a Just Society America's Voice Education Fund American College of Nurse-Midwives American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees American Medical Student Association Americans for Immigrant Justice, formerly Florida Immigrant Advocacy Center Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum Asian American Justice Center, Member of Asian American Center for Advancing Justice **ASISTA** Immigration Assistance Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations Association of Reproductive Health Professionals Black Women's Health Imperative Border Network for Human Rights Breakthrough Center for Immigrant Healthcare Justice Center for Reproductive Rights Civil Liberties & Public Policy Coalition of Labor Union Women Columbian Center for Advocacy and Outreach Ella Baker Center for Human Rights Family Equality Council Health Care for America Now **Hispanic Federation Immigration Equality Action Fund** Institute for Science and Human Values Jewish Labor Committee Western Region Latino Commission on AIDS Law Students for Reproductive Justice Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service Methodist Federation for Social Action Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund Midwives Alliance of North America MomsRising.org National Abortion Federation National Asian American Pacific Islander Mental Health Association National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum National Association of Certified Professional Midwives National Association of Social Workers National Center for Law and Economic Justice

National Council of Jewish Women National Council of Women's Organizations National Family Planning & Reproductive Health Association National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Action Fund National Health Law Program National Immigrant Justice Center National Immigrant Solidarity Network National Immigration Law Center National Immigration Project of the National Lawyers Guild National Korean American Service & Education Consortium (NAKASEC) National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health National Minority AIDS Council National Organization for Women National Partnership for Women & Families National Women's Health Network National Women's Law Center People for the American Way Physicians for Reproductive Health Planned Parenthood Federation of America **Pre-Health Dreamers** Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Raising Women's Voices for the Health Care We Need Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice **Reproductive Health Access Project Reproductive Health Technologies Project** Senior Moments Sexuality Information and Education Council of the U.S. (SIECUS) Sin Fronteras Sisters of Mercy South Central Community The Advocates for Human Rights The Association of Filipinas, Feminists Fighting Imperialism Re-feudalization, & Marginalization (AF3IRM) The Hat Project The United Methodist Church, General Board of Church and Society Transgender Law Center Trust for America's Health Turning Anger into Change Union for Reform Judaism Unitarian Universalist Association United Methodist Women Women's Refugee Commission YWCA USA

State and Local Organizations

Arizona Border Action Network

California

ACCESS Women's Health Justice Asian Law Alliance Asian Pacific American Legal Center, member of Asian American Center for Advancing Justice Asian Pacific Policy & Planning Council Bay Area Communities for Health Education Center on Reproductive Rights and Justice at UC Berkeley School of Law California Latinas for Reproductive Justice (CLRJ) California National Organization for Women California Pan-Ethnic Health Network California Partnership California Primary Care Association California Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice California Women Lawyers Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles Immigration Center for Women and Children JAG-ed Korean Community Center of the East Bay Korean Resource Center Latino Coalition for a Healthy California Methodist Federation for Social Action, Cal-Pac Chapter National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights Northeast Valley Health Corporation Services, Immigrant Rights and Education Network Silicon Valley Alliance for Immigration Reform St. John's Well Child & Family Center Vision y Compromiso

Colorado

Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity and Reproductive Rights Safehouse Progressive Alliance for Nonviolence

Connecticut

Social Justice Council of Unitarian Universalist Church in Meriden

District of Columbia

DC Chapter of the National Organization for Women National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum – D.C. Chapter

Georgia

Women Watch Afrika, Inc.

Illinois

Campaign for Better Health – IL Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights National Council of Jewish Women, Illinois State Policy Advocacy Committee

Iowa

Northeast Iowa Peace & Justice Center, Inc.

Louisiana

Gulf Coast Center for Law & Policy National Council of Jewish Women, Louisiana State Policy Advocacy Committee

Maine

Maine Women's Lobby National Council of Jewish Women, Maine Section

Maryland

Centering Healthcare Institute Maryland Women's Coalition for Health Care Reform

Massachusetts

Disability Policy Consortium Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition

Minnesota

Interfaith Coalition on Immigration (ICOM) Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota

Missouri

National Council of Jewish Women - Missouri State Policy Advocacy Committee Religious for Immigration Reform

Michigan

Washtenaw Interfaith Coalition for Immigrant Rights

New Jersey

National Council of Jewish Women, New Jersey State Policy Advocacy Network Reformed Church of Highland Park

New Mexico

New Mexico Asian Family Center Southwest Women's Law Center

New York

African Services Committee Coalition for Asian American Children & Families Long Island wins National Council of Jewish Women – New York State Policy Advocacy Committee New York Lawyers for the Public Interest New Sanctuary Coalition Northern Manhattan Coalition for Immigrant Rights Violence Intervention Program

North Carolina Raleigh Episcopal Campus Ministry

Oregon Oregon Foundation for Reproductive Health

Pennsylvania Pennsylvania Council of Churches Pennsylvania Immigration and Citizenship Coalition

South Carolina Lowcountry Immigration Coalition

Texas

Lesbian Health Initiative National Council of Jewish Women, Texas State Policy Advocacy Committee

Utah National Council of Jewish Women, Utah State Policy Advocacy Committee

Vermont Vermont Workers Center

Washington

First United Methodist Church of Wenatchee, WA Northwest Immigrant Rights Project Northwest Health Law Advocates OneAmerica

West Virginia WV FREE

Wisconsin Voces de la Frontera Wisconsin Alliance for Women's Health

International Organizations

Ministry of Health Republic of Armenia

Fenced In and Locked Out: Border Deal Will Endanger Women's Lives

By: Jessica González-Rojas, Executive Director, National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health

This week, by a vote of 67-27, the U.S. Senate passed a controversial deal that is expected to propel immigration reform through the chamber with strong bipartisan support. A vote on final passage in the Senate is expected any day, and then all eyes will turn to the House of Representatives, which will (fingers crossed) produce its own bipartisan bill. Immigration reform has real momentum, and more prospects for success than we've seen in decades.

So why am I not celebrating? Because I'm deeply concerned about the implications of this enormous concession for women's health and safety, and the message it sends about our values as a nation. The Corker-Hoeven Amendment, and the underlying bill (S. 744) that seems to be advancing with lightning speed, create an unacceptable second-class status for legalizing immigrants. Under the Senate bill, woman and families navigating the complex roadmap to citizenship would be working, paying taxes, fees, and fines, learning English, and fulfilling other requirements for 15 years or more before affordable health coverage options would become available to them.

That's 15 years paying into Medicaid and other health programs without any opportunity to benefit from those same programs. Senator Mazie Hirono (D-HI) has compared these unfair restrictions to being forced to pay homeowners insurance premiums for over a decade -- and then being denied coverage if your home catches fire.

As an organizer and advocate, I hear every day from immigrant women and families about the struggles they face living without health care. Sofia's* story in particular has weighed on my heart. Sofia was living in Texas with her husband and young children when she began experiencing severe reproductive health problems. She knew she needed to see a doctor, but like most immigrant women, was barred from Medicaid and other affordable health insurance options. Without insurance, no doctor would see her.

Eventually Sofia's health deteriorated and she made the difficult decision to cross into Mexico to see a gynecologist and receive the medical treatment she needed. Each time she went for a procedure, she had to cross back into the U.S. with the aid of a paid coyote, literally swimming across the Rio Grande, painfully aware of the prevalence of rape and other dangers women face during border crossing. She did this for five years, each time uncertain whether she would make it home to her children, because she had no other choice.

The amended Senate immigration bill would do nothing to relieve the suffering of women like Sofia, and would callously deny her family the opportunity to participate in the same affordable health plans as her friends and neighbors. For a woman with undiagnosed cervical or breast cancer, 15 years without health insurance could be the difference between life and death. At the same time, the bill would dump billions more dollars into heavy-handed immigration enforcement, making border crossing more dangerous and difficult.

Sofia and her family would continue to be locked out of the health care system, while at the same time being "fenced in" to an increasingly militarized border community.

Thankfully, several senators have warned against the human and fiscal costs of denying health care to future citizens, and offered commonsense amendments to improve the legislation. Senator Hirono, who fought for improvements to S. 744 in the Senate Judiciary Committee markup, introduced the "Taxpayer Fairness" amendment to ensure that no woman who has satisfied her tax liability shall be ineligible for federal health and other programs on the sole basis of her immigration status. Senator Barbara Boxer (D-CA) introduced amendments to improve health care access for survivors of intimate partner violence and to reduce the mandatory delay individuals on the roadmap to citizenship would face before becoming eligible for vital health coverage programs. Senator Patty Murray (D-WA), another champion of women's health and rights in immigration reform, filed an amendment to end the abhorrent practice of shackling pregnant women in immigration detention.

It is disappointing to see debate on these critical proposals ended prematurely, especially since they're well in line with mainstream opinion on the issues. Across the nation, most Americans support including immigrant families in our health care programs: 63 percent agree that aspiring citizens should be able to participate in Medicaid, and 59 percent believe people on the path to citizenship should be able to pay into and participate in the gains of health reform. Latinas, our families, and communities have spoken -- and wish to fully integrate our immigrant brothers and sisters into the fabric of American society.

It's time for negotiators in the U.S. Senate to reevaluate their priorities, and for House lawmakers to take heed. Reform should allow aspiring citizens to live with health and dignity, and fully contribute to our families, communities, and economy. Anything less is unwise, unjust, and un-American.

Some are saying that this "border surge," and the deal that's come along with it to pass immigration reform in the Senate, is a pill we have to swallow to get the final bill over the finish line. It's worth asking ourselves whether that's true, and whether this amended bill still lives up to our values as a nation.

Especially if the bitter pill of compromise is the only medicine immigrant women and families can expect to receive for fifteen years or more.

* Name has been changed.

Statement of Principles on Women and Immigration Reform¹

Immigrant women make great contributions to the rich social, cultural, intellectual, and economic fabric of the United States. They are our mothers, grandmothers, sisters, daughters, spouses, partners, and friends. They are students, teachers, laborers, business owners, lawmakers, and much more. Yet, despite their many contributions to our families and communities, issues of concern to women continue to be left out of conversations about immigration reform, and women continue to suffer injustice, discrimination, family separation, and fear because of our nation's immigration laws.

The face of the migrant in the United States is increasingly that of a woman. Women now make up 51% of the immigrant population,² and 100 immigrant women arrive in the United States for every 96 men.³ The majority of women migrate to reunite with family, to make a better life for their children, or to escape oppression, discrimination, and violence that prevent them from living full and free lives in their home countries. Current immigration laws, policies, and programs disproportionally disadvantage women, and women are too often left out of policy discussions that affect their lives. In the absence of sufficient legal channels for migration, more than 5 million women in the United States are undocumented and living on the margins of our society.⁴

Policies that divide communities, separate families, and violate the human and due process rights of migrants reinforce gender inequities and ignore the unique circumstances that compel women, LGBT individuals, and others seeking protection and equality to migrate and dictate their needs after they arrive.

Instead of honoring the contributions of immigrant women to the United States, past efforts at immigration reform have failed to provide for equitable citizenship,

¹ Statement Prepared by the National Coalition for Immigrant Women's Rights (NCIWR). For more information please visit ncwir.wordpress.com or contact Natalie D. Camastra at the National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health (NLIRH) at <u>Natalie@latinainstitute.org</u>; Wida Amir at the National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum (NAPAWF) at <u>wamir@napawf.org</u>; or Emily Butera at Women's Refugee Commission at <u>emilybu@wrcommission.org</u>.

²United States Census Bureau. 2011 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates. Selected Characteristics of the Native and Foreign-Born Populations. Available at

http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/searchresults.xhtml?refresh=t. Accessed on January 15, 2013.

³ Migration Policy Institute. MPI Data Hub: Foreign-Born Males per 100 Foreign-Born Females, for the United States: 1870 to 2011. Available at

http://www.migrationinformation.org/datahub/charts/final.malesfemales.shtml Accessed on January 15, 2013. ⁴ Hoefer M, Rytina N, and Baker B. U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Estimates of the Unauthorized Immigrant Population Residing in the United States: January 2011. March 2012. Available at http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/statistics/publications/ois ill pe 2011.pdf. Accessed on January 15, 2013.

adequate protection, and full integration for all women. <u>A reasonable and</u> <u>sustainable solution to current and future immigration needs MUST take into</u> <u>account gender specific perspectives</u>. In addition, the path forward on immigration <u>MUST ensure equality for all immigrants</u>, protect and promote their civil and human rights, and empower aspiring Americans to fully participate in and contribute to our <u>economy and society</u>.

As we begin a long overdue national conversation about immigration reform, we the undersigned organizations, call on policymakers to uphold and incorporate the following principles to ensure that the human rights of all migrants are protected:

- Any pathway to citizenship and integration must be open, affordable, safe, and accessible to ALL immigrant women, including those whose work is in the home and those who are employed in the informal economy.
- Immigrant women must be afforded equal employment-based migration opportunities and workplace protections so that they may safely pursue economic opportunity and support their families with dignity and pride.
- Immigration reform must protect the right of all families to stay together, regardless of immigration status, family structure, sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status, and provide sufficient family-based channels for migration in the future.
- Immigration reform must advance ALL immigrant women's access to public services and economic support, including comprehensive health coverage and care, and legal and social services that promote equality of opportunity, integration, and the ability to make decisions regarding reproductive and sexual health and the well-being of the family.
- Enforcement, detention, and deportation programs that compromise immigrant women's safety, violate their civil, human, and due process rights, and tear families apart must be replaced by sensible and sufficient legal channels for migration that adequately meet family and labor demands and respect our obligations under international law.
- Reforms to our immigration policies must bring an end to programs that disproportionately impact women by discouraging reporting of crimes to law enforcement and compromising the safety of communities, and must advance protections for women fleeing state and interpersonal violence and victims of trafficking or exploitation.

Endorsing Organizations

Members of the National Coalition for Immigrant Women's Rights (NCIWR):

Advocates for Women Advocates for Youth Americans for Immigrant Justice API Chava Asian Pacific American Legal Center, A member of the Asian American Center for Advancing Justice **ASISTA Immigration Assistance** Breakthrough California Latinas for Reproductive Justice **Center for Community Change Center for Women Policy Studies** Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity and Reproductive Rights Forward Together Gulf Coast Center for Law & Policy **Hispanic Federation** Humanitarians in Action Immigration Equality **Jahajee Sisters** IMUMI (Instituto para las Mujeres en la Migración) Law Students for Reproductive Justice MataHari: Eye of the Day Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF) National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum National Center for Lesbian Rights National Council of Jewish Women National Immigrant Justice Center National Immigration Law Center National Immigration Project of the National Lawyers Guild National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights National Organization for Women National Women's Health Network New York Immigration Coalition **OneAmerica** Planned Parenthood Federation of America Refugee Women's Network, Inc. **Reproductive Health Access Project** Sauti Yetu Center for African Women Sin Fronteras Southwest Women's Law Center The Advocates for Human Rights Unid@s: The National Latina/Latino LGBT Human Rights Organization

Violence Intervention Program Women's Refugee Commission Women Watch Afrika, Inc. Worker Justice Center of New York, Inc.

Additional Endorsing Organizations:

9to5 9to5 Atlanta 9to5 California 9to5 Colorado 9to5 Milwaukee Above Status ACCESS Women's Health Justice AIDS United All of Us or None Alliance for a Just Society American Friends Service Committee American Gateways American Immigration Council American Jewish Committee American Medical Student Association American Sexual Health Association **Applied Research Center** Arkansas Coalition for DREAM Arrow Evaluations Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum (APIAHF) Asian American Justice Center, member of Asian American Center for Advancing Justice Asian Pacific Community in Action Asian Services in Action, Inc. (ASIA) Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations **Boston New Sanctuary Movement** Brooklyn Law School, ICOP Casa de Esperanza: National Latin@ Network for Health Families and Communities CASA de Maryland Casa Esperanza Casa Latina **Catholic Charities ILS Center for Gender & Refugee Studies Center for Reproductive Rights** Central American Resource Center--CARECEN--of Northern California **CEUS, Comite En Union Para Salvadorenos Civil Liberties and Public Policy Program** CLUE Santa Barbara Coalición de Derechos Humanos **Coalition of Labor Union Women**

Cobb Immigrant Alliance Cobb United for Change Coalition Dady & Hoffmann LLC DFCS Eau Claire Area Hmong Mutual Assistance Association, Inc. Farmworker Association of Florida Fe y Justicia Worker Center Feminist Women Health Center / Lifting Latina Voices Initiative First Focus Florida Immigrant Youth Network FMGlobal/TheWomen'sQuestion Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network Georgia Rural Urban Summit **Grassroots** Leadership I Am Choice **Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota Immigrant Legal Resource Center** Immigration Center for Women and Children Immigration Counseling Service (ICS) inMotion Institute of Science and Human Values, Inc. Interfaith Coalition on Immigration (ICOM, MN) Interfaith Solidarity Cascadia International Socialist Organization John Snow, Inc. **Just Neighbors Justice For Our Neighbors- New York** Kansas National Organization for Women Labor Council for Latin American Advancement (LCLAA) Lao Assistance Center of Minnesota Latino Coalition for a Healthy California LatinoJustice PRLDEF Latinas at Work Project League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) Legal Services for Prisoners with Children Loyola New Orleans College of Law, Stuart H. Smith Law Clinic and Center for Social Justice Lutheran Social Services of New England MAIZ-Cihuatl Tlatocan (Movimiento de Accion, Inspirando Servicio) MALARIA, AIDS AND RIGHTS ORGANIZATION (MATO) Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition McCrummen Immigration Law Group Methodist Federation for Social Action Mil Mujeres Ministry of Health, Republic of Armenia Ministry of Interior, Albania Miracle Mile NOW of Los Angeles MomsRising.Org

Movimiento Justicia y Paz - Detroit Ms. Foundation for Women Mujeres Unidas y Activas National Alliance of Latin American and Caribbean Communities (NALACC) National Asian American Pacific Islander Mental Health Association National Association of Social Workers National Association of Social Workers - Michigan Chapter National Center for Transgender Equality National Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence National Coalition for LGBT Health National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (NCAVP) National Council of Jewish Women, BCS National Council of Jewish Women, Concordia Section National Council of Jewish Women, Frederick, Maryland Section National Council of Jewish Women. St. Louis Section National Council of Jewish Women, Palm Beach National Council of Jewish Women Bergen County Section National Council of Jewish Women Greater Miami Section National Council of Jewish Women, Howard County, Maryland Section National Council of Jewish Women, California National Council of Jewish Women, Essex County Section National Council of Jewish Women, Greater Dallas Section National Council of Jewish Women, Greater Philadelphia Section National Council of Jewish Women, Greater Rochester Section National Council of Jewish Women, Illinois State Policy Advocacy Chair National Council of Jewish Women, Lakeville National Council of Jewish Women, Louisiana State Policy Advocacy Chair National Council of Jewish Women, Los Angeles Section National Council of Jewish Women, Missouri State Policy Advocacy Chair National Council of Jewish Women, Pennsylvania State Policy Advocacy Chair National Council of Jewish Women. Sacramento National Council of Jewish Women, State Public Advocacy Chair National Council of Jewish Women, Texas State Policy Advocacy National Council of Jewish Women, West Morris Section National Council of Women's Organizations National Domestic Workers Alliance National Employment Law Project National Gay and Lesbian Task Force National Health Law Program (NHeLP) National Minority AIDS Council National Tongan American Society NC AOC-CIP New Sanctuary Coalition of NYC Ni-Ta-Nee NOW Northern Dallas Chapter of the National Organization for Women Northern Manhattan Coalition for Immigrant Rights

Orange County Social Services Agency OWL- The Voice of Midlife and Older Women PAWIS Political Asylum/Immigration Representation Project Priority Africa Network Public Counsel Raising Women's Voices for the Health Care We Need **Reformed Church of Highland Park** Refugio del Rio Grande **Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice Religious Institute Reproductive Health Technologies Project** Samoan National Nurses Association SEEP Sexuality Information and Education Council of the U.S. (SIECUS) SIROW Sisters of Mercy West Midwest Justice Team Sisters of St Joseph Smart Vote Initiative Social Work Allies for Immigrant Rights, University of Michigan School of Social Work South Texas Civil Rights Project Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC) **Strong Families Tahirih Justice Center** The Disability Policy Consortium The Praxis Project The United Methodist Church, General Board of Church & Society UbuntU Immigration Project Union for Reform Judaism Unitarian Universalist Unitarian Universalist Association United Methodist Women United We Dream University of Ontario Institute of Technology UNO FEDERATION COMMUNITY SERVICES USAS Vermont Immigration and Asylum Advocates Vernon County Domestic Abuse Project Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence Washtenaw Interfaith Coalition for Immigrant Rights West Pinellas NOW Women Helping Women - Lanai Women of Reform Judaism YWCA USA

Declaración de Principios acerca de las Mujeres y la Reforma Migratoria

Las mujeres inmigrantes hacen enormes contribuciones sociales, culturales, intelectuales y económicas a la sociedad de los EE.UU. Son madres, abuelas, hermanas, hijas, esposas, parejas y amigas. Son estudiantes, profesoras, trabajadoras, dueñas de negocios, abogadas y mucho más. Sin embargo, a pesar de las muchas contribuciones que aportan a nuestras familias y comunidades, los asuntos que preocupan a estas mujeres continúan siendo dejados fuera de las conversaciones acerca de la reforma migratoria, y las mujeres inmigrantes, continúan sufriendo injusticia, discriminación, separación familiar y temor por las leyes migratorias de nuestro país.

La cara del inmigrante en los EE.UU. cada vez más refleja una cara de mujer. En la actualidad, las mujeres constituyen el 51% de la población inmigrante, y 100 mujeres inmigrantes llegan a los EE.UU. por cada 96 hombres. La mayoría de mujeres emigran para reunirse con su familia, para dar una vida mejor a sus hijos, o para escapar de la opresión, la discriminación y la violencia que no permite que vivan una vida plena y en libertad en sus países de origen. En la actualidad, las leyes, políticas públicas y programas de inmigración, desproporcionadamente ponen a las mujeres en desventaja y con frecuencia estas no son tomadas en cuenta en las discusiones acerca de las políticas públicas que afectan sus vidas. Debido a la ausencia de las vías legales apropiadas para inmigrar, más de cinco millones de mujeres en los EE.UU. no tienen documentos de inmigración y viven al margen de nuestra sociedad.

Las políticas que dividen comunidades, separan familias y violan los derechos humanos y los procesos legales justos para los inmigrantes, solo aumentan las inequidades de género. Aunque estas políticas ignoran las circunstancias únicas que obligan a las mujeres, las personas LGBT y a otros—que buscan protección e igualdad—a emigrar, estas políticas dictan sus necesidades después de haber llegado a los EE.UU.

En lugar de honrar las contribuciones de las mujeres inmigrantes a los EE.UU., en el pasado los esfuerzos en favor de la reforma migratoria han fallado en proporcionar una ciudadanía equitativa, protección adecuada y una integración total para todas las mujeres. Una solución razonable y sostenible para las necesidades actuales y futuras de inmigración DEBE tomar en cuenta las perspectivas de género específicas. Además el camino hacia delante de las políticas de inmigración DEBE asegurar igualdad para todos los inmigrantes, proteger y promover sus derechos civiles y humanos, y empoderar a los aspirantes a ciudadanos de los EE.UU. para que participen de lleno y contribuyan con nuestra economía y sociedad.

Mientras empezamos una conversación nacional—que hace mucho debió haberse iniciado—acerca de la reforma migratoria, las organizaciones abajo firmantes, hacemos un llamado a las y los legisladores para defender e incorporar los siguientes principios para asegurar la protección de los derechos humanos de todos los inmigrantes:

• Cualquier camino hacia la ciudadanía y la integración social debe ser amplio, asequible, seguro y accesible para TODAS las mujeres inmigrantes, incluyendo a aquellas que trabajan en casa y en la economía informal.

- A las mujeres inmigrantes se les debe ofrecer iguales oportunidades de inmigración y protección a través del lugar de trabajo, para que puedan alcanzar oportunidades económicas de forma segura y apoyar a sus familias con dignidad y orgullo.
- La reforma migratoria debe proteger el derecho de todas las familias a permanecer unidas, sin importar su estatus migratorio, estructura familiar, orientación sexual, identidad de género o estatus marital, y proporcionar suficientes vías que se basen en la familia para inmigrar en el futuro.
- La reforma migratoria debe mejorar el acceso de TODAS las mujeres inmigrantes a los servicios públicos y el apoyo económico. Este acceso debería incluir una cobertura integral de salud y cuidados, así como de servicios legales y sociales que promuevan la igualdad de oportunidad e integración, y la habilidad de tomar decisiones acerca de la salud y los derechos reproductivos y el bienestar de la familia.
- Los programas de detención y deportación que comprometen la seguridad de las mujeres inmigrantes, violan sus derechos humanos y procesales y dividen familias, deben ser reemplazados por vías apropiadas y sensatas para inmigrar que cumplan con las demandas familiares y laborales y que respeten nuestras obligaciones bajo la ley a nivel internacional.
- Las reformas a nuestras políticas migratorias deben poner un fin a los programas que desproporcionadamente impactan a las mujeres y que las desanima a reportar crímenes a las autoridades, comprometiendo así la seguridad de las comunidades. Estas reformas deben promover la protección de las mujeres que huyen de la violencia interpersonal e institucional en sus países de origen, y también de las víctimas de tráfico humano y explotación.

⁽¹⁾Declaración preparada por la Coalición Nacional para los Derechos de las Mujeres Inmigrantes, NCIWR (National Coalition for Immigrant Women's Rights) por sus siglas en inglés. Para más información por favor visite ncwir.wordpress.com o contacte a Natalie D. Camastra en el Instituto Nacional de Latinas para la Salud Reproductiva NLIRH (National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health) por sus siglas en inglés en el correo electrónico Natalie@latinainstitute.org; Wida Amir en el Foro Nacional de Mujeres Asia-Pacífico Americanas, NAPAWF (National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum) por sus siglas en inglés en el correo electrónico wamir@napawf.org; o Emily Butera en la Comisión de Mujeres Refugiadas (Women's Refugee Commission) en el correo electrónico emilybu@wrcommission.org.

⁽²⁾ United States Census Bureau. 2011 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates. Selected Characteristics of the Native and Foreign-Born Populations. Available at

http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/searchresults.xhtml?refresh=t. Accessed on January 15, 2013. (3) Migration Policy Institute. MPI Data Hub: Foreign-Born Males per 100 Foreign-Born Females, for the United States: 1870 to 2011. Available at http://www.migrationinformation.org/datahub/charts/final.malesfemales.shtml Accessed on January 15, 2013.

⁽⁴⁾ Hoefer M, Rytina N, and Baker B. U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Estimates of the Unauthorized Immigrant Population Residing in the United States: January 2011. March 2012. Available at http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/statistics/publications/ois_ill_pe_2011.pdf . Accessed on January 15, 2013.

Organizaciones Miembros de la

Coalición Nacional para los Derechos de las Mujeres Inmigrantes (NCIWR)

Advocates for Women Advocates for Youth Americans for Immigrant Justice **API** Chaya Asian Pacific American Legal Center, A member of the Asian American Center for Advancing Justice **ASISTA Immigration Assistance** Breakthrough California Latinas for Reproductive Justice Center for Community Change **Center for Women Policy Studies** Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity and Reproductive Rights Forward Together Gulf Coast Center for Law & Policy **Hispanic Federation** Humanitarians in Action **Immigration Equality Jahajee Sisters** IMUMI (Instituto para las Mujeres en la Migración) Law Students for Reproductive Justice MataHari: Eye of the Day Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF) National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum National Center for Lesbian Rights National Council of Jewish Women National Immigrant Justice Center National Immigration Law Center National Immigration Project of the National Lawyers Guild National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights National Organization for Women National Women's Health Network New York Immigration Coalition **OneAmerica** Planned Parenthood Federation of America Refugee Women's Network, Inc. **Reproductive Health Access Project** Sauti Yetu Center for African Women Sin Fronteras Southwest Women's Law Center The Advocates for Human Rights Unid@s: The National Latina/Latino LGBT Human Rights Organization **Violence Intervention Program**

Women's Refugee Commission Women Watch Afrika, Inc. Worker Justice Center of New York, Inc.

Organizaciones firmantes adicionales:

9to5 9to5 Atlanta 9to5 California 9to5 Colorado 9to5 Milwaukee Above Status **ACCESS Women's Health Justice** AIDS United All of Us or None Alliance for a Just Society American Friends Service Committee American Gateways American Immigration Council American Jewish Committee American Medical Student Association American Sexual Health Association **Applied Research Center** Arkansas Coalition for DREAM Arrow Evaluations Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum (APIAHF) Asian American Justice Center, member of Asian American Center for Advancing Justice Asian Pacific Community in Action Asian Services in Action, Inc. (ASIA) Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations **Boston New Sanctuary Movement** Brooklyn Law School, ICOP Casa de Esperanza: National Latin@ Network for Health Families and Communities CASA de Marvland Casa Esperanza Casa Latina **Catholic Charities ILS** Center for Gender & Refugee Studies Center for Reproductive Rights Central American Resource Center--CARECEN--of Northern California **CEUS, Comite En Union Para Salvadorenos** Civil Liberties and Public Policy Program CLUE Santa Barbara Coalición de Derechos Humanos Coalition of Labor Union Women **Cobb Immigrant Alliance** Cobb United for Change Coalition Dady & Hoffmann LLC

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National Association of Social Workers National Association of Social Workers - Michigan Chapter National Center for Transgender Equality National Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence National Coalition for LGBT Health National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (NCAVP) National Council of Jewish Women, BCS National Council of Jewish Women, Concordia Section National Council of Jewish Women, Frederick, Maryland Section National Council of Jewish Women, St. Louis Section National Council of Jewish Women, Palm Beach National Council of Jewish Women Bergen County Section National Council of Jewish Women Greater Miami Section National Council of Jewish Women, Howard County, Maryland Section National Council of Jewish Women, California National Council of Jewish Women, Essex County Section National Council of Jewish Women, Greater Dallas Section National Council of Jewish Women, Greater Philadelphia Section National Council of Jewish Women, Greater Rochester Section National Council of Jewish Women, Illinois State Policy Advocacy Chair National Council of Jewish Women, Lakeville National Council of Jewish Women, Louisiana State Policy Advocacy Chair National Council of Jewish Women, Los Angeles Section National Council of Jewish Women, Missouri State Policy Advocacy Chair National Council of Jewish Women, Pennsylvania State Policy Advocacy Chair National Council of Jewish Women, Sacramento National Council of Jewish Women, State Public Advocacy Chair National Council of Jewish Women, Texas State Policy Advocacy National Council of Jewish Women, West Morris Section National Council of Women's Organizations National Domestic Workers Alliance National Employment Law Project National Gay and Lesbian Task Force National Health Law Program (NHeLP) National Minority AIDS Council National Tongan American Society NC AOC-CIP New Sanctuary Coalition of NYC Ni-Ta-Nee NOW Northern Dallas Chapter of the National Organization for Women Northern Manhattan Coalition for Immigrant Rights Orange County Social Services Agency OWL- The Voice of Midlife and Older Women PAWIS Political Asylum/Immigration Representation Project Priority Africa Network Public Counsel Raising Women's Voices for the Health Care We Need

Reformed Church of Highland Park Refugio del Rio Grande **Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice Religious Institute** Reproductive Health Technologies Project Samoan National Nurses Association SEEP Sexuality Information and Education Council of the U.S. (SIECUS) SIROW Sisters of Mercy West Midwest Justice Team Sisters of St Joseph Smart Vote Initiative Social Work Allies for Immigrant Rights, University of Michigan School of Social Work South Texas Civil Rights Project Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC) Strong Families Tahirih Justice Center The Disability Policy Consortium The Praxis Project The United Methodist Church, General Board of Church & Society UbuntU Immigration Project Union for Reform Judaism Unitarian Universalist Unitarian Universalist Association United Methodist Women United We Dream University of Ontario Institute of Technology **UNO FEDERATION COMMUNITY SERVICES** USAS Vermont Immigration and Asylum Advocates Vernon County Domestic Abuse Project Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence Washtenaw Interfaith Coalition for Immigrant Rights West Pinellas NOW Women Helping Women - Lanai Women of Reform Judaism YWCA USA

June 27, 2013 FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Erin White, erin@caminopr.com, 212-255-2575

LATINAS RESPOND TO SENATE PASSAGE OF IMMIGRATION REFORM BILL

Express disappointment, concern about severe restrictions on health coverage and border militarization

(WASHINGTON, D.C.) -

With the U.S. Senate's passage of immigration reform in a 68-32 vote, the National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health (NLIRH) recognizes today's historic step to realize comprehensive immigration reform. S. 744, or the "Border Security, Economic Opportunity and Immigration Modernization Act," was propelled to a final vote this week with the inclusion of the "Corker-Hoeven" amendment, which dedicates billions more in federal spending to further militarize the U.S. southern border and includes restrictions on access to health care that threaten women's health and safety.

Jessica González-Rojas, executive director of NLIRH issued the following statement:

"We continue to be encouraged by the historic progress of immigration reform, and today's vote in the Senate is an important step. In particular, we'd like to thank Senators Hirono (D-HI), Boxer (D-CA), Leahy (D-VT), and Murray (D-WA) for their tireless work to improve the legislation and the health and lives of immigrant women and families. However, we remain deeply concerned about the devastating implications of the severe restrictions on health care. Under the Senate bill, women and families will be forced to wait 15 years or more to see a doctor. As the debate moves forward in the House of Representatives, we encourage lawmakers to consider these important concerns, so that reform allows aspiring citizens the opportunity to fully contribute to our families, communities, and economy. Latinas have demanded immigration reform that respects human dignity and supports the health and success of our communities. Congress should deliver nothing less."

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The National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health is the only national organization working on behalf of the reproductive health and justice of the 24 million Latinas, their families and communities in the United States through public education, community mobilization and policy advocacy.

June 18, 2013

To All Members of the U.S. Senate:

We welcome the Senate's consideration of comprehensive immigration reform as the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act (S. 744) proceeds to the Senate floor. As advocates for the health of the most vulnerable in our communities, we have deep concerns about provisions in S. 744 that would harm the health and well-being of aspiring citizens and their families. Immigrants on the roadmap to citizenship will be paying taxes, and as taxpayers, aspiring citizens should have access to taxpayer-funded programs like all Americans.

Senator Hirono (D-HI) plans to introduce an amendment to restore taxpayer fairness to aspiring citizens. The amendment provides that all immigrants who are lawfully present, employed, and have satisfied their federal tax liability shall not be prohibited from using any federally-funded program or tax credit solely on the basis of their immigration status. Allowing immigrants to use the programs they pay for will enable them to be more economically successful. We urge you to stand with Senator Hirono and others to correct the unfair restrictions on access to health, nutrition, and economic supports, thereby ensuring that the roadmap to citizenship allows immigrants equal opportunity to succeed in our country.

As currently proposed, S.744 bars most individuals in RPI status from vital federal health coverage, nutrition assistance, and economic security programs for the entire period they are in provisional status, which would be at least 10 years. When RPIs become Lawful Permanent Residents (LPRs) and earn their green card, current law further restricts LPRs from accessing these vital federal programs for another five years. S.744 also bars aspiring citizens in RPI status from the premium tax credits and cost-sharing reductions that will allow them to participate in the new health insurance marketplaces established under the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Individuals in blue-card and V visa status are similarly restricted from accessing safety net programs, premium tax credits, and cost-sharing reductions.

The restrictions in S. 744 mean that most aspiring citizens may have to pay into programs for 15 years before they can use them if their kids get sick or if they lose their jobs. For about half a million children who may soon be on the roadmap to citizenship, these restrictions could impact their development and ability to learn in school.¹ For pregnant women, it could mean no access to prenatal care that is critical to the health of infants and women. For women with undetected breast or cervical cancer, a 15-year wait to see a doctor could be the difference between life and death. These restrictions will result in poorer health outcomes, wider health disparities, lower worker productivity, and higher costs to the healthcare system. The restrictions are also out of line with the views of most Americans: 63% believe those on the roadmap to citizenship should be eligible for Medicaid and 59% believe they should be eligible for affordability options under the ACA.² Entrenching struggling parents and families in poverty prevents economic

¹ Randy Capps, James D. Bachmeier, Michael Fix & Jennifer Van Hook, *A Demographic, Socioeconomic, and Health Coverage Profile of Unauthorized Immigrants in the United States*, MIGRATION POLICY INSTITUTE 8 (May 2013), http://www.migrationpolicy.org/pubs/CIRbrief-Profile-Unauthorized.pdf.

² HENRY J. KAISER FAMILY FOUNDATION. *Kaiser Health Tracking Poll: February 2013*. February 27, 2013. http://kff.org/report-section/february-2013-tracking-poll-findings/

competitiveness and productivity; additionally, these programs exist so people can take economic risks like starting a business. Instead, better immigration policy will facilitate the integration of aspiring citizens into the social and economic fabric of our country.

Moreover, denying aspiring citizens access to the very programs that they pay into with their tax dollars is inherently unfair. Aspiring citizens currently pay \$11.2 billion annually in taxes.³ Already, immigrants have paid \$115 billion more in taxes into the Medicare system than they have used.⁴ As aspiring citizens move forward on the roadmap to citizenship, they will contribute even more to government revenue in fines, fees, and taxes.

Senator Hirono's amendment to restore taxpayer fairness to aspiring citizens will enable those on the roadmap to citizenship to succeed and will promote the health of our families, communities, and economy. We urge you to stand with Senator Hirono to ensure that the roadmap to citizenship is fair and allows aspiring citizens to live with health, dignity, and justice.

Thank you for your time and consideration to these issues.

Sincerely,

9to5 9to5 Atlanta 9to5 California 9to5 Colorado 9to5 Milwaukee Abortion Care Network **ACCESS Women's Health Justice** Advocates for Women AFL-CIO AIDS Alabama AIDS Foundation of Chicago **AIDS United** Alliance for a Just Society American Academy of Pediatrics American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) Americans for Immigrant Justice, formerly Florida Immigrant Advocacy Center Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum Asian American Justice Center, Member of Asian American Center for Advancing Justice Asian Law Alliance Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, AFL-CIO **ASISTA** Immigration Assistance

³ IMMIGRATION POLICY CENTER. *Unauthorized Immigrants Pay Taxes, Too*, April 18, 2011, http://www.immigrationpolicy.org/just-facts/unauthorized-immigrants-pay-taxes-too.

⁴ Leah Zallman, Steffie Woolhandler, David Himmelstein, David Bor & Danny McCormick, *Immigrants Contributed an Estimated \$115.2 Billion More to the Medicare Trust Fund Than They Took Out in 2002–2009*, HEALTH AFFAIRS (May 2013), *available at* http://content.healthaffairs.org/content/early/2013/05/20/hlthaff.2012.1223.

Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations Association of Farmworker Opportunity Programs Association of Reproductive Health Professionals (ARHP) Breakthrough California Latinas for Reproductive Justice California Primary Care Association California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation Campaign for Better Health Care CASA de Maryland Center for Community Change (CCC) Center for independence of the Disabled, NY Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) Center for Medicare Advocacy, Inc. Center on Reproductive Rights and Justice at University of California Berkeley School of Law Central Ohio Immigrant Justice Children's Defense Fund Church of Our Saviour/Iglesia de Nuestro Salvador **Civil Liberties and Public Policy CLUE** Santa Barbara Coalition for Asian American Children and Families Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles Coalition for Peace Action of Monroe Township Coalition on Human Needs COFA Community Advocacy Network COMGARIGUA **Community Action Partnership** Connecticut Multicultural Health Partnership CT Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission Direct Care Alliance DRUM - Desis Rising Up & Moving El Concilio/Council for the Spanish Speaking **Empire Justice Center** Fair Immigration Reform Movement (FIRM) Families USA Farmworker Association of Florida Feminist Majority First Focus Campaign for Children Georgia Rural Urban Summit Hawai'i Coalition for Immigration Reform Hawaii State Coalition Against Domestic Violence Health Care for All Philadelphia Health Care for America Now HealthyPacific.Org HIKITTI Community **HIV Prevention Justice Alliance** Housing Works

Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project Immigrant Service Providers Group/Health International Tribunal of Conscience Jewish Community Action Jewish Labor Committee Western Region Kentucky Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights Koolauloa Health Center Korean Community Center of the East Bay La Clinica del Pueblo La Raza Centro Legal Latin American Association Latino Coalition for a Healthy California Latino Commission on AIDS The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights Leadership Conference of Woman Religious League of United Latin American Citizens Lifting Latina Voices Initiative/FWHC Lowcountry Immigration Coalition LUMA Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition Methodist Federation for Social Action Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund Micronesian United Big Island ministry of Health Moloka'i Community Service Council MomsRising.Org Ms. Foundation for Women National Alliance of Latin American and Caribbean Communities National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum National Association of Counsel for Children National Center for Law and Economic Justice National Center for Lesbian Rights National Center for Transgender Equality National Conference of Puerto Rican Women, Inc., National Council of Jewish Women National Council of La Raza (NCLR) National Employment Law Project National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Action Fund National Health Care for the Homeless Council National Health Law Program National Hispanic Medical Association National Immigrant Justice Center National Immigration Law Center

National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health National Organization for Women National Physicians Alliance National Senior Citizens Law Center National Women's Health Network National Women's Law Center **NCJW** - Maine Section Nema Hawaii Community Association New Economics for Women New Mexico Voices for Children New York Lawyers for the Public Interest New Yorkers for Accessible Health Coverage Ni-ta-nee NOW North Dallas Chapter of the National Organization for Women Northern Manhattan Coalition for Immigrant Rights Northwest Health Law Advocates OneAmerica Pacific Islander Health partnership Pennsylvania Council of Churches PHI PolicyWorks Physicians for Reproductive Health Planned Parenthood Federation of America Pohnpei Fellowship Ministry Political Asylum Immigration Representation Project **Project Inform** Raleigh Episcopal Campus Ministry Ramirez Group Reformed Church of Highland Park, NJ Refugio del Rio Grande **Religious for Immigration Reform Reproductive Health Technologies Project RESULTS Rockland Immigration Coalition** Safehouse Progressive Alliance for Nonviolence Salvadoran American National Network Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law Sea Mar Community Health Centers Silicon Valley Alliance for Immigration Reform Single Stop USA Sisters of Mercy West Midwest Justice Team South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT) South Cove Community Health Center The Black Institute The Center for APA Women The Children's Advocacy Institute The Children's Partnership

The Hat Project Unitarian Society of New Haven, Immigration Rights Task Force United for a Fair Economy United Migrant Opportunity Services/UMOS Inc United We Dream Unity Fellowship Church NYC University of Hawaii Violence Intervention Program Voces de la Frontera Voices for America's Children Washtenaw Interfaith Coalition for Immigrant Rights We Belong Together: Women For Common-Sense Immigration Reform WI Council on Children and Families Women Watch Afrika, Inc. Women's Law Project Worker Justice Center YWCA YWCA USA