

IMMIGRANT RIGHTS ARE WORKERS' RIGHTS!

Since 2006, massive marches for immigrant rights have blocked the passage of racist legislation in Congress, such as the Sensenbrenner bill, that mandated unacceptable proposals such as guest worker "Bracero" programs, national identity card schemes and further militarization of the border.

These were enormous victories that must be defended. That is why Radical Women and the Freedom Socialist Party have signed onto an Open Letter issued by the Grassroots Immigrant Justice Network, a group recently formed by leaders in the immigrant rights and labor movements across the country.

For immigration reform based on equality and dignity, not corporate greed

The appeal calls for "a different approach to discussing Comprehensive Immigration Reform. We need to generate a national debate based on immigration as a labor mobility and human rights issue, not as an issue of national security and enforcement. Immigrants have made vast contributions to the U.S., and they should be granted the right to live here legally and without fear. We should recognize migration as the global phenomenon it is and address the root economic causes of migration."

Here are some excerpts from the letter, which proposes that the national debate around immigration reform should include the following:

- **Build bridges between the peoples of the U.S. and Mexico instead of walls that segregate them ... end border militarization.**
- **All immigrants deserve the full rights accorded to U.S. citizens, not a second-class status.**
- **Bracero-style guest worker programs and other forms of labor exploitation should be eliminated, and the labor system made to benefit workers and their families, not corporations and agribusiness.**
- **End the criminalization of work through the use of E-verify, "silent raids," and other tactics used to carry out mass firings of workers.**
- **Immigrants and their families have the right to live in their communities without fear. Stop the raids and deportations, end 'enforcement first' policies ... eliminate the privatization of the detention system.**

Gutierrez bill offers false hope

The letter further cautions that the bill introduced in the House of Representatives by Rep. Luis Gutierrez (CIR ASAP Act of 2009):

...will not grant a fair and fast path for the millions of undocumented immigrants who deserve a chance to legalize their status quickly and

affordably. Instead, the bill creates a new *conditional non-immigrant status* (CNIS) visa.

The Gutierrez bill includes the AgJOBS Act of 2009, which would provide temporary “blue card” visas to undocumented farm workers who have been living in the United States. In the past, temporary visa programs like the infamous Bracero program have been rife with abuse, benefiting growing companies and not workers.

The Gutierrez bill also includes the DREAM Act, which aims to offer in-state tuition rates to the children of undocumented immigrants. But it conditions the college loans and grants that these young people need on a type of ‘community service’ which includes military service. This is unacceptable.

Since this Open Letter was issued, even worse legislation has been proposed by Senators Charles Schumer and Lindsey Graham, and embraced by President Obama. It calls for huge allocations of funds for border militarization, makes the needs of employers for cheap labor the determining factor in how many visas – and what kind of visas – are allowed, *and sets up a national identity card system for all workers in the U.S., both immigrants and the native-born.*

These bills do not address the root cause of the massive waves of migration to the U.S., namely, NAFTA and other “free trade” agreements that have destroyed peoples lives, especially those of vulnerable women and children, and ruined the economies and environments of countries used as cheap labor pools for multi-national corporations.

For solidarity across borders

Let’s build a powerful movement to end the stranglehold that capitalist interests have on immigration reform, to truly revolutionize our society, and to bring the focus back to where it belongs: *the people doing the work.*

The so-called “comprehensive immigration reform” legislation that we are being asked to support serves the interests of domestic corporations and employers, NOT those of workers.

We cannot let fear of ICE raids, nor false promises by so-called friends in the Democratic Party lead us to settle for less. All workers are entitled to live with dignity, free from fear, working fair hours for fair wages, with access to healthcare, the rights to vote and organize, and to start afresh, as so many millions have done in U.S. history. We are truly one working class – and that is where our power lies!

To find out more about the Open Letter issued by the Grassroots Immigrant Justice Network, visit <http://grassrootsimmigrantjusticenetwork.blogspot.com>, or give us a call and let’s talk about it.

**Issued by Radical Women & Freedom Socialist Party
New Freeway Hall, 5018 Rainier Ave. S., Seattle, WA 98118**

www.RadicalWomen.org • 206-722-6057 • RWseattle@mindspring.com

www.socialism.com • 206-722-2453 • FSPseattle@mindspring.com
facebook.com/FSPseattle