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SENATE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, The United States was founded as a nation of
3 immigrants, a place where people could find economic
4 opportunity and a better life, or escape persecution in their
5 home country, and fulfill their hopes of a brighter future
6 based on freedom and democratic ideals; and

7 WHEREAS, The cultural diversity of immigrants to the United
8 States adds to the social fabric of this nation, and the new
9 ideas and energies immigrants contribute to the economy
10 strengthen the nation as a whole; and

11 WHEREAS, There are currently over 11 million undocumented
12 immigrants residing in the United States, the vast majority of
13 whom abide by the laws, work hard, and pay taxes; and

14 WHEREAS, Comprehensive immigration reform must provide
15 law-abiding, tax paying immigrant workers and their families
16 with an opportunity to obtain legal permanent residency and
17 eventually United States citizenship through fair and
18 reasonable requirements; and

19 WHEREAS, Undocumented immigrants are at risk of abuse by
20 employers and live in fear of arrest and deportation; and

1 WHEREAS, Any new worker visa program must provide workers
2 with all rights afforded by the Constitution of the United
3 States, portability of visas so that workers can change jobs,
4 and the ability for workers to petition for permanent
5 residency; and

6 WHEREAS, The Diversity Visa program was established by
7 federal law in 1990 to provide an opportunity for 55,000
8 immigrants each year from countries that send smaller numbers
9 of immigrants to United States to immigrate legally; and

10 WHEREAS, The Diversity Visa program has truly diversified
11 the range of countries from which immigrants come to the United
12 States and is one of the few options for African immigrants to
13 come to the United States, as shown in many years where as many
14 as half of all Diversity Visas are issued to immigrants from
15 Africa; and

16 WHEREAS, Abolishing the Diversity Visa program would limit
17 the opportunities for many immigrants, especially from Africa,
18 to come to the United States lawfully; and

19 WHEREAS, The nation's immigration system is laden with
20 backlogs and as a result, legal immigrants may wait decades for
21 family reunification; and

1 WHEREAS, At present, the "line" for legal immigration is
2 about 4 million people long; and

3 WHEREAS, Family unity is a component of a strong economy,
4 and reunification of families has been a key part of federal
5 immigration policy for almost 50 years; and

6 WHEREAS, It is our country's best interests to create a
7 streamlined process to resolve the backlog of existing visa
8 applications and develop methods to ensure the efficient
9 processing of future immigration applications in a timely
10 manner, which will expedite reunification of families; and

11 WHEREAS, Keeping families, which includes husbands and
12 wives, sons and daughters, and brothers and sisters, together
13 not only is the correct and moral thing to do but is also good
14 for the economy because families provide a base of support that
15 increases worker productivity and spurs entrepreneurship; and

16 WHEREAS, Illinois recognizes that immigration reform must
17 protect the right of all families to stay together, regardless
18 of immigration status, family structure, sexual orientation,
19 gender identity, or marital status, and provide sufficient
20 family-based channels for migration in the future; and

21 WHEREAS, The State of Illinois is home to 1.8 million

1 immigrants, the sixth largest immigrant population of any state
2 in the nation; and

3 WHEREAS, Immigrants make up 13.5% of Illinois' population
4 and 17.5% of Illinois' workforce and accounted for half of the
5 State's population growth over the last decade; and

6 WHEREAS, Illinois has a special pride as being one of the
7 most immigrant-friendly states in the country, as evidenced by
8 its deep commitment to successful programs such as the New
9 Americans Initiative & Refugee and Immigrant Citizenship
10 Initiative, Immigrant Family Resource Program, Parent Mentor
11 Program and Uniting America Program; and

12 WHEREAS, Illinois believes in the human dignity of all
13 Illinois residents, regardless of immigration status, and
14 recognize the importance of immigrants' many contributions to
15 the social and economic fabric of the state of Illinois; and

16 WHEREAS, Illinois, therefore, has a strong interest in
17 immigration policy and the impact it has on immigrants seeking
18 a new life in the United States; and

19 WHEREAS, Immigration reform must occur in a comprehensive,
20 thoughtful manner that builds the strength and unity of working
21 people, keeps families together wherever possible, and

1 guarantees the same rights, obligations, and basic fairness for
2 all lawful workers, no matter where they come from; and

3 WHEREAS, The federal government has the exclusive
4 authority to develop, implement, and enforce immigration
5 policy under the United States Constitution, and the regulation
6 of immigration is solely the responsibility of the federal
7 government; therefore, be it

8 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-EIGHTH GENERAL
9 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that the President of the
10 United States and the United States Congress are urged to enact
11 comprehensive immigration reform and provide a practical and
12 inclusive path to permanent citizenship that promotes fairness
13 and justice, while also protecting and valuing families and
14 upholding human dignity and mutual respect; and be it further

15 RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be
16 transmitted to the President of the United States, the Speaker
17 of the United States House of Representatives, the President of
18 the United States Senate, members of Illinois' Congressional
19 delegation, the Illinois Coalition of Immigrant and Refugee
20 Rights, and Asian Americans Advancing Justice-Chicago.