

American Friends Service Committee  
March 23, 2007

## SUBSTANTIAL GAPS REMAIN IN PROPOSED HOUSE IMMIGRATION BILL

PHILADELPHIA [MARCH 23] — The recently introduced STRIVE (Security Through Regularized Immigration and a Vibrant Economy) Act of 2007, sponsored by Representative Luis V. Gutierrez (D-IL) and Representative Jeff Flake (R-AZ), fails to protect the fundamental human rights of immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers in this country, according to the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), a Quaker social justice organization.

While Congress has sought to craft a bipartisan compromise bill, the STRIVE Act offers little to address the root causes of undocumented migration and contains several troubling provisions.

One such provision is “Touchback,” which requires an applicant to leave the U.S. and re-enter the country to receive legal immigration status. This is not a practical starting point for the estimated 12 million undocumented immigrants now living in the U.S.

AFSC urges lawmakers to develop legislation that produces a fair and humane immigration system, upholds the right of families to remain intact, does not militarize communities, eliminates unreasonable detention and deportation practices, toughens basic workers’ rights, and strengthens the ability of immigrants to become equal members of the nation’s economic and social landscape.

Earlier this month, AFSC brought more than 100 immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers from more than 40 states to Washington, D.C., to meet with congressional members and staff. The delegation stressed the need for a new process that supports family reunification, ends workplace raids, creates alternatives beyond detention and deportation, demilitarizes the border region and eliminates the immigration backlog. We urge Congress to seriously consider the needs of immigrants during this congressional debate.

Laws must uphold our common humanity. The STRIVE Act fails to address how detention and deportation split families and complicate the immigration process.

Public policy should be not only fair, but also realistic. By increasing the militarization of the U.S. southern border, the Act continues a failed path that threatens the safety of all residents. In AFSC's history of work on the U.S.-Mexico border, we have documented ongoing civil and human rights abuses, including racial profiling and harassment. New immigration laws should hold higher standards of accountability for Border Patrol agents and increased oversight by Congress and the administration.

AFSC will monitor the unfolding of the congressional debate and continue to call for humane, fair, and effective legislative measures. The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) is a Quaker organization that includes people of various faiths who are committed to social justice, peace and humanitarian service. Its work is based on the belief in the worth of every person and faith in the power of love to overcome violence and injustice. The Service Committee supports the rights and dignity of all people, regardless of their immigration status. AFSC works to uplift migrant voices and strengthen migrant-led efforts to advocate for fair and humane national public policies.

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