



MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 18, 2013

TO: Council President Todd Gloria

Council President Pro Tem Sherri Lightner, Chair, Rules Committee

FROM: Councilmember Kevin Faulconer, District 2

Councilmember Mark Kersey, District 5

Councilmember Lorie Zapf, District 6

Councilmember Scott Sherman, District 7

SUBJECT: Proposed Immigration Reform

San Diego is the largest city on a border in the United States and along with Tijuana comprises one of the largest international metropolitan areas in the world. With a combined population of over 5 million people, San Diego-Tijuana is a world-wide hub for trade, commerce, and tourism. The San Ysidro Port of Entry is the busiest crossing in the world with approximately 50,000 vehicles and 25,000 pedestrians crossing every day.

Immigration has a direct and tangible impact on our cross-border metropolis. Decisions on reform may be made in Washington, D.C. but the impact of those decisions will be felt locally, which is why the City Council must outline a position on reform that protects our residents, supports our businesses, and strengthens our families.

We would strongly urge the Chair of the Rules Committee to consider the attached resolution at the Rules Committee meeting of March 20th under Item 4- Consideration of Proposed Draft Resolution Regarding Immigration Reform. We would also ask the Council President to docket the same resolution for a full Council Hearing in an expedited fashion so that we as Council have an opportunity to weigh in on legislative discussions taking place at the Federal level.

We believe that the resolution represents bipartisan reforms that would create a safe border, reunite families, and strengthen our regional economy. We would strongly urge your consideration of this effort to instill common sense to our broken immigration system.

A RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO URGING THE 113TH CONGRESS TO ENACT A BIPARTISAN LEGISLATIVE PACKAGE THAT REFORMS THE NATION'S BROKEN IMMIGRATION SYSTEM AND SECURES THE NATION'S BORDERS

WHEREAS, from its inception the United States has been a beacon of liberty and opportunity for immigrants seeking a better life; AND

WHEREAS, immigrants have made significant contributions to our nation's economic and cultural vitality and played central roles in the founding and development of the City of San Diego; AND

WHEREAS, immigration reform will allow families to stay together and provide U.S. businesses with a stronger, legal workforce that is competitive in the global economy; AND

WHEREAS, our nation's immigration and border security system is broken due to years of neglect and partisan gridlock in Washington, D.C.; AND

WHEREAS, it is estimated that over 11 million unauthorized immigrants live in the United States, with a quarter of that population residing in California; AND

WHEREAS, the current visa backlog for family-sponsored immigration petitions is over 20 years long and deters individuals wanting to come to the United States from doing so legally; AND

WHEREAS, there is a need for an effective and reliable employment verification system that allows employers to ensure that their employees are in the country legally; AND

WHEREAS, California has the highest concentration of unauthorized immigrants in the nation – constituting about seven percent of the state's total population and nine percent of the labor force; AND

WHEREAS, the City of San Diego can greatly benefit from immigration reform at the federal level; AND

WHEREAS, increased border security and federal and state cooperation on immigration are concerns that are of great importance to local government entities on both sides of the United States-Mexico border; AND

WHEREAS, legislators must take a balanced approach to securing the border that includes building in independent accountability and oversight mechanisms, while still allowing for legal migration, continued commerce, and tourism; NOW THEREFORE

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Council of the City of San Diego that it urges the 113th Congress to work in a thoughtful and bipartisan manner to enact an immigration reform package that includes the following:

- A reasonable and practical plan that allows unauthorized immigrants currently residing in the United States to earn legal status and is contingent upon successfully securing the nation's borders
- A streamlined immigration process that clears out the backlog of visa applications starting with the family and employment categories and a rational process for approval or denial of immigration applications in a timely manner

- Aggressive accountability measures for companies who knowingly hire unauthorized workers and the establishment of a reliable method for employers to verify that employees are in the country legally
 - A comprehensive plan to enhance border security that includes increasing the number of agents at and between ports of entry and utilizing advanced technology
 - An entry-exit system that tracks whether persons entering the United States on Non-Immigrant Visas leave the country when their visas expire
 - The ability for businesses to hire certain categories of foreign workers when legal residents are unavailable or unwilling to fill jobs and increased enforcement of labor regulations to ensure that workers are protected
 - A provision that precludes individuals who pose a threat to national security or have serious criminal backgrounds from being eligible to earn legal status and makes them subject to removal;
- AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT, the City of San Diego supports a bi-national effort to secure the border that includes adequate staffing and infrastructure at our ports of entry to facilitate decreased wait times and encourage economic growth; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT, the City of San Diego supports providing young people who entered the United States as children and did not knowingly violate immigration laws with an opportunity to apply for legal status through a separate process which could include military service or the attainment of higher education; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT, the City Clerk be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the President and the Honorable members of the 113th Congress representing the City of San Diego.