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Nebraska Appleseed Calls on Rep. Gutierrez to Take the Lead on Immigration Reform Legislation

On Citizenship Day, communities across the country call for action on rational and humane immigration reform

WASHINGTON – Today, hundreds of immigrant leaders and representatives are calling upon Rep. Luis Gutierrez (D-IL) to lead a strategy in the coming weeks that will get specific comprehensive immigration reform legislation introduced and moving through the halls of Congress. With the overwhelming support of communities across the country, Rep. Gutierrez will be asked to make the commitment at an event in Washington organized by the National Korean American Service & Education Consortium (NAKASEC) and the Fair Immigration Reform Movement (a network of immigrant and community-based advocacy groups) as part of their Citizenship Day celebration.

Rep. Gutierrez played a pivotal role in the Familias Unidas interfaith tour earlier this year that introduced families separated from loved ones by our broken immigration system to his colleagues in the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, the Congressional Black Caucus, the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus and House Democratic Leadership and helped build compassion and support for immigration reform.

“Nebraska’s communities need a bill that creates a workable solution to our broken immigration system so that we can move forward,” said Darcy Tromanhauser, Director of Nebraska Appleseed’s Immigrant Integration and Civic Participation Program. “We want to support Rep. Gutierrez in taking bold action to break through the years-long stalemate on Capital Hill.”

Nebraska Appleseed said they expect Gutierrez’s effort to lead to a rational and humane immigration bill which they defined as having the following features:

- a pathway to citizenship that keeps families together;
- elimination of the family immigration backlogs that keep people waiting years and decades for legal entry;
- a system to modernize the process by which visas are allocated so that they reflect actual economic needs;
- protection of worker rights for immigrants and native-born workers;
- restoration of basic due process rights and protection of basic rights and liberties;

- enforcement that respects these rights and restores confidence in the immigration system; and effective and innovative immigrant integration programs

“There is real urgency behind this for communities, families, and Nebraska’s future – for all of us,” Tromanhauser said. “It will take leadership, and Rep. Gutierrez had the courage to stand up and tell the stories of separated families at a time when people weren’t listening. Now we are asking him to step up to the plate again to get things moving in Congress for an immigration reform bill. We hope members of the Nebraska delegation join in him in making the passage of an immigration bill a top priority.”

While a great deal of attention has been on health care reform – and rightly so – the urgent need for immigration reform has not diminished. If anything, the acrimony, deception and scapegoating of immigrants in the health care debate has underscored the need for a meaningful solution that resolves the immigration issue. Immigrants, faith leaders, businesses, labor unions, and a broad coalition across the political spectrum want solutions to our current immigration mess.

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Nebraska Appleseed, a nonprofit, nonpartisan public interest law project, is a national leader in addressing social problems facing vulnerable children without loving and permanent homes, low-income families working hard to make ends meet, and new immigrants seeking a better life. Nebraska Appleseed’s current year action plan and description of its six program areas, significant litigation and policy reform successes, and broad-based accomplishments can be found at neappleseed.org.

Nebraska Appleseed is a part of the Appleseed network of independent state-based public interest law centers working to identify and address social injustices. The Appleseed network seeks to build a just society through education, legal advocacy, community activism and policy expertise by addressing root causes and producing practical, systemic solutions with broad implication. For more information visit appleseednetwork.org.

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