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March 2, 2015

U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), the nation's oldest and largest Latino civil rights organization, I write to express our concern and strong opposition to H.R. 1147, the “Legal Workforce Act”; H.R. 1148, the “Michael Davis, Jr. in Honor of State and Local Law Enforcement Act”; H.R. 1149, the “Protection of Children Act of 2015”; and H.R. 1153, the “Asylum Reform and Border Protection Act of 2015” – all bills which are set to be marked up in the House Judiciary Committee this week. While intended to address immigration issues, LULAC agrees with other civil rights and immigration partners that these piecemeal bills would be a setback when it comes to the U.S. treatment of immigrant minors, require costly and troublesome layers of additional bureaucratic verification, and at their worse, spur racial profiling and burden local and state governments with constitutionally questionable enforcement mandates.

H.R. 1147 - Legal Workforce Act

The mandatory implementation of faulty and troublesome E-Verify technology will negatively impact thousands of U.S. authorized workers. According to some sources, based on the 2012 E-Verify error rate, about 150,000 authorized workers would be erroneously denied employment if a mandatory implementation of E-Verify were to take place as prescribed in H.R. 1147. Moreover, according to the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), the mandatory implementation of E-Verify will increase the federal budget deficit by at least \$30 billion and cost private employers over \$1.2 billion to implement.

H.R. 1148 - Michael Davis, Jr. in Honor of State and Local Law Enforcement Act

H.R. 1148 adopts a “deportation-only” approach to immigration reform and is not a credible strategy to address the multi-faceted challenges facing our immigration system. This legislation would block the Department of Homeland Security from implementing the vast majority of the November 20, 2014 immigration-related administrative actions announced by President Obama. The bill would prevent the President of the United States from exercising prosecutorial discretion to focus our nation’s limited immigration enforcement resources on high priority targets. In essence, it would insist that our nation’s immigration enforcement agencies target the hardworking immigrants who pick our food, clean our homes and offices, care for our children, and countless other essential tasks. Undoing efforts by President Obama to enact meaningful immigration reform through administrative action would send a message to our community that Latino immigrants are not valued by this Congress. Moreover, these attempts go against the will of the American people. According to recent polling, over 89 percent of Latino voters approve of the President’s actions, and over 60 percent of the general American public support President Obama’s immigration policy reforms.

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H.R. 1149 - Protection of Children Act of 2015

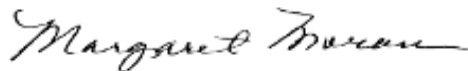
Lowering due process standards for unaccompanied refugee children fleeing violence, persecution, economic turmoil, and a host of other issues, is unacceptable to our organization. H.R. 1149 aims to make it easier to deport refugee children by forgoing comprehensive screening for abbreviated and inadequate sorting at deportation centers. The safety and treatment of unaccompanied refugee children arriving at our borders from Latin America, or any other country, should be a top concern as lax and inappropriate screening at the border has resulted in the further traumatization of child victims of sexual assault and violence. We strongly agree with other civil rights and immigration partners that all unaccompanied refugee children should be screened by a professional with training in child welfare, trauma, counseling, and international humanitarian, and immigration law.

H.R. 1153 - Asylum Reform and Border Protection Act of 2015

While a strong re-write of U.S. asylum and humanitarian law is needed, H.R. 1153 is a step in the wrong direction. Aside from stripping Advance Parole eligibility from 2012 DACA recipients, H.R. 1153 would make it increasingly difficult for victims of violence and persecution to seek protection. The bill would severely restrict parole authority that Congress has granted to relatives of victims of violence. Domestic violence and battered children protected under the bi-partisan VAWA and trafficking laws rely on parole to be reunited with their families. In addition, as other civil rights and immigration partners have noted, the spouses, children, and parents of active duty military personnel, reserve members, and veterans, frequently depend on grants of parole to enable them to remain in the country. H.R. 1153 would weaken the government's ability to grant parole to these relatives.

As the House moves forward with its legislative business, LULAC urges you to oppose these bills and any other legislation with similar damaging language. Please feel free to have your staff reach out to Luis Torres, LULAC Director of Policy, at latorres@lulac.org should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Margaret Moran".

Margaret Moran
LULAC National President