

Mayor's Congreso on Immigration Reform Resolution

Know ALL Men By These Presents:

THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION IS A CONSENSUS STATEMENT BY THE COMMUNITY OF THE EL PASO, TEXAS REGION TO ENCOURAGE THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS AND THE ELECTED OFFICIALS OF THE STATE OF TEXAS TO PASS FAIR AND COMPREHENSIVE IMMIGRATION REFORM.

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

WHEREAS, immigrants make important contributions to the economies and cultures of the United States and Mexico; and,

WHEREAS, immigrants collectively earn \$240 billion a year, pay \$90 billion a year in taxes, and receive \$5 billion in social services; and,

WHEREAS, immigrants have demonstrated their patriotism through their valor and bravery in defending this country in numerous military conflicts and Hispanics have received the highest proportion of Medals of Honor and Purple Hearts than any other ethnic group; and,

WHEREAS, border security is critical to the safety and, quality of life, and economic prosperity of the United States-Mexico border region; and,

WHEREAS, our historical receptiveness toward immigrants reflects our faith in the American ideal, that it is possible for all men and women to improve their status via hard work, and that opportunity should be denied to no one on the basis of their race or country of origin; and,

WHEREAS, though today's immigrants, like yesterday's, may arrive in the United States with no money, looking different and speaking foreign languages, they come with an entrepreneurial spirit and desire to live the American Dream; and,

WHEREAS, immigrants come to the United States because we are nation that cherishes individual freedom and rewards individual effort; and,

WHEREAS, across the world, walls erected to divide peoples and nations are symbols of failed and repressive efforts to thwart human freedom and prosperity; and,

WHEREAS, enforcement of federal immigration laws is neither a state nor local responsibility, state and local agencies do not have the training, expertise or authority to enforce immigration laws; and,

WHEREAS, the principle of *posse comitatus*, meaning the necessary and traditional separation of civilian and military authority, is critical and should be renewed and strengthened; and,

WHEREAS, the city of El Paso has been, and remains, committed to the protection of civil rights, liberties and security for all peoples as expressed in the United States and Texas Constitutions; and,

WHEREAS, local law enforcement shall treat immigrants with dignity and respect.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, BY WE THE UNDERSIGNED THAT OUR NATION'S AND TEXAS' IMMIGRATION POLICIES SHOULD ADHERE TO THE FOLLOWING PRINCIPLES:

Economics/Fiscal Impact

- Limited state resources should not be diverted to support policies and initiatives that tolerate or result in racial profiling in our communities.
- Instead of wasting precious resources on erecting a wall, the federal government should invest now in secure, fast and smart technology solutions to afford fast movement in our Hemisphere of people and products.
- Initiatives aimed at promoting investment and economic opportunities in Mexico, such as the U.S.-Mexico Partnership for Prosperity and Mexico's 3 for 1 program that encourages the use of remittances to build local infrastructure and economic development in Mexico, should be supported.
- Legislation that authorizes additional federal funds to states and hospitals for reimbursement of the indirect and direct costs related to emergency health services, prosecution, and the incarceration of undocumented immigrants should be supported.
- State legislation that aims to tax immigrants' remittances not only alienates U.S. corporations but discriminates against and penalizes hardworking individuals, and reduces investment in Mexico where jobs can be created to support Mexican economic growth.

Education

- A temporary worker program that allows employers to sponsor low-skilled immigrant workers to obtain a permanent residence status should be supported. Undocumented students under the age of 21 should be able to satisfy the requirements under such a program by attending an institution of higher education or a secondary school full-time.
- Our nation must remain committed to the constitutional principles that guarantee a public education for all children regardless of their immigration status.

Legal/Political

- Legislation that focuses solely on enforcement will be ineffective. We need and should support fair and comprehensive immigration legislation that balances border security concerns with recognition of the U.S. demand for workers in the numerous sectors of the U.S. labor force, including agriculture, construction, and the service economy.
- Local law enforcement should not be given the powers to stop, interrogate, detain or otherwise participate in immigration enforcement activities.
- Our nation should offer a path to citizenship, under clearly defined guidelines, to immigrants who have demonstrated citizenship, paid taxes, and parented citizen children and grandchildren.
- Legislation that provides a larger number of employment and family-based green cards to promote family unification, reduce backlogs in application processing, and that demands sensitive quotas, should be supported.
- Funding a \$100-million expansion of a failed state immigration program, while budget shortfalls force cuts to vital state services in Texas including higher education and the Children's Health Insurance Program, is bad public policy.

Security

- Federal resources should be focused on strategies to improve interdiction at our borders.
- It is the federal government's obligation to fund and oversee a robust Border Patrol
- As we consider ways to make our borders more secure, we should look at technology solutions that offer low-cost alternatives to the interdiction efforts of local law enforcement that lead inevitably to racial profiling

- The development and implementation of plans regarding information-sharing, international and federal-state-local coordination, technology, and anti-smuggling should be supported.
- The development of multilateral agreements to establish a North American security plan to improve border security should be supported.
- Measures that would include anti-fraud measures and biometric data on all visa and immigration documents should be supported
- The ongoing implementation of the Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America between the U.S., Canada and Mexico aimed at establishing a common security strategy, competitiveness, quality of life, and to promote economic growth by streamlining the secure movement of low-risk traffic across our shared borders, should be supported.

Social Justice

- Legislation that promotes any action by civilians - individual or groups - that interfere with the duties of United States law enforcement officials in securing the border region should be condemned. This should include the apprehension of individuals, the use of any weapons against individuals, or purporting to act in any law enforcement capacity.
- Legislation that criminalizes immigrants, their families, and the organizations that provide assistance to them, should be condemned.
- Legislation or any acts that violate the human rights of immigrants, documented or undocumented should be condemned. Law enforcement agencies, both federal and state, must treat all immigrants with respect and dignity and adhere to the legal rights they are entitled under state, federal or international treaties, especially the rights of minors through the utilization of procedures and programs that protect them.

BY THE UNANIMOUS CONSENT AND IN WITNESS WHEREOF THE FOLLOWING PERSONS PRESENT, THE SEVENTEENTH DAY OF AUGUST IN THE YEAR TWO THOUSAND AND SIX, WE HEREUNTO SUBSCRIBE OUR NAMES:

Honorable John F. Cook

Honorable Trinidad Lopez

Mayor of the City of El Paso, Texas

Mayor of the City of Socorro, Texas

Honorable Eliot G. Shapleigh

Honorable Norma Chavez

Texas State Senator, District 29

Texas State Representative, District 76

Honorable Jose Rodriguez

Honorable Lisa Colquitt Munoz

El Paso County Attorney

El Paso Independent School District Board President

Honorable Charlie Garcia

Honorable Hector Montenegro

Socorro Independent School District
Board Vice-President

Ysleta Independent School District Superintendent