



February 2, 2015

Oppose Anti-Immigrant Riders in Homeland Security Appropriations (H.R. 240)

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, we write to express our strong opposition to H.R. 240, the FY 2015 Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act, as passed by the House. After more than a year and a half of inaction by the House on one of the most important issues facing our nation, it is shameful that it began the 114th Congress with a rhetorical assault on immigrants and on the number of common-sense policies adopted by President Obama over the past several years. We urge you to reject H.R. 240 and pass a clean DHS appropriations bill without any harmful riders.

We are particularly troubled by the language adopted under the Aderhold and Blackburn amendments. Taken together, these provisions would drastically limit the President's authority to exercise common-sense prosecutorial discretion, a well-accepted aspect of law enforcement, to spare classes of deserving immigrants from the threat of deportation and to direct limited resources toward higher-priority cases. While prosecutorial discretion is hardly a solution to the longstanding problems in our nation's immigration policies, it is the only remaining option at the President's disposal given the House's refusal to take up legislation on the underlying issues. With these provisions, the House has effectively said "until we act, no one else can act – and we're not going to act."


While we understand the principle behind the Desantis amendment, which is to prioritize the deportation of immigrants convicted of several particularly egregious crimes, we are concerned with how it would apply in some cases. In particular, it would prioritize the deportation of domestic violence survivors if they themselves have also been convicted of any domestic violence offenses, something that does happen in many cases. Meanwhile, the Schock and Salmon amendments, while nonbinding "Sense of the Congress" resolutions, are premised on either erroneous or outdated information.

We strongly urge you to reject H.R. 240, pass a clean DHS appropriations bill, and promptly deal with the underlying immigration issues through the appropriate deliberative processes. It makes no sense for Congress to hold up DHS funding over a fight that it has absolutely no chance of winning.

If you have any questions, please contact either of us or Senior Counsel Rob Randhava at (202) 466-3311. Thank you.

Sincerely,


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