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**Executive Vice President & COO**  
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June 24, 2013

**Support Cloture on Leahy Amendment #1183, As Modified By  
the Corker-Hoeven Compromise**

Dear Senator:

We urge you to vote yes on cloture on Senator Leahy's amendment #1183 to S. 744, as modified by the Corker-Hoeven second-degree amendment #1556. This vote is a crucial step in ensuring the Senate passage of S. 744 – including its path to citizenship and other reforms.

We recognize that there is a great deal to dislike about the Corker-Hoeven second-degree amendment. It drastically expands border enforcement policies in ways that are unnecessary, extraordinarily expensive, and raise significant concerns for the civil and human rights of people who reside near or travel across our nation's borders. Among other things, the Corker-Hoeven compromise would:

- Require a so-called "border surge" involving the doubling of border patrol agents, additional fencing, and billions of dollars in additional "pork" spending – even though unlawful crossings in all nine southern border sectors have already fallen to near historic low levels not seen since the Nixon administration, and even though unauthorized immigration is increasingly caused by visa overstays rather than border crossings;
- Do nothing to address our neglected ports of entry, which have created choke points for the more than 215 million people and 13 million containers entering legally through our northern and southern ports every year;
- Despite its massive increases in spending on border patrol agents and technology, fail to require the adoption of lapel cameras that have been successfully used by numerous police jurisdictions to reduce civil rights and profiling abuses, resolve factual disputes, and improve training; and
- Bar Registered Provisional Immigrants (RPIs) from getting credit for the Social Security payments they made into the system in the past decade, penalizing individuals who, despite their lack of work authorization, attempted to play by the rules, and include other harsh and unnecessary limitations on federal safety net programs.

At a time when the budget sequester has forced significant, across-the-board cuts in important federal programs, the "border surge" called for by Corker-Hoeven is particularly difficult to comprehend. In short, the adoption of the Corker-Hoeven compromise would

*The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights is the nation's oldest and most diverse coalition of civil and human rights organizations. Founded in 1950, it consists of more than 200 national organizations representing persons of color, women, children, organized labor, persons with disabilities, the elderly, the LGBT community, and major religious groups.*



represent a tremendous setback in a legislative process that, to date, has produced a highly-thoughtful, balanced bipartisan bill, one that represents the best chance that we have had in years to overhaul our broken immigration system.

Despite our profound disappointment with the Corker-Hoeven compromise, however, we feel compelled to urge its adoption as part of the “Gang of Eight” legislation. Throughout the history of The Leadership Conference, the penultimate question we have faced, in determining whether to support or oppose any compromise piece of legislation, is: “does this bill do more harm than good?” In this case, we believe the improvements to our immigration system made by S. 744 – which largely remain intact – are simply too important to abandon at this point, even with the profoundly detrimental additions made by the Corker-Hoeven compromise.

Even with the Corker-Hoeven compromise included, S. 744 will still put millions of hardworking, deserving undocumented immigrants on a road to citizenship that, while far from perfect, will enable people to fully share in the American dream and put an end to their second-class legal status. It will finally enact the DREAM Act, something that has long enjoyed bipartisan support and could have easily become law years ago. It provides drastically improved protections for agricultural guestworkers and other workers recruited from abroad, many of whom currently face some of the harshest and most inhumane labor conditions imaginable in our nation. S. 744 makes significant reforms to immigration detention policies which, since 1996, have made a mockery of our most basic constitutional and human rights principles. While we were disappointed that S. 744 would repeal the diversity visa program, it now includes provisions that we are confident will address our concerns in that area. In a number of areas, such as the reduction of family-based visa backlogs, promoting immigrant integration, removing arbitrary barriers to asylum, gathering data on the use of profiling, and many other policies, S. 744 makes some – while not ideal – improvements that have been many years in the making and that will go a long way in advancing the civil and human rights of immigrants and citizens alike.

While we share the disappointment of many advocates – especially those who for decades have toiled to improve how people are treated at our borders – we are reluctant to sacrifice the important reforms made by S. 744. If the Corker-Hoeven compromise truly represents the only way of moving forward with the passage of S. 744, we are prepared to accept it. We urge you to do the same.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions, please contact Executive Vice President Nancy Zirkin or Senior Counsel Rob Randhava at (202) 466-3311.

Sincerely,

Wade Henderson  
President & CEO

Nancy Zirkin  
Executive Vice President