



TO: BOARD OF DIRECTORS
FROM: EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
SUBJECT: IMMIGRATION

STATUS: ADOPTED

DATE: 05/20/2010

RECOMMENDATION: That the Board of Directors of The Greater San Antonio Chamber of Commerce adopt the following statement as policy:

STATEMENT: The Greater San Antonio Chamber of Commerce continues our unqualified support for Comprehensive Immigration Reform as a necessary part of our economic resurgence as a nation and as a critical element to our community's success. Such reform must have as its core:

1. The increased availability of, and improvement to the process for obtaining work visas;
2. The implementation of a fair process that addresses the citizenship of undocumented immigrants currently residing in the United States; and
3. Ensures the safety and security of our Nation's borders.

The Chamber knows that effective comprehensive immigration reform can only be accomplished at the federal level. We therefore implore the leaders of our nation to adopt federal legislation that aligns our immigration policy with the economic realities of our business community. Just as our Nation begins to rebound, the need for adequate labor is a necessary part of our economic resurgence and a critical element to our community's success.

BACKGROUND:

Since the founding of our City, immigrants have been at the heart of the growth and development of San Antonio. The Chamber has a long history of celebrating our ethnic and cultural diversity and recognizing with pride the contributions of immigrants to the community.

The Chamber has a standing record of support for a federal comprehensive immigration reform effort that secures the safety of the US border, addresses citizenship of the immigrants currently residing in the US and addresses the effectiveness of the visa program and the need for businesses to easily access an authorization verification system. Since 2006, The Greater San Antonio Chamber of Commerce Board has adopted annual positions on the immigration issue in the context of our SA to DC federal agenda and our State Legislative Agenda.

CURRENT EVENTS

The debate regarding Comprehensive Immigration Reform has been rekindled as a result of State legislation adopted in Arizona on April 13.

- Pros-
1. A comprehensive immigration policy will promote and enforce a safe and healthy flow of trade and people across our borders.
 2. Since the implementation of NAFTA, the United States and Mexico have worked closely to become better economic partners and have created a framework of cooperation through trade.
 3. There is a big concern that State or local policy would force local police officers to assume the responsibilities of immigration officers therefore straining resources for current public safety responsibilities and emergency response.
- Cons-
1. Implementing an immediate guest worker program for the 11 or 12 million undocumented workers currently in the United States discourages those that are currently in line to work in the United States legally.
 2. There are reports that claim undocumented workers take jobs from American citizens and because they are undocumented, result in depressed wages.

IMPLEMENTATION: The Chamber will communicate this position to our Congressional delegation, Governor Rick Perry, the Bexar County delegation, the Mayor and members of the City Council, the media and The Chamber membership through public testimony, letters, media releases and publication in *The Chamber Today*.