

February 9, 2005

Dear Member of Congress:

We, the under-signed organizations, continue to urge you to vote against the REAL ID Act (H.R.418). We also have serious concerns about a new amendment to be offered by Rep. Sensenbrenner. The amendment he proposed today would make the bill worse in various important ways. This amendment would, among other changes, make it even more difficult for legitimate asylum-seekers to find refuge in the United States, and it would bar courts from reviewing an even broader range of decisions to deport non-citizens.

The amendment would also lift the cap on the number of asylees who can adjust to permanent resident status each year. That cap is now so low (10,000) that an asylee who applies today for a green card can expect to wait at least 15 years to become a legal permanent resident. While we support eliminating the cap, we oppose the Sensenbrenner amendment because it would remove the cap at the cost of preventing asylum seekers from finding the safety they desperately need.

Thank you for considering our views.

Sincerely,

Organizations

American Civil Liberties Union

American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC)

American Immigration Lawyers Association

Amnesty International USA

American Jewish Committee

Anti-Defamation League

Asian Pacific American Legal Center of Southern California

Bill of Rights Defense Committee

B'nai B'rith International

Capital Area Immigrant Rights Coalition (CAIR)

Center for Gender & Refugee Studies

Church Alliance for a New Sudan

Connecticut Immigrant and Refugee Coalition

Heartland Alliance for Human Needs & Human Rights

Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS)

Human Rights First

Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights

Immigration Equality

Institute on Religion and Public Policy

Jesuit Refugee Service USA

Jewish Council for Public Affairs

Jewish Labor Committee

Jubilee Campaign

Leadership Conference on Civil Rights

League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)

Legal Momentum

Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS)

Midwest Immigrant & Human Rights Center

Migrant and Refugee Cultural Support, Inc

Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights

The Multiracial Activist

National Asian Pacific American Legal Consortium

National Immigration Forum

National Network to End Violence Against Immigrant Women

People For the American Way

September 11th Families for Peaceful Tomorrows

Tahirih Justice Center

U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants

The Union for Reform Judaism

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

Vermont Refugee Assistance

Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs

Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children

Workmen's Circle/Arbeter Ring

World Organization for Human Rights USA

World Relief

Individuals*

Peggy Birchfield
Executive Director
Religious Freedom Coalition

Donna M. Hughes
Professor and Carlson Endowed Chair
Women's Studies Program
University of Rhode Island

Michele Pistone
Professor and Director
Clinical Program & CARES Clinic
Villanova University School of Law

Berta J. Romero
Consultant/Coordinator
Refugee Affairs
Refugee Council USA

Philip G. Schrag
Professor of Law
Georgetown University Law Center

*For individual signers, institutional affiliations are listed for identification purposes only