

# March U.S. Immigration Alert!

A Monthly Newsletter from National Immigrant Solidarity Network

March 2004 Issue, Volume One

No Immigrant Bashing! Support Immigrant Rights!

<http://www.actionla.org/ISN/>

\$2.00/Copy



In this issue:

1. Support national call for signing DREAM Act Petitions (Page 1)
2. CLEAR Act Updates (Page 1)
3. Bush's new immigration proposals (page 2)
4. AgJOBS legislation Updates (Page 3)
5. Immigration news, link of the month (page 3)
6. What's new at ISN (page 4)
7. Subscribe to the Immigration Alert! (page 4)

## DREAM Act Petition Updates Deadline is April 1!

Join major immigrant youth activist organizations from across the country: Wise-UP/CHIRLA, USSA & USAS at their efforts to collect 65,000 petitions by April 1<sup>st</sup> to send to President Bush, urging him to support the DREAM Act (S.1545) and Student Adjustment Act (H.R. 1684) which are pending legislation that would help legalize undocumented students so that they can have access to a fair college education.

Many undocumented students find colleges and universities doors closed to them because of their immigration status after graduation. These are long-time residents of this country who have grown up and have made the United States their home. They have dreams of becoming professionals in their communities like lawyers, doctors, etc., and have the grades and 4.0GPAs to help them, but because of their immigration status, they are hardly encouraged and have little resources to continue a higher education. Thus, many students are forced to abandon their dreams and hopes of a career. How can we throw away such talented and gifted students?

By supporting student legalization, we are investing in communities that would eventually benefit from the careers that these students are pursuing. Our communities cannot afford to be ignoring these students anymore. By collecting 65,000 petitions, one for every undocumented student that graduates every year, we will be one step closer to getting the DREAM Campaign passed this year.

To get the petition on-line, please visit:

<http://www.actionla.org/ISN/>

and download the petition, sign it and return to:

National Immigrant Solidarity Network

C/O Lee Siu Hin

1013 Mission St. #6, South Pasadena CA 91030

For more information, you can call Horacio at (213) 201-4449

**REMEMBER, THE DREAM ACT PETITION  
DEADLINE IS APRIL 1!**

**CLEAR Act Updates  
We need your support to defeat it!**

(Continue Page 2...)

### Who is National Immigrant Solidarity Network

On November 2003 at SOA Protest Ft. Benning GA, dozen national grassroots & community groups are agreed to form a broad-based immigrant support coalition, aim to mobilize community forces to work with different national immigrants and civil rights organizations. Major endorsing and participating organizations includes: Latin American Solidarity Coalition, CISPES, Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada, Nicaragua Network, United Students Against Sweatshops, Student Peace Action Networks, ActionLA and so on.

For more information about the ISN, and learn how you can participate, please visit our website:

<http://www.actionla.org/ISN/>

E-mail: [ISN@ActionLA.org](mailto:ISN@ActionLA.org)

Tel: (213)413-1778

1013 Mission St. #6 South Pasadena, CA 91030

(CLEAR Act Updates, from Page 1)

## **CLEAR Would Cost Federal Taxpayers \$9,000,000,000 Over 5 Years, In Addition to State and Local Costs**

The Congressional Budget Office has completed a cost estimate for the CLEAR Act. Although CBO did not directly figure state and local government costs, their analysis includes some mention of these burdens and is helpful on the federal cost side. While we need to do a more detailed analysis of their findings, here are some highlights:

The price tag for the federal government would be \$9 billion between 2005 and 2009, if everything authorized is appropriated (such as the \$1 billion annually for SCAAP). In the analysis CBO points out that Congress fails to appropriate more than 35% of SCAAP requests annually in its current form, showing how unlikely it is that CLEAR would lead to new resources for state/local governments and police proportionate to the costs of participating.

Furthermore, SCAAP reimbursement currently requires conviction for a state or local crime. Since immigration violations are not part of state or local legal codes, it raises the question whether any of the new enforcement could actually be reimbursed for as the bill's drafters envision. This point was not explored by CBO, and if anyone has greater insight into how this might work we would like to hear from you.

Regarding the administrative judgment system established in the bill (to award monies to local police departments who take undocumented immigrants into custody and the Department of Homeland Security doesn't come to pick them up), CBO said local governments won't find this cost-effective and likely won't pursue the funds, again undercutting the argument that more money is on the way. In fact, CBO didn't factor any of these potential reimbursements (\$1,000 per incident and then \$10,000 if there is a pattern and practice of DHS not picking up undocumented people identified by local police) into the \$9 billion federal price tag, because they deemed it so unlikely local governments would try to pursue this money.

In the legislation, both state/local and federal enforcement of immigration laws would be funded, in part, through a "tax" on visa application fees paid to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. One-third of these fees would be re-directed to enforcement. CBO estimates that U.S. CIS could have to raise an additional \$1 billion or more a year to pay for this "tax," which could require perhaps a doubling of application fees. This additional money is not coming out of federal tax coffers, and so may be another hidden cost of the legislation. Fees are already on the rise as application processing times skyrocket, and forcing immigration

benefits applicants to now foot part of the bill for enforcement is a significant statement on the drafters' part. Finally, CBO said that the bill does contain intergovernmental mandates that preempt state and local laws, as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act.

The entire analysis can be viewed at: <ftp://ftp.cbo.gov/51xx/doc5117/hr2671.pdf>

## **Bush Immigration Proposals: False Hopes**

**From National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (NNIRR) Oakland, CA.**

**Jan. 7, 2004**

**Contact: Cathi Tactaquin or Claudia Gómez Tel: 510.465.1984 x302 or 304**

Oakland, CA – The proposal for immigration reform outlined today by President George Bush promises little hope for fair wages or decent working conditions, much less opportunity for legal status, for the millions of undocumented immigrant workers in the U.S. Instead, the proposed "new" policy amounts to little more than another "guestworker" program, with even fewer protections and opportunities than programs currently under consideration in Congress. The Bush proposal might be good for employers wanting cheap and vulnerable labor, but does little to contribute to the human rights and well-being of immigrant workers.

The National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights and other immigrant rights advocates hoped that the Administration would finally follow through on its pledge of over two years ago to consider a path to permanent residency for the hundreds of thousands of undocumented immigrants who live and work in the U.S.

However, the main fix that the President proposes – a three-year, renewable temporary worker visa – provides no definitive path toward legalization, but rather, ensures a pool of cheap labor for "bad jobs" that American workers try to avoid. Nor did the proposal specify how immigrant families could be united or remain together in the U.S., only that participants could leave to visit home countries and gain re-entry.

The President also spoke of the tragic deaths of migrants at the U.S.-Mexico border, indicating that his proposals for temporary work visas would help migrants who have been victimized by smugglers. However, he also reaffirmed border security policies which themselves have contributed to discrimination, abuse and violence against immigrants in

**(Continue Page 3...)**

## **(Bush Proposals, from Page 2)**

the border regions, sometimes at the hands of border patrol agents. After September 11, stepped-up “militarization” of the border has forced desperate men, women and children into more hazardous migration situations.

The President’s proposal did not specify changes to the current legal immigration program, which is woefully backlogged and inadequate in addressing the demand for immigration access. Since participants in the new temporary worker program would have “fall in line” to apply for permanent residency status, they too would be thrust into the existing backlog that itself contributes to undocumented immigration.

The fact that the Department of Homeland Security, which is dedicated to national security, would be responsible for implementing the proposed program is also disturbing. DHS immigration enforcement programs, as described in NNIRR’s recent report, Human Rights and Human Security at Risk, already jeopardize community safety and compromise access to immigration services. DHS oversight

provides little incentive for undocumented immigrants to emerge from the shadows and identify themselves through a program that carries little hope for long-term legal residency.

Comprehensive immigration reform must include opportunities for permanent residency and family reunification, labor protection, access to due process, safety and community security. Undocumented immigrant students, many of whom have lived in the U.S. most of their lives, have been waiting for President Bush to support pending legislation that would provide them with access to permanent residency and a future free from fear of deportation. Farm worker unions have negotiated with agribusiness to bring to Congress legislation that would protect their rights as workers and create a path for legal residency. President Bush’s proposals made no mention of these efforts. Instead, his announcement, which comes less than a week before he is scheduled to meet with Mexican President Vicente Fox, has the transparency of a pre-election appeal to Latino voters -- not a serious attempt to chart a path towards a fair and just program of much-needed immigration reform.

## **AgJOBS Week of Action Come to DC at Week of March 22**

**As part of the AgJOBS Call to Action, the United Farm Workers, the Farm Labor Organizing Committee, the Farmworker Justice Fund and others are holding National Week of Action in Washington, DC March 23 - 25, 2004 to educate the members of Congress about the importance of passing AgJOBS legislation this year.**



If you are planning to come to DC for the week of Action, please complete the attached registration form by Wednesday, March 17th. and email to [agjobs@fwjustice.org](mailto:agjobs@fwjustice.org). For questions, please send an email to [agjobs@fwjustice.org](mailto:agjobs@fwjustice.org) or call Ms. Lorna Baez at 202-783-2628 ext. 211.

### **AGJOBS: ADVOCACY AND ACTIONS**

A piece of immigration reform that has already been introduced in Congress is the Agricultural Job Opportunity, Benefits, and Security Act (AgJOBS, S. 1645 and H.R. 3142). The AgJOBS bill is the product of a compromise between growers and their advocates in Congress, and farmworkers and their advocates. It would legalize (and provide permanent residence to) the undocumented agricultural workforce, and make changes to the program that provides temporary visas to agricultural workers.

On March 9, a bill was introduced in the Senate as an alternative to the AgJOBS bill by Immigration Subcommittee Chair Saxby Chambliss (R-GA). It would abolish many of the worker protections of the current H-2A program, and would NOT offer permanent residence to undocumented farmworkers. The bill, S. 2185, is similar to a bill introduced by Robert Goodlatte (R-VA), H.R. 3604. (Discussion of the Goodlatte bill was included in a previous e-mail update.) If you make a call (as requested below) and are asked, please say that you oppose the Chambliss bill in the Senate and the Goodlatte bill in the House.

## **Immigration Links of the Month**

**National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights**  
[www.nnirr.org](http://www.nnirr.org)

**National Immigration Forum**  
[www.immigrationforum.org](http://www.immigrationforum.org)

# Immigration News

## Stories Missed By Corporate Media

### Army Wrong to Ask for Islam Meeting Info

By **MATT JOYCE**, Associated Press  
March 15, 2004

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) - Army Intelligence and Security Command agents overstepped their authority when they sought information on civilian participants at a University of Texas conference on Islam, the Army said.

Two counterintelligence agents from Fort Hood, near Killeen, went to the university's law school on Feb. 9, seeking information on people who attended the conference, "Islam and the Law: The Question of Sexism."

The Army is prohibited from investigating civilians unless the FBI waives its jurisdiction or requests assistance, said Deborah Parker, a spokeswoman for the Army Intelligence and Security Command, based in Fort Belvoir, Va.

"It was a lapse in judgment," Parker said Monday. "It was not something that was done maliciously."

The conference, which had taken place the previous week, was open to the public. Conference organizers said they refused to give the agents a list of participants and a video of the event.

"It is inappropriate for us to invite the public and the student body to come and freely exchange ideas and then to turn around and relay their personal information to the intelligence community," Sahar Aziz, a UT law student, had said last month.

The organizers and civil rights activists accused the Army of spying on the conference and using investigation tactics meant to stifle free speech.

A statement from the Army issued Friday said that the agents were acting on a report by two Army lawyers who attended the conference. The lawyers reported suspicious behavior by a conference participant who persistently questioned their identity, occupation and status, the statement said.

Army rules require its members to report those types of suspicious incidents, Parker said.

But the Fort Hood detachment of the Intelligence and Security Command erred in investigating the incident without first reporting it to command headquarters in Virginia, she said.

The incident involved civilians, and officials at the command's headquarters would have reported it to the FBI, Parker said.

"This is where things went wrong," she said. "The procedure required that the FBI be notified before taking action, and that notification wasn't made."

## What's New at ISN

National Immigrant Solidarity Network is holding a monthly phone conference (next one will be mid-April) to discuss how we can mobilize our grassroots and community resources to fight against President Bush's right wing anti-immigrant policies, as well as campaigns to against CLEAR, SEVIS and to support DREAM acts.

We are planning to hold a grassroots and community-based Immigrant Unity Conference this summer at New York city.

To learn how you can participate at the ISN projects, and endorse the ISN, please visit our webpage:

<http://www.actionla.org/ISN/>

and write to us by e-mail:

[ISN@ActionLA.org](mailto:ISN@ActionLA.org)

Also please subscribe to our daily-news listserv, send e-mail to: [isn-subscribe@lists.riseup.net](mailto:isn-subscribe@lists.riseup.net)

## Please subscribe to the U.S. Immigration Alert!

### A Monthly Newsletter from National Immigrant Solidarity Network

Please subscribe to our new monthly newsletter focus on the latest U.S. immigrant events, alerts, news and useful information. This is a totally volunteer-based efforts and first of this kind in this country.

1 year subscription rate (12 issues) is **\$20.00**

It will help us pay for the printing costs, as well as funding for the ISN projects (additional donations to the ISN is tax deductible!)

Send your subscription request/check to:

**Lee Siu Hin**

**National Immigrant Solidarity Network**

**1013 Mission St. #6**

**South Pasadena, CA 91030**