State Attorneys General

A Communication from the Chief Legal Officers
of the Following States and Territories:

Arkansas * Colorado * Guam * Hawaii * Idaho * Indiana
Iowa * Maine * Maryland * Mississippi * Missouri * Montana
New Mexico * New York * Rhode Island * South Dakota
Vermont * Virgin Islands

December 5, 2014

The Honorable Harry Reid  The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader  Minority Leader
U.S. Senate  U.S. Senate

The Honorable John Boehner  The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House of Representatives  Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives  U.S. House of Representatives

Dear Majority Leader Reid, Minority Leader McConnell, Speaker Boehner, Minority Leader Pelosi,

As elected Attorneys General of our respective states, we recognize the need for bipartisan immigration legislation to fix our dysfunctional legal immigration system.

President Obama's recent executive actions on immigration are necessarily temporary and cannot be as comprehensive as immigration reform passed by Congress. Some question the authority of the President in this area. Regardless, the moment is now upon Congress to seize the opportunity and advance commonsense legislative reforms to our immigration system to secure our borders, support businesses and workers, and promote the safety of our communities.

As Attorneys General, our first priority is ensuring the safety and security of the nation and our communities. Recognizing that immigration policy is primarily a federal responsibility, we urge Congress to pass immigration reform legislation to ensure the protection of our communities and the integrity of our national borders.

We support a law enforcement strategy that focuses on public safety, targets serious crime, safeguards witnesses and victims, and considers national security implications for porous borders.

We further urge a reasonable and predictable regulatory environment that considers the interests of, and the unintended consequences to businesses, workers and consumers.
A broader reform effort should eventually include a way to accurately, reliably and affordably determine who’s permitted to work, ensuring an adequate labor force for a growing economy.

Our immigration system must be flexible enough to address the needs of businesses in the various states, with state input, while protecting the interests of workers. This includes a visa system that is both responsive and effective in meeting the demands of our economy. It should also acknowledge the beneficial economic contributions immigrants make as workers, tax payers, and consumers.

Our immigration policies, where possible, should prioritize keeping families together in order to ensure the most supportive home environment for all the children across our country.

Our immigration policies must provide a sensible means to deal with the immigrants who are currently in the country without legal status but are of good character, pay taxes and are committed to continuing to contribute to our society.

In passing immigration reform legislation, Congress can permanently fix a broken system, strengthening border security, aiding businesses and workers, and supporting public safety.

Sincerely,

Greg Zoeller
Indiana Attorney General

Jim Hood
Mississippi Attorney General

Dustin McDaniel
Arkansas Attorney General

John W. Suthers
Colorado Attorney General

Lenny Rapadas
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Russell Suzuki
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Vincent Frazer
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