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Erin White, [erin@caminopr.com](mailto:erin@caminopr.com) / 212.255.2575

## **Advocates for immigrant women commend introduction of bipartisan immigration reform bill in U.S. Senate**

*Urge Congress to close gaps for women's health care, LGBT families, and ensure fairness and justice in enforcement*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, the [National Coalition for Immigrant Women's Rights](#) (NCIWR) commends the U.S. Senate on its introduction of the “[Border Security, Economic Opportunity and Immigration Modernization Act](#),” a bipartisan proposal for immigration reform. The NCIWR applauds the tireless work of the Senators leading the effort, known as the “Gang of Eight”—Michael Bennet (D–Colo.), Richard Durbin (D–Ill.), Jeff Flake (R–Ariz.), Lindsey Graham (R–S.C.), John McCain (R–Ariz.), Robert Menendez (D–N.J.), Marco Rubio (R–Fla.), and Chuck Schumer (D–N.Y.) and congratulates them on reaching an agreement on this important issue.

“Immigrant women are key contributors to the success of the U.S. They contribute to the economy, keep their families strong and invest in their children’s education. However, heavy-handed enforcement policies are violating their rights and tearing their families apart in inhumane, costly and counterproductive ways,” notes Michelle Brané, Director of the Migrant Rights and Justice Program with the [Women’s Refugee Commission](#) (WRC), a member of NCIWR Steering Committee. Brané continues, “The introduction of the Border Security, Economic Opportunity and Immigration Modernization Act is an important step forward in affording immigrant women the opportunity to become full citizens of the United States and to build a better future for their families and their communities.”

“While we’re encouraged to see this process moving forward, we are disappointed that the Senate did not seriously address the damaging barriers to health care for immigrant women and their families. As currently proposed, immigrant women and families would have to wait at least 13 to 15 years for access to affordable health insurance options. For a mother suffering from undetected breast or cervical cancer, 15 years can be the difference between life and death,” comments Jessica González-Rojas, executive director of the [National Latina Institute for](#)

[Reproductive Health](#) (NLIRH), a Steering Committee member of NCIWR. She adds, “We urge Congress to address this glaring oversight and ensure that the roadmap to citizenship provides greater opportunity for aspiring citizens to contribute to and participate in affordable health care, and to live with health, dignity, and justice.”

“Today's proposed bill from the Senate Gang of Eight is an important first step and we are glad that legislators have heard the message from Latina, Asian American and women voters that we must fix our broken immigration system. Yet we have a long way to go before all the needs and concerns of Asian American immigrant women and our families are met. For example, the Senate bill today proposes to destroy two essential components of our family-based immigration system. Asian American women will feel the impact of these changes most acutely. Children and sisters and brothers are family. We urge Congress to fight for the family unity values that make this country great,” notes Miriam Yeung, executive director of the [National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum](#) (NAPAWF), Steering Committee member of NCIWR. Yeung adds, “We look forward to working with Congress to ensure that comprehensive immigration policy reform lifts up the best of our country's values.”

[More than 230](#) NCIWR members and allied organizations have joined together to call for a fair roadmap to citizenship that is broad, affordable, safe and accessible to all immigrant women; equal employment-based migration opportunities for women and sufficient workplace protections; sufficient opportunities for all families to stay together, including LGBT families; access to quality and affordable health care and family economic supports; an end to enforcement, detention and deportation policies that undermine women's due process, civil rights and human rights, and undermine the safety of communities and tear families apart; and enhanced protections for women fleeing violence. The Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act makes important strides for immigrant women, families and communities, yet many issues of concerns to women remain.

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*The [National Coalition for Immigrant Women's Rights](#) is the leading national collaboration to specifically focus on women and gender issues in the public discourse on immigration. The coalition represents more than 80 leading national advocacy and grassroots organizations. For more information about the National Coalition for Immigrant Women's Rights, please visit <http://nciwr.wordpress.com>. To view the [Statement of Principles on Women and Immigration Reform](#), endorsed by over 230 national, state, and local organizations, please visit the website of the [National Coalition for Immigrant Women's Rights \(NCIWR\)](#).*