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Marielena Hincapié

March 2, 2015

Dear Member of Congress,

The National Immigration Law Center (NILC) is writing to express our strong opposition to four bills set to be marked up in the House Judiciary Committee this week: **H.R. 1147**, the “Legal Workforce Act”; **H.R. 1149**, the “Protection of Children Act of 2015”; **H.R. 1153**, the “Asylum Reform and Border Protection Act of 2015”; and **H.R. 1148**, the “Michael Davis, Jr. in Honor of State and Local Law Enforcement Act,” a reincarnation of the much-criticized SAFE Act.

NILC is a nonpartisan organization exclusively dedicated to defending and advancing the rights of low-income immigrants and their families. Policymakers, faith and community-based organizations, legal aid attorneys, government agencies, and the media recognize NILC staff as experts on a wide range of issues that affect the lives of immigrants in the U.S. and frequently call upon us to explain the real-life impact of immigration-related laws and policies. Our experience working on state and local immigration law enforcement, immigrant workplace issues, and due process for unaccompanied children facing deportation informs our view that these four bills are the wrong approach to reforming the nation’s immigration system.

H.R. 1147, The Legal Workforce Act is costly legislation representing an outdated enforcement-only approach that threatens the livelihood of all workers, including U.S. citizens, while failing to provide real solutions for law-abiding employers. By mandating that all U.S. employers use the error-prone E-Verify system, the bill could cause hundreds of thousands of authorized U.S. workers to lose their jobs and push workers and businesses deeper into the underground economy.

H.R. 1149, The Protection of Children Act and H.R. 1153, the Asylum Reform and Border Protection Act are harsh departures from the U.S. tradition of protecting the most vulnerable, especially children who have been subjected to violence, trafficking, abuse and other crimes. Collectively, the bills undermine critical due process protections in the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act (TVPPRA), subject children to prolonged detention, and prevent children from being cared for in age-appropriate facilities.

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H.R. 1148, The SAFE Act is an extreme and costly measure that would damage public safety, spur racial profiling, and heavily burden local and state governments. A wide spectrum of law enforcement and faith leaders opposed the version introduced in the 113th Congress. The bill puts states and localities in the driver's seat of immigration enforcement, by allowing them to enact and enforce immigration laws. It would punish the most basic human interactions of care and support for individuals who are undocumented. It would also, for the first time in our history, make it a criminal offense for an individual to be present in the U.S. without permission.

NILC urges Congress to revamp our nation's immigration system through real immigration reform that creates a road to citizenship for those who are currently undocumented, strengthens our families, and implement policies consistent with our values.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Marielena Hincapie". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Marielena Hincapie
Executive Director
National Immigration Law Center