



Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota

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December 4, 2014

Dear Representative:

The Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota (ILCM) writes to express our opposition to H.R. 5759, the “Executive Amnesty Prevent Act of 2014,” introduced by Rep. Ted Yoho, which is a misguided effort to prohibit the President from taking executive action on immigration.

Attempts to strip the executive branch of authority to defer the removal of certain noncitizens places individuals and communities at greater risk of harm. One such effort, H.R. 5759, is grossly overbroad and if passed, would sweep into its wide net many vulnerable individuals in compelling circumstances who rely on protection from removal for their safety and well-being. For example, those fleeing armed conflict, humanitarian disasters and domestic violence are eligible under existing law to have their deportation deferred until a more permanent solution becomes available. In addition, the ability to protect from removal those victims of crime who cooperate with criminal investigations and prosecutions is a critical law enforcement tool. Protection of vulnerable individuals has always been a bipartisan value and longstanding American tradition that should not be up-ended by divisive politics.

As a direct legal service provider to thousands of noncitizens annually, ILCM cannot understate the importance of the executive branch’s authority to defer removal for many of the clients we serve. One ILCM client, Eddie, came to Minnesota from Honduras when he was only fourteen years old. His parents had abandoned him as a child and he was forced to flee his home after receiving threats from gang members. Eddie was homeless and alone in a rural Minnesota town until a local couple took him in and eventually became his family. Eddie was terrified at the thought of being sent back to his dangerous life in Honduras so his caretakers connected him with the Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota. ILCM was able to assist Eddie in receiving Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS), and eventually his green card. Eddie was able to be legally adopted by his new family, go to college, and get a driver’s license. He volunteers at his church as a mentor for children and hopes to get a job working in law enforcement where he can be a mentor for at-risk youth.

The President acted within his established legal authority when taking recent executive actions on immigration. Public opinion supports these steps, with an approval rate of over 60 percent of the general public and 89 percent of Latino voters recently polled. The President’s actions, however, are

only a limited and temporary fix. If Congress prefers a legislative solution over executive action, it should bring to the floor a bill like H.R. 15 that seeks to address the wide range of challenges in our broken immigration system.

ILCM stands in opposition to H.R. 5759 and hopes you will join us. If you have any questions about the impact and unintended consequences of this bill, please contact John Keller, ILCM's executive director, at (651) 641-1011 or john.keller@ilcm.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John C. Keller". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and "K".

John C. Keller

Executive Director