



March 3, 2015

Dear Members of the House Judiciary Committee,

We Belong Together is co-anchored by the National Domestic Workers Alliance and the National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum, with the participation of women's organizations, immigrant rights groups, children and families across the country. We Belong Together is a campaign to mobilize women in support of common sense immigration policies that will keep families together and empower women.

We write to you today to voice our opposition to four bills scheduled for mark up in the House Judiciary Committee this week: H.R. 1148, the Michael Davis, Jr. in Honor of State and Local Law Enforcement 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. 1147, the Legal Workforce Act. These bills are an attack on immigrant women. Women and children represent 75% of immigrants in our country today and there are an estimated 5 million undocumented women living in the U.S. Immigrant women fuel our economy, power our communities and grow our families.

The Committee must reject each of the four bills enumerated above. H.R. 1148 undercuts President Obama's executive actions on immigration and the ability of the executive branch to use its legal authority to set enforcement priorities and exercise discretion. The bill harms survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault and other forms of gender-based violence by adopting the strategy of Arizona's notorious racial profiling law, SB 1070, as a national regime. By turning over immigration authority to state and local agents, H.R. 1148 destroys any opportunities for law enforcement to build trust with the communities they are sworn to protect and discourages victims and witnesses from coming forward, keeping police from fulfilling their core mission of ensuring public safety. Such policies have resulted in immigrant women and children remaining in abusive situations unable to access safety and justice.

H.R. 1149 and H.R. 1153 harm survivors of gender-based violence as well as children seeking refuge in the U.S. These bills restrict the ability of survivors to be reunited with their families, envision such a high standard of proof for asylum seekers as to make this form of relief inaccessible, lower due process standards for unaccompanied children, subject children to prolonged detention in inappropriate settings and go against our country's long-standard tradition of fairness and humanitarian protections for the most vulnerable.

H.R. 1147 continues to use an outdated and enforcement-only framework by mandating E-Verify for all employers without meaningful worker safeguards or other reforms. This scheme would result in the dangers of lost wages and jobs, often without recourse, to all workers, including U.S. citizens, and pushes many women workers further into the underground economy. Immigrant

women workers, already vulnerable to workplace sexual assault, unsafe working conditions and other abuses, would be at greater risk.

Each of the four bills discussed above must be rejected. Sadly, these bills signal a refusal to engage in a meaningful and serious discussion about reforms to our immigration system and instead promote inhumane and anti-immigrant policies that have been rejected by most Americans.

We Belong Together urges members of the Committee to remember the women, children and families who are looking to Congress for thoughtful and humane solutions that align with our values and benefit our economy. We Belong Together looks forward to our continued work toward permanent legislative change that honors the needs and contributions of women, makes our communities safer and promotes the human rights and dignity of all those living in our country. We urge you to reject H.R. 1147, H.R. 1148, H.R. 1149, H.R. 1153 and any similar proposals.

Sincerely,

Andrea Cristina Mercado and Miriam Yeung
Co-Chairs, We Belong Together