

AFT PRINCIPLES ON **Commonsense** Immigration Reform

The time is NOW for a comprehensive immigration reform plan that provides a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants who often are forced to live in the shadows without basic rights and protections.

We urge members of Congress to:

- **Create pathways to citizenship** for the approximately 11 million undocumented immigrants and students living and working in the U.S., who deserve a reasonable road map to citizenship. Our great country has been strengthened and enriched by the diversity immigrants bring. The failure to pass commonsense immigration reform would hurt our economy and communities around the country.
- **Ensure safe, secure jobs and protect labor rights** that guarantee the uniform enforcement of worker protection standards, including real, enforceable remedies for labor and employment law violations for *all* workers—regardless of their immigration status. Abuses in the current visa program that undermine the focus on retraining and hiring American workers should be addressed before any expansion of existing guest worker programs is considered. An immigration reform plan also should reduce incentives for employers to hire undocumented or temporary foreign workers.

All workers, foreign-born and native, should be guaranteed full workplace rights, including the right to self petition, mobility and the right to organize. Any comprehensive immigration reform legislation must incorporate a workable solution to address the future flow of immigrants that includes the needs of the American economy.

- **Uphold family unification.** The AFT believes that family unification should be a priority. Families should be allowed to remain together. When parents are deported and separated from their children, our communities suffer. Undocumented immigrants have settled roots and are working and contributing members of their communities. They need a road map to earn legalization to come out of the shadows.

The AFT strongly supports an immigration policy that allows U.S. citizens, visa-contingent workers and lawful permanent residents the ability to seek a visa on the basis of a permanent relationship with a same-sex partner.

- **Expand access to higher education.** The DREAM Act is a crucial part of immigration reform. About 65,000 undocumented students graduate from high school each year. Yet, without the DREAM Act, they are relegated to a life in the underground economy. Dream Act Students have done everything our society has asked them to do; yet, they are still being punished.

The DREAM Act is good for our students, and it's good for our economy. And for our DREAMers who already have gone through the process and received temporary relief through the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, there should be a streamlined process towards citizenship.

It's time for commonsense, compassionate and comprehensive immigration reform.