



888 16th Street, NW, Suite 800, Washington, DC 20006

www.Blackallianceorg.org

Dear Members of Congress,

We, the undersigned members of the Black American Leadership Alliance respectfully address this letter to Members of the Senate Gang of Eight, the Congressional Black Caucus, and to Senators from those states having the highest rates of black unemployment. We write in our capacity as leaders of the Black American Leadership Alliance, a Washington, DC-based organization whose primary mission is to further the economic and social interests of the black community. We write to express our serious concerns with Senate Bill 744. Given the fact that more than 13% of all blacks are unemployed - nearly double that of the national average, it is our position that each Member of Congress must consider the disastrous effects that Senate Bill 744 would have on low skill workers of all races, while paying particular attention to the potential harm to African Americans. Credible research indicates that black workers will suffer the greatest harm if this legislation were to be passed. We are asking that you oppose Senate Bill S.744 because of the dramatic effect it will have on the availability of employment for African American workers.

Many studies have shown that black Americans are disproportionately harmed by mass immigration and amnesty. Most policy makers who favor the legalization of nearly 11 million aliens fail to acknowledge that decades of high immigration levels has caused unemployment to rise significantly, most particularly among black Americans. They further fail to consider how current plans to add 33 million more legal workers within ten years will have an enormously disastrous effect on our nation's jobs outlook. With respect to African Americans, well respected researchers from some of America's most venerable universities have found undeniable links tying large-scale immigration in the U.S. to declining rates of employment for America's black citizens. The National Bureau of Economic Research recently issued a report asserting that 40 percent of the decline in employment rates for low skilled black men in recent decades was due to immigration. Studies by Borjas and Katz, professors from Harvard University, found that immigration reduced the earnings of certain native born laborers by as much as eight percent and other demographic groups by 2 to 4 percent.

According to research conducted by University of California San Diego economics Professor Gordon H. Hanson, immigration has accounted for 40% of the 18 percentage point decline in black employment rates, and current immigration proposals are sure to substantially raise these numbers. Upon conducting research in this area, Professor Vernon Briggs of Cornell University concluded that illegal immigrants and blacks, both of whom are disproportionately likely to be low skilled, frequently compete for the same jobs, and that a large number of illegal immigrants ensures a surplus of low skilled labor, thus keeping wages for black workers artificially low.

The House Immigration Subcommittee also addressed this topic when panelists presented a report from the Center for Labor Market Studies (CLMS) at Northeastern University entitled "Exclusive: Over a Million Immigrants Land U.S. Jobs in 2008-2010." Unsurprisingly, the study found that unskilled immigrants were taking jobs in the construction sector, jobs that young, American workers typically gravitate towards. Of course, some of the immigrants



referred to by Senate Bill S. 744 work in high skill sectors, but the vast majority of them will compete with young Americans for entry level jobs, including jobs traditionally held by black workers in the low skilled wage sector. Andrew Sum, director of the Center for Labor Market Studies, estimates that 35 percent of the immigrants taking these construction jobs are undocumented.

Many blacks compete with immigrants, particularly illegal immigrants, for low skilled jobs due to skill level and geography, and there are simply not enough of these jobs to go around. Consider the fact that nearly 51% of African Americans do not have a higher education. In 2011, 24.6% of blacks without a high school diploma were unemployed. Even blacks with a high school diploma were unemployed at a rate of 15.5% that same year. Passing legislation to add additional workers to an already swamped labor market will only exacerbate these statistics.

Despite the fact that these figures are readily available and have been reported by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, many lawmakers have chosen to do nothing, putting politics over the well-being of constituents. Yet, the fact remains that the proposed immigration bill will nearly double legal immigration levels and provide instant work authorization to over 11 million illegal immigrants. We are firmly convinced that such an expansion of the labor force during one of the most protracted periods of high unemployment in decades will result in suppressed wages for all Americans, but the effects on African Americans will be the most devastating. Given the current economic outlook, with declining wages and fewer opportunities for black workers, now is not the time to add millions more workers as S. 744 proposes.

Nationally, labor participation is at 63.3% - the lowest level since 1979. Passage of the Senate's amnesty bill will continue to flood an already overcrowded labor force and result in reduced wages and opportunities for many black citizens who are least able to afford it. Following even the simplest rules of supply and demand, this increase in available low skilled labor will undoubtedly reduce wages for all workers. However, according to the experts, the impact will be hardest on the black community.

If passed, the proposed immigration bill will be costly for all Americans, but will harm black American workers more than any other group. Mass immigration and amnesty puts African Americans from all walks of life out of work and suppresses wages, causing them to compete with aliens willing to work in poorer working conditions for cheaper pay. When almost one in seven blacks is unemployed, now is not the time to further saturate the labor force with increased immigration levels and amnesty. If Congress fails to stop this irresponsible legislation, the United States will continue to see more and more blacks out of jobs and unable to support their families. The disastrous effects of illegal immigration to the black community is not simply limited to jobs.¹

¹ Research from Harvard University's George Borjas has correlated lower wages and fewer jobs in the black community with an increase in the rates of black incarceration.



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The Black American Leadership Alliance is calling upon the Senate Gang of Eight and those Members from states having the highest rates of black unemployment to recognize the devastating effects amnesty and mass immigration has on low skilled workers, particularly those in the black community. Secondly, we implore each Member to fulfill his or her duty to the millions of Americans struggling to find work by opposing amnesty and supporting policies to reduce overall levels of legal and illegal immigration.

Sincerely,

Reverend Jesse Lee Peterson
President and Founder of BOND (The
Brotherhood Organization of a New
Destiny)

Bishop Felton Smith
Prelate, Tennessee Eastern First Jurisdiction

Frank Morris, Ph. D.
Former Executive Director, Congressional
Black Caucus Foundation and Board
Member, Progressives for Immigration
Reform

Assistant Bishop Curtis A. Rodgers
Northern, IL, Church of God in Christ

Charles Butler
Veteran Host of the Take with Charles
Butler

Leah V. Durant
Former US DOJ Immigration Attorney and
Executive Director of Progressives for
Immigration Reform

T. Willard Fair
President and CEO, Urban League of
Greater Miami

Vernon Robinson
Former Council Member, Winston-Salem,
NC and former candidate for US
Congressional Office

Kevin Jackson
Radio Host and Executive Director, The
Black Sphere

Leo Alexander
Broadcaster, Writer and Political
Commentator, Washington, DC

Kevin Martin
Author, Writer and Political Commentator

Tom Broadwater
National Chair, Americans for Work

Cc: Senator Barbara A. Mikulski
Senator Benjamin L. Cardin
Senator Bob Corker
Senator Charles E. Schumer
Senator Christopher A. Coons
Senator David Vitter
Senator Isakson Johnny



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Senator Jeff Sessions
Senator John McCain
Senator Kay R. Hagan
Senator Lamar Alexander
Senator Lindsey Graham
Senator Marco Rubio
Senator Mark R. Warner
Senator Mary L. Landrieu
Senator Michael F. Bennet
Senator Richard Burr
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Senator Robert Menendez
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Senator Saxby Chambliss
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