



# Making the Case for Passing Comprehensive Immigration Reform This Year

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**Comprehensive Immigration Reform** is the name given to a legislative strategy to fix America's terribly broken immigration system



## **CIR's strategy has three key planks**

Toughen up on the border and on employers illegally hiring undocumented workers

Better manage the future flow of legal immigrants

Create legal status and a path to citizenship for those already here



## **A Clear and Consistent Majority of Americans Support the Strategy Behind CIR**

Fixing the broken immigration system is a top-tier concern for a majority of Americans. They are looking for action.

In polls, a clear majority of Americans consistently support CIR. Few blame the immigrants. Offering a path to citizenship is preferred to offering just legal status to the undocumented.

Only about 15 percent of the country is opposed to any solution other than expulsion of the undocumented.



## New Polling Shows Overwhelming Majority Support for CIR Holding:

By 59% to 39%, voters favor the idea that Congress can handle multiple issues at the same time and should tackle immigration reform this year over the notion that Congress has too much on its plate this year with the economy and health care reform and should wait and tackle immigration reform later.

When comprehensive reform entails securing the border, cracking down on employers who hire undocumented immigrants, and requiring those undocumented immigrants already here to register for legal status, pay back taxes, and learn English to be eligible for U.S. citizenship, **86% support comprehensive reform, with 58% strongly supporting it.**

Only 7% strongly oppose the plan. More than 8 in 10 members of all political parties support this form of immigration reform, as do nearly 9 in 10 voters undecided as to whom to support in the 2010 Congressional race.



## **CIR Has Been Among the Most Bi-Partisan Pieces of Legislation in a Highly Partisan Age**

CIR has been supported by a large and diverse bi-partisan coalition, with partners ranging from immigrant rights groups to the Chamber of Commerce to labor unions to high-tech and agricultural groups to the faith community to governors, mayors, sheriffs and Chiefs of Police across the country.

CIR was one of the most bi-partisan bills of its era, attracting 62 votes with the support of President Bush, John McCain, Harry Reid, Nancy Pelosi and Barack Obama.



With a majority of Americans supporting CIR,  
and a deep and broad bi-partisan coalition  
behind it...

Comprehensive Immigration Reform Is No  
Third Rail

It is a mainstream, common-sense, pragmatic  
effort to solve a vexing national problem.



# **More Reasons to Pass Comprehensive Immigration Reform This Year**





The Administration and Congress will grow weary of fighting immigration proxy wars on issue after issue as the year grinds on.



The pressure on Washington from state and local officials – in key battleground states – will continue to mount.



It will help depoliticize an already highly contentious census and reapportionment process.



As the economy worsens, it will remove a trap door under the minimum wage.

Fully 5 percent of the American workforce today is undocumented. Bringing them under the protection of American law will allow them to be paid minimum wage, prevent exploitation by unscrupulous employers and allow them to unionize – all helping relieve the downward pressure on the wages of all Americans.



In a time of tight budgets, passing immigration reform will bring more money into the federal treasury.

Putting the undocumented population on the road to citizenship will also increase tax revenue in a time of economic crisis, as the newly legal immigrants will pay fees and fines, and become fully integrated into the U.S. tax-paying system. When immigration reform legislation passed the Senate in 2006, the Congressional Budget Office estimate that accompanied the bill projected Treasury revenues would see a net increase of \$44 billion over 10 years.



As the year unfolds, CIR will become seen as a vital component of a broader strategy to calm the increasingly dangerous border region.



The current immigration detention system was not designed to handle its current caseload, and has quickly become a legal and moral disgrace.



After spending months extolling the inspiring virtues of hard working Hispanic immigrants in their campaign to put Sonia Sotomayor on the Supreme Court, it will be hard for the Administration to then stand down from their rhetorical investment in this compelling narrative by suggesting that the American Dream for a new generation of Hispanic immigrants must be deferred.





Support of CIR has become a litmus test for Hispanics / Latinos—the fastest growing part of the American electorate. It will be very difficult for either party to succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century without significant Hispanic support.



Finally, in this new age of racial reconciliation, passing CIR this year will take the air out of the balloon of some of the most shocking and unacceptable public displays of racism in America today.



## **Our advice to Democrats:**

You promised.

In recent years, President Obama, Speaker Pelosi and Senate Leader Reid have all repeatedly promised to pass CIR right away, with no delay. Now is the time.

It will also help lock in the gains made with Hispanic voters in recent elections, and show the electorate that you have what it takes to tackle the tough problems of this new century.



## **Our advice to Republicans:**

Sue for peace.

Pass CIR, renounce your recent national commitment to demonizing Hispanics, and give yourself a fighting chance to win these voters at some point in the future.

Oppose CIR this year, and watch your chance to win national elections again evaporate for a generation or more.



## **Our Conclusion:**

It is in the best interest of both political parties, and the nation, to pass CIR this year and begin the process of fixing our terribly broken and increasingly unjust immigration system.

There is a pragmatic, bi-partisan plan, with broad public support and a deep coalition behind it, ready to go.

There simply is no compelling political, economic, legislative or moral argument against moving now.



More Polling

[Results of Spring 2009 Focus Groups on Immigration](#), Lake Research Partners, 6/1/09

[Recent Polling on Immigration Reform](#), Benenson Strategy Group, 6/2/09

[Polling Snapshot from the Past Year](#), America's Voice, 6/2/09