



Media Advisory

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Local Attorneys to Call for Common-Sense Immigration Solutions at National Day of Action on Capitol Hill

On April 7, they'll bring their on-the-ground expertise directly to legislators

SAN FRANCISCO — On Thursday, April 7, more than 200 members of the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA) will bring a powerful message to Washington — that immigrants and immigrant-owned businesses are proven engines that help drive economic growth. As they'll tell legislators, smart immigration reform can spur business innovation and economic development in regions and sectors where growth is most needed, while still protecting American workers. It is more critical now than ever that we move beyond “enforcement-only” proposals that do nothing to help the economy.

As part of AILA's National Day of Action, about 10 members of the Northern California chapter (AILA NorCal) will visit the offices of Senator Boxer and Representatives Pelosi, Woolsey, Lofgren, Thompson, Farr, Garamendi, Lundgren and Herger to push for real solutions to help fix our broken immigration system. In doing so, they'll draw on their experience representing clients in every facet of immigration law. The AILA NorCal coalition will include two nonprofit attorneys, Jackie Shull-Gonzalez of Dolores Street Community Services, based in San Francisco's Mission District, and Linda Tam of Berkeley-based East Bay Community Law Center, who assists HIV and AIDS patients and their families with immigration matters. These two attorneys won scholarships from AILA NorCal to participate in National Day of Action. One of the co-organizers, Laura Sanchez, is an attorney at the nonprofit Central American Resource Center (CARECEN), also based in the Mission District. Other participants specialize in employment-based immigration law.

AILA's reform framework calls on the U.S. government to take action now by 1) requiring all undocumented immigrants to register with the government and earn permanent legal status by paying stiff fines and back taxes, undergoing rigorous background checks and learning English; 2) providing fair and lawful ways for American businesses to hire much-needed immigrant workers while protecting U.S. workers from unfair competition and all workers from exploitation; 3) reducing the counterproductive backlogs in family-based and employment-based immigration; 4) ensuring that the immigration system provides adequate visas to meet the future needs of American families, businesses and communities; and 5) preserving and restoring the fundamental principles of due process and equal protection while protecting our national security.

AILA NorCal immigration attorneys look forward to sharing their expertise in a productive round of meetings with California legislators in Washington, D.C. While border security and interior enforcement are necessary components of a functioning immigration system, it's time to address America's continuing need for legal immigration avenues to meet business and family needs.

AILA is a national association of more than 11,000 attorneys who practice and teach immigration law. Founded in 1946, AILA is a nonpartisan, not-for-profit organization that provides continuing legal education, information, professional services, and expertise through its 36 chapters.

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