



**STATEMENT**  
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## ON TO THE HOUSE!

*Yesterday, the Senate voted 68 to 32 to pass S. 744, the Border Security, Economic Opportunity and Immigration Modernization Act. ImmigrationWorks USA president Tamar Jacoby made the following statement.*

What happened in the Senate this week is a historic milestone. Lawmakers in both parties overcame the partisan gridlock that is now the norm in Washington to agree on compromise legislation overhauling the nation's immigration system.

It's an essential fix and high past time. There's no one in America – Democrat or Republican, pro- or anti-immigration – who thinks the status quo is acceptable.

The vote total was a triumph for the Gang of Eight that crafted the bill – a half dozen more AYES than in 2006, the last high-water mark for immigration reform in the Senate.

And Republicans, often cast as the Party of No on immigration, were full partners in the effort. Sens. Marco Rubio, Jeff Flake, Lindsey Graham and John McCain can be as proud today as the Democrats in the Gang – if anything, prouder. After all, many of their colleagues were harder to convince.

What's next: on to the House.

No one close to the House or House leadership thinks the House will take up the Senate bill. And it's highly unlikely that the lower chamber will pass a comprehensive measure. But those are the wrong standards, and to try to hold the House to them would do a grave disservice to reform.

The House will work in its own way: step by step, based on its own ideas, with its own methods and its own rules. The question – the standard by which to judge lawmakers – is whether the House will pass a package that can be sent to conference to be reconciled with the Senate product.

S. 744 is a good bill, but there is much that can be improved: starting with the size of the low-skilled visa program that will be essential to preventing illegal immigration in years to come.

Senate Republicans John Cornyn, Mike Lee, Pat Toomey and Rand Paul offered amendments to make the low-skilled visa program more market-driven and more effective in replacing illegal immigration. Rob Portman, Orrin Hatch and Ted Cruz – not to mention Marco Rubio – also proposed ideas for fixing the legal immigration system that were ignored by their Senate colleagues. Now Republicans in the House will have a chance to implement those ideas and more.

The heart of reform is fixing the legal immigration system so it works for America in the future, admitting the immigrants we need and preventing future illegal immigration. The Senate has taken a bold first step. Now it's time for the House to act.

**ImmigrationWorks USA president Tamar Jacoby can be reached for comment at 202 480-2076.**

*ImmigrationWorks USA is a national federation of employers working to advance better immigration law. The network links major corporations, national trade associations and 25 state-based coalitions of small to medium-sized business owners concerned that the broken immigration system is holding back the nation's economic growth. Their shared aim: legislation that brings America's annual legal intake of foreign workers more realistically into line with the country's labor needs.*