



GREATER COLUMBIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

March 13, 2013

The Honorable Lindsey Graham
290 Russell Senate Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Graham,

We at the Greater Chamber of Commerce, representing more than 1,300 employers, write to you regarding our nation's immigration policies. We thank you for your leadership in developing the commonsense Senate principles for immigration reform. We know that many details will need to be worked out, but we are very encouraged by this framework for reform and look forward to helping advance comprehensive immigration legislation and build public support.

There is no question that the U.S. immigration system is broken. Our current system is not serving the interests of our economy, businesses, or our society. Changes to our immigration policy must be developed to secure our borders, respond to the labor needs of the economy, and address the issues of the 11 million undocumented immigrants already living and working in the U.S.

As the Senate considers legislation on immigration, we write to suggest an approach containing a set of interdependent principles that make sense and can work. Such legislation must:

- Promote our national security interests by continuing to focus on securing our borders while pursuing other immigration reform initiatives.
- Address both our current and future economic needs for both high skilled and lower skilled workers through the creation of work visas programs. These work visa programs must be tied to market demands that go beyond high skilled, seasonal, and agriculture, and include other areas where employers face demonstrated labor shortages. Such programs would also increase national security and reduce illegal immigration by creating a functional, controlled system meeting workforce needs—a need not met by prior immigration legislation.

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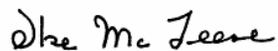
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- Create a workable, reliable national employee verification system. The federal E-Verify program has been improved dramatically. We are ready to move forward with it nationally, provided there is strong preemption language for state and local laws, no obligation to re-verify the entire current workforce for private employers, and a safe harbor for good faith efforts by employers.
- Provide a path out of the shadows for the 11 million undocumented immigrants who live in the United States today with the understanding that they will meet strict conditions, such as paying civil penalties and back taxes and learning English.

We know this is a very complex and emotional debate and these issues are not easy to deal with. However, we understand that the Senate will soon be taking up legislation in this area and we wanted to make our views known to you. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ike McLeese". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Ike McLeese
President & CEO