

Senators McCain, Flake leading way on long-awaited immigration reform

I'm excited that Congress may finally take up the issue of immigration reform.

Nearly three years ago, I led an effort by chambers of commerce throughout Arizona to develop a policy on comprehensive immigration reform.



My Turn

Mary Ann Miller

Together, we went to Washington, D.C., in January 2011 to meet with congressional leaders and Arizona's representatives to present our collective vision but were told the timing for reform wasn't right.

The policy statement was endorsed by more than 20 chambers of commerce in Arizona, representing more than 70,000 businesses employing more than 1 million people.

Last month, the chambers were joined by more than 100 other business leaders to support the immigration reform led by Arizona Senators John McCain and Jeff Flake. Let's hope the



Senators (from left) Jeff Flake, R-Ariz., Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., John McCain, R-Ariz., and Michael Bennet, D-Colo., confer after they took a border tour. NICK OZA/THE REPUBLIC

timing is right in 2013.

We support comprehensive immigration policy reform that:

» First and foremost, strengthens border security. From guarding the

physical border to better tracking of expired visas, we must stem the tide of illegal immigration.

» Creates a secure, reliable system for employers to verify the legal work

eligibility of employees. Employers need a federally based, user-friendly, low-cost, non-discriminatory method to ensure they are complying in good faith with the law.

» Establishes a market-based immigration process to support a wide range of workforce needs and to respond quickly to the employment demands of U.S. businesses. Legal international workers play an integral part in the U.S. economy.

» Develops criteria and establishes a guest worker/visa program for illegal immigrants already in the U.S. with no other criminal record, which is based on strictly-enforced criteria, including payment of penalties. Productive, integrated members of our society should be given an opportunity to continue to add to our economy.

We applaud Senators McCain and Flake for their leadership in pursuing this issue and stand ready to help them in any way we can.

Mary Ann Miller is the president and CEO of the Tempe Chamber of Commerce.