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Kingsport Chamber Supports Comprehensive Immigration Reform

It has been nearly 50 years since changes have been made to our Immigration system. Immigration is a very complex and sensitive issue. It is something our country needs to address because it is putting America at a competitive disadvantage and costing American's jobs. The current system is broken and is difficult to navigate for those who are playing by the rules to obtain visas and work permits.

There are nearly 11 million undocumented immigrants who strain our economy, making it impossible for our law enforcement, education system and healthcare partners to know what to do. Our country was founded by immigrants and it is crucial to our economy that we fix our immigration system. Immigrants are more likely to start a business and compete in high-skilled sectors such as science, technology, engineering and math. Businesses need skilled workers and 70 percent of Americans favor comprehensive reform that provides a pathway to citizenship and does not burden small business with ineffective verification forms.

The Kingsport Chamber has joined a growing coalition of Tennessee business, civic and community leaders along with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce who believe it is time for Congress to take action to create a modern immigration system that is easier to understand, navigate and implement. We need a system that ensures all immigration laws are enforced, obeyed and our borders secured. A modern immigration system is necessary to attract, then keep the world's top students, innovators, entrepreneurs and job creators here in the U.S. Our businesses and industry require a system that recruits

and deploys the workers we need to fill both the high- and low-skilled sectors of our economy. Our nation must create a modern immigration system that brings nearly 11 million undocumented workers currently living in the shadows into the legal economy so they can learn our language and history, pay more in taxes and contribute to a growing American economy.

Thank you to the 68 U.S. Senators that passed a comprehensive immigration reform bill last month. The current system is broken and outdated and the time is right for a comprehensive immigration reform. Reform is a vital necessity for an economy to provide stable and rewarding jobs and opportunities for all Americans. The Senate has taken the first steps and we now call on the members of the House of Representatives to reach beyond partisanship to continue a dialog and discussion on comprehensive immigration reform. We encourage our legislators and leaders in Congress to work toward bipartisan immigration reform that secures our borders, addresses our workforce needs and provides a pathway toward earned citizenship.