

I was disappointed that the comprehensive immigration reform legislation considered in the previous Congress failed to move forward. Although it needed to be improved in a number of areas, that bill represents a missed opportunity to address serious problems with our current policies. Fortunately, President Obama has signaled his commitment to immigration reform. Although dealing with the economic crisis will likely continue to be the top item on his agenda for some time, it is my hope that he will work expeditiously with Congress to enact comprehensive immigration reform.

On the [House Homeland Security Appropriations Subcommittee](#), where I act as ranking member, I have worked to move policy in a constructive direction in areas such as border security and immigration enforcement. To be truly effective, our immigration policy must simultaneously address border security and employer accountability, create legal avenues for workers to enter the country to meet the legitimate needs of employers, and offer opportunities for adjustment to legal status -- on a case by case basis -- to those undocumented workers and their families who are already firmly established in our communities. If through such policies we can eliminate the flow of illegal workers crossing our borders, the Department of Homeland Security can focus its resources on terrorist threats and criminal threats at the border.

Until we have a comprehensive solution to illegal immigration, the federal government must seek to use existing resources as effectively as possible to address this complex problem. Our Homeland Security Subcommittee found that Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) significantly stepped up its worksite enforcement efforts during the previous Administration but made only modest efforts to address a population of illegal immigrants that are known to pose a threat to our communities -- those serving time in our penal institutions for committing serious crimes. In my view, failing to identify and deport illegal aliens who have been convicted of serious criminal offenses -- many of whom are released in the United States after completing their sentences -- is unacceptable. This must be our top priority in immigration enforcement, and I have worked to provide improved congressional oversight of ICE and to ensure that ICE has adequate resources to accomplish this goal.

Ultimately, however, we cannot continue to address the complicated and interconnected challenges of immigration in America by working around the margins. We must enact a comprehensive, pragmatic program that attacks all aspects of the problem. I believe President Obama is committed to a comprehensive solution, and I look forward to working with him to address the pressing problem of illegal immigration.

Related Information

Price Op Ed in The Hill [■]
["Enforcement Only is an Incomplete Solution"](#)

- If you need help with US Citizenship and Immigration Services, please visit my [Constituent Services](#) page.