

STATE OF MAINE

—
**IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD
TWO THOUSAND AND THIRTEEN**
—

**JOINT RESOLUTION TO SUPPORT COMPREHENSIVE
IMMIGRATION REFORM**

WHEREAS, Maine's identity is defined by its promise of equality, esteem for diversity and commitment to innovation; and

WHEREAS, Maine and the United States have prospered because of the contributions of hardworking and aspiring citizens; and

WHEREAS, we support the value of human dignity of all Maine residents, regardless of immigration status, and recognize the importance of immigrants' many contributions to the social and economic fabric of Maine; and

WHEREAS, becoming a citizen in the United States means taking a solemn oath to uphold the United States Constitution; and

WHEREAS, citizenship is an important symbol of full membership and participation in society that should be encouraged, not barred; and

WHEREAS, keeping families together not only is the right thing to do, but also is good for the economy because families provide a base of support that increases worker productivity and spurs entrepreneurship; and

WHEREAS, immigration enforcement will be much more efficient and effective once the number of undocumented immigrants is reduced due to immigration reform; and

WHEREAS, the nation's current immigration system is dysfunctional, harms the economy and does not reflect our values as a state and nation; and

WHEREAS, overseeing immigration is a federal responsibility, and a comprehensive approach to reforming the immigration system would strengthen the economy and free aspiring citizens to make an even greater contribution to their communities; and

WHEREAS, the Federal Government's inability to enact immigration reform has created severe economic, cultural and political strains in Maine and in communities across the United States; and

WHEREAS, immigration reform must occur in a comprehensive, thoughtful manner that builds the strength and unity of working people and guarantees the same rights, obligations and basic fairness for all workers, no matter where they come from; and

WHEREAS, comprehensive immigration reform must include a realistic pathway to citizenship for all hardworking and taxpaying aspiring citizens who live in the United States if they meet reasonable requirements; and

WHEREAS, comprehensive immigration reform must provide a mechanism for those citizens who have grown up in this country to become citizens and be able to fully contribute to our joint future; and

WHEREAS, comprehensive immigration reform must update the immigration system so that the future flow of immigrant workers more realistically matches our nation's labor needs and is structured to protect the wages and working conditions of citizen and immigrant workers; and

WHEREAS, any new worker visa program must provide for strict compliance with United States labor standards and wage and hour standards, portability of visas so that workers can change jobs and the ability for workers to petition for permanent residency; and

WHEREAS, comprehensive immigration reform must limit the wait times and rules that keep families separated from their loved ones; and

WHEREAS, comprehensive immigration reform enforcement provisions must restore respect for law by promoting strict adherence to our nation's values, including due process, civil and human rights, accountability and proportionality; and

WHEREAS, internal and border law enforcement should focus on preventing criminals, drug cartels and other negative and harmful elements from entering the United States or engaging in criminal activities; and

WHEREAS, Maine supports a comprehensive immigration reform bill that keeps families together, upholds national values, promotes economic growth and provides a long-term solution to the immigration system; and

WHEREAS, elected officials must create an immigration process that strengthens our nation's economy and lets aspiring citizens continue their contributions to their communities; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That We, the Members of the One Hundred and Twenty-sixth Legislature now assembled in the First Regular Session, on behalf of the people we represent, support comprehensive immigration reform that addresses earned legalization with a path to citizenship, updated future immigration of families and workers and improved immigration enforcement and border security that is consistent with national values.