

**Introduced by Senator Vidak**  
**(Coauthor: Senator Cannella)**  
(Coauthor: Assembly Member Lackey)

December 9, 2014

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Senate Joint Resolution No. 2—Relative to immigration.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL’S DIGEST

SJR 2, as introduced, Vidak. Immigration.

This measure would urge Congress and the President of the United States to work together to create a comprehensive and workable approach to reform the nation’s immigration system according to specified principles.

Fiscal committee: no.

1 WHEREAS, This country was built by immigrants seeking a  
2 better life; and

3 WHEREAS, Estimates suggest that there are 11 million  
4 undocumented immigrants living in the shadows in the United  
5 States, including millions of children brought to this country  
6 undocumented who have grown up here and call the United States  
7 home, and who are suffering from our dysfunctional immigration  
8 policy; and

9 WHEREAS, A logical and streamlined path to citizenship for  
10 individuals after they gain legal status would stimulate the economy  
11 by allowing these individuals to get college degrees and driver’s  
12 licenses, buy homes, start new companies, and create legal,  
13 tax-paying jobs, affording them a chance at the American Dream;  
14 and

1 WHEREAS, The United States Congress last enacted major  
2 immigration legislation more than 25 years ago; and

3 WHEREAS, Since that time, fragmented attempts at immigration  
4 reform have failed to create the rational and effective systems  
5 needed to maintain international competitiveness. Whether in  
6 industries like agriculture, which requires large numbers of workers  
7 able to perform physically demanding tasks, or in industries like  
8 technology or health care, where the demand for employees with  
9 advanced degrees is projected to exceed supply within the next  
10 five years, immigration policy must be designed to respond to  
11 emerging labor needs in all sectors of the United States economy;  
12 and

13 WHEREAS, Our national interests and security are not served  
14 by our outdated, inefficient, and slow-moving immigration system.  
15 Patchwork attempts to mend its deficiencies undermine our  
16 potential for prosperity and leave us vulnerable and unable to meet  
17 the needs of the modern world; and

18 WHEREAS, Labor mobility is crucial to our economic  
19 prosperity and our country's recovery from the economic crisis.  
20 Yet our rigid, outdated immigration policies are making it difficult  
21 for our companies and our nation to compete. Information released  
22 in a study by the University of California, Los Angeles, states that  
23 legalizing the status of undocumented immigrants working and  
24 living in the United States would create around \$1.5 trillion in  
25 additional gross domestic product growth over the next 10 years  
26 and increase wages for all workers. A study done by the University  
27 of California, Davis, indicates that the last large wave of  
28 immigrants, from 1990 to 2007, raised the income of a native-born  
29 American worker by an average of \$5,000; and

30 WHEREAS, California has the largest share of immigrants in  
31 the country. These immigrants are a vital and productive part of  
32 our state's economy and are active in a variety of industries,  
33 including technology, biotech, hospitality, agriculture, construction,  
34 services, transportation, and textiles. They also represent a large  
35 share of our new small business owners and create economic  
36 prosperity and needed jobs for everyone; and

37 WHEREAS, Keeping these families, business owners, and hard  
38 workers in the shadows of society serves no one; and

39 WHEREAS, Our state, for economic, social, health, security,  
40 and prosperity reasons, must support policies that allow individuals

1 to become legal and enfranchised participants in our society and  
2 economy; and

3 WHEREAS, Comprehensive immigration reform should include  
4 a reasonable and timely path to citizenship for undocumented  
5 immigrants who are already living and working in the United  
6 States. It should also include comprehensive background checks,  
7 require demonstrated proficiency in English and payment of all  
8 current and back taxes, and have the flexibility to respond to  
9 emerging business trends; and

10 WHEREAS, The Migration Policy Institute, a nonpartisan  
11 research group in Washington, D.C., estimates that in 2012, the  
12 federal government spent \$18 billion on immigration enforcement,  
13 and since 2004, the number of United States Border Patrol agents  
14 has doubled; and

15 WHEREAS, Increased enforcement has given the federal  
16 government the ability to prioritize the deportation of lawbreakers  
17 and dangerous individuals and to ensure our border's security.  
18 Nevertheless, this enforcement should not be done in an inhumane  
19 way; and

20 WHEREAS, Immigration enforcement should continue to focus  
21 on criminals, not on hardworking immigrant families, and not at  
22 the expense of efficient trade with two of our top three economic  
23 partners; and

24 WHEREAS, The United States loses large numbers of necessary,  
25 highly skilled workers due to the lengthy and complicated  
26 processes currently in place to get or keep a legal residency option;  
27 and

28 WHEREAS, Reform should include an expedited process for  
29 those residing abroad and applying for legal visas. Additionally,  
30 reform should offer permanent residency opportunities to  
31 international students in American universities who are highly  
32 trained and in high demand, and in so doing avoid an intellectual  
33 vacuum after their graduation; and

34 WHEREAS, Reform should recognize the societal and cultural  
35 benefits of keeping the family unit intact. The system should take  
36 into account special circumstances surrounding candidates for  
37 probationary legal status, such as those of minors who were brought  
38 to the country as children or workers whose labor is essential to  
39 maintain our country's competitiveness; now, therefore, be it

1     *Resolved by the Senate and the Assembly of the State of*  
2     *California, jointly,* That the Legislature urges the President and  
3     the Congress of the United States to work together and create a  
4     comprehensive and workable approach to solving our nation's  
5     historically broken immigration system, using the principles  
6     described in this resolution; and be it further  
7     *Resolved,* That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of  
8     this resolution to the President and the Vice President of the United  
9     States, to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, to the  
10    Majority Leader of the Senate, and to each Senator and  
11    Representative from California in the Congress of the United  
12    States.