

Senate Joint Resolution

No. 2

**Introduced by Senator Vidak
(~~Coauthor: Senator Cannella~~)**

(Coauthors: Senators Cannella and Stone)

~~(Coauthor: Assembly Member Lackey~~ *Members Alejo, Chávez, Chiu, Dahle, Cristina Garcia, Gonzalez, Lackey, Maienschein, Olsen, Steinorth, and Mark Stone)*

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Senate Joint Resolution No. 2—Relative to immigration.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SJR 2, as amended, 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 here, call the United
7 States home, and ~~who~~ are suffering from our dysfunctional
8 immigration policy; and

9 WHEREAS, A logical and streamlined path to citizenship for
10 individuals after they gain legal status would stimulate the economy

1 by allowing these individuals to get college degrees and driver's
2 licenses, buy homes, start new companies, and create legal,
3 tax-paying jobs, affording them a chance at the American Dream;
4 and

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

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

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18 by our outdated, inefficient, and slow-moving immigration system.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

22 WHEREAS, Labor mobility is crucial to our economic
23 prosperity and our country's recovery from the economic crisis.
24 Yet our rigid, outdated immigration policies are making it difficult
25 for our companies and our nation to compete. Information released
26 in a study by the University of California, Los Angeles, states that
27 legalizing the status of undocumented immigrants working and
28 living in the United States would create ~~around~~ *approximately*
29 \$1.5 trillion in additional gross domestic product growth over the
30 next 10 years and increase wages for all workers. ~~A~~ *Another* study
31 ~~done~~ by the University of California, Davis, indicates that the last
32 large wave of immigrants, from 1990 to 2007, *inclusive*, raised
33 the income of a native-born American worker by an average of
34 \$5,000; and

35 WHEREAS, California has the largest share of immigrants in
36 the country. These immigrants are a vital and productive part of
37 our state's economy and are active in a variety of industries,
38 including technology, biotech, hospitality, agriculture, construction,
39 services, transportation, and textiles. They also represent a large

1 share of our new small business owners and create economic
2 prosperity and needed jobs for everyone; and

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

5 WHEREAS, Our state, for economic, social, health, security,
6 and prosperity reasons, must support policies that allow individuals
7 to become legal and enfranchised participants in our society and
8 economy; and

9 WHEREAS, Comprehensive immigration reform should include
10 a reasonable and timely path to citizenship for undocumented
11 immigrants who are already living and working in the United
12 States. ~~It~~ *Immigration reform* should also include comprehensive
13 background checks, require demonstrated proficiency in English
14 and payment of all current and back taxes, and have the flexibility
15 to respond to emerging business trends; and

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

21 WHEREAS, Increased enforcement has given the federal
22 government the ability to prioritize the deportation of lawbreakers
23 and dangerous individuals and to ensure our border's security.
24 Nevertheless, this enforcement should not be done in an inhumane
25 way; and

26 WHEREAS, Immigration enforcement should continue to focus
27 on criminals, not on hardworking immigrant families, and not at
28 the expense of efficient trade with two of our top three economic
29 partners; and

30 WHEREAS, The United States loses large numbers of necessary,
31 highly skilled workers due to the lengthy and complicated
32 processes currently in place to get or keep a legal residency option;
33 and

34 WHEREAS, Reform should include an expedited process for
35 those residing abroad and applying for legal visas. Additionally,
36 reform should offer permanent residency opportunities to
37 international students in American universities who are highly
38 trained and in high demand, and in so doing avoid an intellectual
39 vacuum after their graduation; and

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

7 *Resolved by the Senate and the Assembly of the State of*
8 *California, jointly,* That the Legislature urges the President and
9 the Congress of the United States to work together and create a
10 comprehensive and workable approach to solving our nation's
11 historically broken immigration system, using the principles
12 described in this resolution; and be it further

13 *Resolved,* That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of
14 this resolution to the President and the Vice President of the United
15 States, to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, to the
16 Majority Leader of the Senate, and to each Senator and
17 Representative from California in the Congress of the United
18 States.