

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MARCH 26, 2015

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MARCH 19, 2015

Senate Joint Resolution

No. 2

Introduced by Senator Vidak

(Coauthors: Senators Cannella and Stone)

(Coauthors: Assembly Members Alejo, Chávez, Chiu, Dahle, Cristina Garcia, Gonzalez, Lackey, Maienschein, Olsen, Steinorth, ~~and Mark Stone~~ *Mark Stone, Achadjian, Atkins, Baker, Bloom, Bonilla, Bonta, Brown, Burke, Calderon, Campos, Chau, Chu, Cooley, Cooper, Daly, Dodd, Eggman, Frazier, Eduardo Garcia, Gatto, Gipson, Gomez, Gordon, Gray, Grove, Hadley, Holden, Irwin, Jones, Kim, Levine, Linder, Lopez, Low, McCarty, Medina, Mullin, Nazarian, O'Donnell, Perea, Quirk, Ridley-Thomas, Rodriguez, Salas, Santiago, Thurmond, Ting, Wagner, Weber, Wilk, Williams, and Wood*)

December 9, 2014

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

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

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

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

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

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26 by our outdated, inefficient, and slow-moving immigration system.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

30 WHEREAS, Labor mobility is crucial to our economic
31 prosperity and our country's recovery from the economic crisis.
32 Yet our rigid, outdated immigration policies are making it difficult
33 for our companies and our nation to compete. Information released
34 in a study by the University of California, Los Angeles, states that
35 legalizing the status of undocumented immigrants working and
36 living in the United States would create approximately \$1.5 trillion
37 in additional gross domestic product growth over the next 10 years
38 and increase wages for all workers. Another study by the University
39 of California, Davis, indicates that the last large wave of

1 immigrants, from 1990 to 2007, inclusive, raised the income of a
2 native-born American worker by an average of \$5,000; and

3 WHEREAS, California has the largest share of immigrants in
4 the country. These immigrants are a vital and productive part of
5 our state's economy and are active in a variety of industries,
6 including technology, biotech, hospitality, agriculture, construction,
7 services, transportation, and textiles. They also represent a large
8 share of our new small business owners and create economic
9 prosperity and needed jobs for everyone; and

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

12 WHEREAS, Our state, for economic, social, health, security,
13 and prosperity reasons, must support policies that allow individuals
14 to become legal and enfranchised participants in our society and
15 economy; and

16 WHEREAS, Comprehensive immigration reform should include
17 a reasonable and timely path to citizenship for undocumented
18 immigrants who are already living and working in the United
19 States. Immigration reform should also include comprehensive
20 background checks, require demonstrated proficiency in English
21 and payment of all current and back taxes, and have the flexibility
22 to respond to emerging business trends; and

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

28 WHEREAS, Increased enforcement has given the federal
29 government the ability to prioritize the deportation of lawbreakers
30 and dangerous individuals and to ensure our border's security.
31 Nevertheless, this enforcement should not be done in an inhumane
32 way; and

33 WHEREAS, Immigration enforcement should continue to focus
34 on criminals, not on hardworking immigrant families, and not at
35 the expense of efficient trade with two of our top three economic
36 partners; and

37 WHEREAS, The United States loses large numbers of necessary,
38 highly skilled workers due to the lengthy and complicated
39 processes currently in place to get or keep a legal residency option;
40 and

1 WHEREAS, Reform should include an expedited process for
2 those residing abroad and applying for legal visas. Additionally,
3 reform should offer permanent residency opportunities to
4 international students in American universities who are highly
5 trained and in high demand, and in so doing avoid an intellectual
6 vacuum after their graduation; and

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

13 *Resolved by the Senate and the Assembly of the State of*
14 *California, jointly,* That the Legislature urges the President and
15 the Congress of the United States to work together and create a
16 comprehensive and workable approach to solving our nation's
17 historically broken immigration system, using the principles
18 described in this resolution; and be it further

19 *Resolved,* That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of
20 this resolution to the President and the Vice President of the United
21 States, to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, to the
22 Majority Leader of the Senate, and to each Senator and
23 Representative from California in the Congress of the United
24 States.