

June 24, 2014

The Honorable Tony Cardenas
1508 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Ileana Ros-Lehtinen
2206 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Cardenas and Ros-Lehtinen:

The under-signed organizations express our support of the New American Success Act and commend you on its introduction. This important immigrant integration legislation fills a conspicuous void in the larger national conversation on reform: providing a path for new, legal arrivals to become fully naturalized and part of the broader fabric of American life.

The full and successful integration of immigrants into the American spheres of work, school and community is vital to the social and economic strength of the United States. Unfortunately, immigrants face immense challenges obtaining higher levels of education, including industry recognized postsecondary credentials and certificates, and the English proficiency they need to succeed in modern career pathways. This bill acknowledges that an effective immigrant integration policy can help break down these barriers and ensure that each and every resident, including new Americans, is a wholly productive participant in all aspects of our national systems.

If enacted, the legislation would create the National Office of New Americans – a federal coordinating body within the White House responsible for multi-agency initiatives - to examine effective integration programs that would promote naturalization, the importance of the rule of law and constitutional government, and the responsibilities of citizenship. Along with a focus on aligning civic obligation to higher levels of educational attainment and workforce development, this office would for the first time in a century, promote an over-arching immigrant integration policy. By establishing meaningful goals, indicators, and metrics to measure success at the national, state and local levels, this National Office of New Americans will be able to determine how the United States can best serve its newest arrivals and put them on a path to becoming flourishing Americans.

The bill would also take additional steps to ensure that eligible immigrants have access to vital services while attempting to integrate. The Initial Entry, Adjustment, and Citizenship Assistance Grants will help local community-based organizations work with the populations they serve to navigate the naturalization process to become citizens by providing direct legal assistance and related services to encourage lawfully present immigrants. Similarly, the Integration Success Grant will encourage state and local governments and their community partners to find creative and innovative ways to comprehensively serve their immigrant populations in obtaining the knowledge and skills they may need to adjust to American culture and dynamism.

By tying together the three pillars of immigrant integration – civic, linguistic, and economic, this bill will promote enhanced federal programs that match the real needs of new immigrants today. Most importantly, it will help ensure that the country benefits fully from the skills and talents that immigrants bring to the U.S.

Sincerely,

Cisneros Center for New Americans
Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles (CHIRLA)
Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition
National Association of Latino Elected Officials (NALEO)
National Council of La Raza (NCLR)
National Immigration Forum
National Immigration Law Center (NILC)
National Partnership for New Americans
National Skills Coalition
OneAmerica
Shirlington Employment and Education Center
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center
Virginia Coalition of Latino Organizations (VACOLAO)