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Arizona employers applaud efforts by Arizona members of Congress to advance comprehensive immigration reform

PHOENIX – On the day that the first piece of major immigration reform legislation is introduced in the 110th Congress, a broad coalition of Arizona employers is applauding the efforts of members of Arizona’s congressional delegation for their support for a solution to the illegal immigration problem.

“Arizona is blessed with a congressional delegation that takes the immigration problem seriously. They are working to replace an immigration system that is unregulated, chaotic and abusive with one that is secure, controlled and fair,” said Sheridan L. Bailey, president of Arizona Employers for Immigration Reform and owner of a Phoenix-area steel fabricator.

“Sen. [John McCain](#), Sen. [Jon Kyl](#), Congressman [Jeff Flake](#) are working constructively with their colleagues, the [White House](#), U.S. Homeland Security Secretary [Michael Chertoff](#), U.S. Commerce Secretary [Carlos Gutierrez](#) and others to advance comprehensive reform this year,” Bailey said.

“Arizona Employers for Immigration Reform is committed to helping our congressional leaders educate the public on reform legislation and communicate back to them the needs of our economy for a reliable and legal workforce that includes guest workers,” Bailey said.

[Arizona Employers for Immigration Reform](#) (AZEIR) is a coalition of Arizona businesses, chambers of commerce and trade associations that have come together to communicate the need for federal action on a variety of immigration-related issues that can only be addressed effectively at the national level.

Earlier today, U.S. Representatives Jeff Flake (R-Arizona) and [Luis Gutierrez](#) (D-Illinois) introduced bipartisan comprehensive immigration reform legislation, known as the STRIVE Act (Security Through Regularized Immigration and a Vibrant Economy Act).

“According to reports, Congressmen Flake’s and Gutierrez’s bill includes the principles and elements needed to fix our broken immigration system and will certainly push the process of debating and enacting comprehensive immigration reform legislation forward,” Bailey said.

Many congressional experts believe that if immigration reform is going to happen in the 110th Congress, it must happen this year before the issue becomes effectively frozen in place pending the 2008 presidential and congressional elections.

To support efforts in the U.S. Senate, AZEIR organized and delivered today a coalition letter to Sen. Kyl and Sen. McCain signed by 60 Arizona business owners, CEOs, trade associations and chambers of commerce. The letter supports Sen. McCain’s and Sen. Kyl’s on-going work with the Bush Administration to formulate a consensus pro-reform position for the Republican Senate caucus.

“We received outstanding support from the business community on this letter and AZEIR is growing every day as we get our message out,” Bailey said.

A primary goal of AZEIR is to facilitate direct action by Arizona employers to communicate the need for a comprehensive solution to the immigration problem at the federal level. AZEIR believes that “lobbying” by real world business owners from Arizona is the most effective way to ensure that Arizona’s delegation supports comprehensive immigration reform.

AZEIR has already had productive meetings with U.S. Representative [Gabrielle Giffords](#) (D-Arizona) and will be scheduling a series of meetings with other members of the delegation over the coming weeks.

Arizona Employers for Immigration Reform (AZEIR) is a 501(c)(4) non-for-profit organization founded in December 2006 to help organize Arizona employers in favor of comprehensive immigration reform. AZEIR is one in a series of independent state-level groups that have formed over the last few months to support reform efforts in Congress. The AZEIR organization is roughly modeled on [Texas Employers for Immigration Reform](#). Those wishing to join AZEIR or to find out more about the organization, please visit www.azeir.org or call (602) 501-6691.

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