

SAALT Participates in White House Meeting on Immigration Reform

On Thursday, August 20th, SAALT's Executive Director joined a White House meeting to discuss immigration reform, along with representatives from business, law enforcement, labor, interfaith groups, and immigrant rights organizations. The meeting included a briefing from Secretary Janet Napolitano of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), moderated breakout sessions, and remarks by President Obama.

During the meeting, Secretary Napolitano and President Obama stated their commitment to comprehensive immigration reform at the legislative and administrative levels. Secretary Napolitano outlined several components that DHS considers to be crucial for immigration reform, such as continuing to enforce immigration laws while reviewing their effectiveness; establishing workable mechanisms for legalization and the citizenship process; increasing the efficiency of the immigration court system; and implementing a practical and sustainable system for future flows of immigrants and workers.

Deepa Iyer, SAALT's Executive Director, attended the meeting and raised issues affecting the Asian American and Pacific Islander communities, including family reunification, legalization, and the impact of local enforcement of immigration laws. Iyer noted, "**The leadership of the President and Secretary Napolitano on immigration is critical if we are to reach workable and humane policy solutions to our country's broken immigration system. By providing a forum for immigrant rights advocates to share priorities and raise concerns with current immigration policies, yesterday's meeting represents a positive step. In the coming months, we hope that the Administration maintains their commitment to immigration reform. SAALT will continue to monitor the process moving forward and engage South Asian organizations and individuals around the country to make their voices and opinions heard.**"

As a predominantly foreign-born community, South Asians often face challenges navigating the current immigration system and would be significantly affected by immigration reform. Given the impact on the community, SAALT has long been advocating for just and humane changes to immigration policies. Most recently, the [National Coalition of South Asian Organizations](#), a network of 39 organizations that serve, organize, and advocate on behalf of South Asians across the United States, launched the [One Community United](#) Campaign for Immigrant and Human Rights to ensure that South Asian voices are part of the dialogue on immigration reform.

There are three simple ways that community members can weigh in on immigration:

- **Call your members of Congress** and let them know that just and humane immigration reform is necessary for South Asians and all Americans; you can find out who your member of Congress is by clicking [here](#) and reach your them by calling the Capitol Switchboard at (202) 224-3121.
- **Join or help to plan a *One Community United* Campaign town hall** in your area; various town halls are being planned this year, including one in Miami on September 26.
- **Plug into the Reform Immigration FOR America's text messaging campaign** to get action alert updates by simply texting "JUSTICE" to 69866 (standard text messaging fees apply).

Additional Resources to Learn More about Immigration Reform:

- [Immigration Section of A National Action Agenda: Policy Priorities to Empower South Asian Communities](#), a policy platform for the National Coalition of South Asian Organizations
- [Reform Immigration FOR America Campaign](#)
- [Asian American Justice Center](#)

For further information about immigration reform and the impact on the South Asian community, contact SAALT at saalt@saalt.org or **301.270.1855**

