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Statement from South Asian Organizations on Passage of Senate Immigration Bill
Important Step Forward, But Bill is Deeply Flawed

Today, the U.S. Senate passed the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act (S. 744) by a vote of 68 to 32. As [organizations that work with South Asians in the United States](#), we know that our community members struggle with the broken immigration system on a daily basis. While we are heartened by the momentum around immigration reform, we remain concerned by several of the provisions included in the Senate legislation, as well as with its many significant gaps and omissions. As the debate progresses in the House of Representatives and immigration issues continue to gain attention on the national stage, we will continue to advocate around an [immigration reform package](#) that treats all immigrants with dignity.

As it now stands, the Senate legislation has numerous flaws. Of particular concern is the inclusion of the Corker-Hoeven Amendment (Leahy Amendment 1183), which heightens border and interior enforcement with increased militarization, mandatory implementation of E-verify, and further limits benefits for some immigrants. Moreover, the Senate bill limits family-based immigration options for U.S. citizens to petition for their siblings and adult married children over the age of 30, and creates needless barriers in the pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants. The bill also fails to create a meaningful prohibition on profiling, as it does not ban profiling based on national origin and religion (only race and ethnicity), and at the same time, creates a large border and national security loophole. It also requires additional screening for individuals on the pathway to citizenship based on where they are from (country or region), which essentially mandates the ineffective profiling that our community members have been enduring, especially since September 11th.

We recognize that the Senate immigration bill contains numerous provisions that will improve the lives of immigrants here today and those coming in the future, thanks to the work of champions in the Senate and the growing power of the immigrant rights movement. Included in the bill are numerous improvements to the system, such as the creation of a pathway to citizenship for undocumented individuals including DREAMers; the clearing of the family and employment backlogs; protections for survivors of domestic violence, crimes, and trafficking; greater opportunities, protections and rights for workers, including H-1B workers and their spouses and workers recruited abroad; and due process protections. Additionally, with this week's U.S. Supreme Court decision on the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), same-sex couples will be able to petition for their



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partners, despite the fact that those provisions were not included in the Senate immigration bill.

While the Senate debate has come to a close, we hope that in the upcoming weeks and months, champions in the House of Representatives will advocate for improvements, much like Senators Cardin, Durbin and Hirono and others have done in the Senate over the last few months. Throughout this process, we will continue to advocate for legislation that promotes just and humane immigration reform for South Asians, immigrants, and all Americans.

The [National Coalition of South Asian Organizations \(NCSO\)](#), a network of organizations that serve, organize, and advocate on behalf of the South Asian community, is coordinated by [South Asian Americans Leading Together \(SAALT\)](#). Learn more about the NCSO and SAALT at www.saalt.org.