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South Asian Organization Supports ‘Demand A Vote’ Petition:
Best Chance for Immigration Reform

Today, House Democratic leaders introduced a ‘Demand A Vote’ petition, which, if successful, would bring [H.R. 15](#), the most comprehensive House immigration reform bill, to the House floor. As immigration reform has stalled in the House after the Senate passed a similar bill in June of 2013, this strategy may be the only way to encourage the House to move forward on immigration reform. An overwhelming and bipartisan majority of Americans, including many South Asians, support an overhaul of our nation’s immigration laws in order to fix our broken system.

“SAALT welcomes the ‘Demand A Vote’ (i.e. discharge) petition, as it seeks to advance immigration reform,” said Suman Raghunathan, Executive Director of South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT). “H.R. 15 is far from perfect, but our communities have been suffering as a result of the nation’s outdated and broken immigration system for years. Nearly 2 million people have been torn from their families and deported under this Administration: a shameful record. We can no longer wait as the House continues to drag its heels. It is time for the House to act.”

H.R. 15, like the Senate’s proposal ([S. 744](#)), includes improvements and also has numerous flaws—both of which will impact millions of people. H.R. 15 is consistent with many of the [principles](#) advocated for by the [National Coalition of South Asian Organizations \(NCSO\)](#), a coalition of 49 groups across the United States that works closely with South Asian immigrants. The bill includes a roadmap to citizenship for undocumented aspiring citizens; clearing the family and employment immigration backlogs; improved opportunities and protections for workers; and several due process protections. Nevertheless, H.R. 15’s flaws are abundant. It imposes an onerous and costly 13-year process to obtain citizenship that bars many aspiring citizens from accessing basic government programs, and it fails to include meaningful prohibitions on profiling, which have long impacted South Asians nationwide. Along with other immigrants, South Asians will also lack options to reunite with their family members in increasing numbers under H.R. 15’s provisions: a phenomenon that is as destructive as it is heartbreaking.

Still, in order to advance immigration reform that reflects both the nation’s best interests and the concerns of immigrant communities, we must continue to move forward. Today, that movement takes the shape of a ‘Demand A Vote’ petition that will allow debate on the above issues, including Conference Committee in the future.

“The ‘Demand A Vote’ petition requires the support of 218 House members who are willing to move the ball forward on immigration reform that meets the needs of immigrant communities and our nation as a whole. We encourage that support,” said Manar Waheed, Policy Director of SAALT. “While H.R. 15 requires many improvements, the petition provides an opportunity for these enhancements. The destiny of our nation’s diverse communities hangs in the balance. We must fix our broken immigration system.”