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**LR-399**

**SUPPORT COMPREHENSIVE IMMIGRATION REFORM  
JUDICIARY COMMITTEE HEARING  
FEBRUARY 5, 2014**

Good afternoon, Chairman Ashford and members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is David Brown, (D-A-V-I-D B-R-O-W-N). I appreciate the opportunity to speak in support of LR-399.

I'm managing partner of Brown Immigration Law, LLC and I've practiced immigration law for 15 years. I am also licensed in Canada and assist multinational companies with international relocations so I have a perspective on other systems as well as our own.

Our system is a train wreck plain and simple. There are many programs that serve the good of the U.S. and our people, but there are many aspects of the system today that serve no-one, and if anything serve to tell our friends around the world we are no longer a nation of immigrants, and "please go ahead and start your new business somewhere else". It is these issues we need to tackle and it is these issues our federal system has failed to tackle for over 10 years. It is time we stop kicking the can down the road. The future of our country is linked to our treatment of immigration and immigrants in particular.

- We rely on agricultural workers from other countries, but our current visa systems do not support the hiring of legal workers;
- We rely on highly skilled immigrants to fuel our innovation and power companies and industries of the future but we make them wait years to become permanent residents (on the extreme – over 50 years for Indian bachelor's degree graduates);

- We admit very high percentages of STEM graduate school applicants from foreign countries (33% in engineering, and mid/high 20% for math/physics/statistics), but yet don't adequately support them when they graduate;
- We have venture funds excited to invest money in innovative technologies but find their investment may be the barrier to getting a visa or immigrant status;
- We have children who were brought to the US as children who know no other country and there is no future for them;
- We now perform "silent" raids and destroy lawful businesses, while not addressing the problem of undocumented workers, and ultimately new businesses then hire these workers;

For many in the "system" it is broken, and people's lives are on hold. From a migration perspective, people either accept the flaws, or make different choices. We will lose vital industries, technologies, and important cultural benefits if we remain the nation of "no"

I want to share with you one case of a "stuck" person. They could not appear in person today but asked that I tell their story.

At the age of 7 they were brought to the US under a fake US passport. They never asked to be brought here, nor did they know they were claiming to be a US citizen. It was only later that when they married a US Citizen and graduated from University that they appreciated how they got here, and how stuck they were.

They could not get a driver's license, or a job, or a social security card. And because of the false claim of US Citizenship, after he married his college sweetheart, we could not get him a green card. This was an absolute bar to his green card filing. He was married, had a newborn, a home, a family, but no future.

A year ago while driving on I-80 an individual driving under the influence of meth took away his future by driving him and his family off the road. His wife was killed. He was in a coma and severely injured but his baby was spared. It was not until he awoke that he realized his wife was gone. He is now a single father seeking a better life for him and his child. His US Citizen in-laws love and cherish their grandchild and they do not want to see their son-in-law removed or leave the US because he has no future.

The first ray of sun for his immigration situation was DACA – we filed and he received a 2 year work permit. He is now comfortable he can work, provide for his child, and no longer hide. But DACA is not status, and in the year since his wife died two important steps have been taken that would dramatically help this person.

The first – the government no longer assumes 7 year olds are responsible for their parents actions in using false documents – this prior bar to his application no longer exists. But with his wife now deceased, we can no longer file an application for permanent residence.

The second – it exists in the Senate bill passed last June. It permits individuals who had qualifying relationships to file for status within 2 years of the death of a spouse. In other words – if the Senate bill were passed into law today, this young man would have a future. There are millions of people on hold because the federal government has chosen to sit on its hands for 10 years. This is embarrassing and inexcusable. I applaud the Nebraska legislature for saying in LB 399 it is time to make change – let's show the country how we can compromise and demonstrate to others what we value as a nation.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'DB', with a stylized flourish at the end.

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