

Congressman Blumenauer applauds President Obama's pledge to push for an overhaul of our broken immigration system and supports efforts to begin this process this year. Experience has shown that reforming our immigration policy is not easy. It is a complex and contentious issue, one which Congress has attempted twice in the past three years without success. We should not allow those failures keep us from finding a path forward.

A comprehensive immigration bill needs to reduce wait-times for people trying to follow our immigration laws, simplify and stabilize an effective guest worker program, address security and border control, give employers the resources they need to hire a legal workforce and better tools to uphold our laws, and bring into fold the 12 million people currently living in the US without documentation.

Of particular interest to the Congressman is ensuring that children who have come to the United States with their parents are given a chance to achieve permanent resident status. Providing this opportunity for children who came to the U.S. before their 16th birthday, who have demonstrated achievement, and who demonstrate good moral character, will strengthen our economy and comports with established notions of basic fairness. The Congressman has sponsored legislation—H.R. 1751, the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act, or “Dream Act”—to enact these changes.

Immigration rules have a substantial effect on the competitiveness of our agricultural industry. That industry needs a stable and legal workforce to continue providing the food that every American family depends on. An important aspect of immigration reform will be resolving this debate in farming communities across the country. This is why Congressman Blumenauer supports H.R. 2414, the Agricultural Job Opportunities, Benefits and Security Act, which is also supported by a wide range of immigration leaders, labor unions, civil rights organizations, religious groups, employers, and farmworkers.

Current immigration law does not include any provisions for same sex couples, so gay and lesbian citizens have no process in which to naturalize their partners. By supporting H.R. 2709, the Reuniting Families Act, and H.R. 1024, the Uniting American Families Act, Congressman Blumenauer hopes to end this discrimination. These pieces of legislation create a new “permanent partner” category for immigrants so that couples in committed, long term relationships are afforded the same opportunities as heterosexual couples.

Congressman Blumenauer believes the immigration debate should encompass the reasons people are compelled to come to the US. One of the most effective ways to curb the influx of people emigrating from their own countries is to improve conditions abroad. I support policies that will advance the quality of life in other countries, not only for humanitarian reasons, but because it assists the United States from a national security perspective and an immigration perspective.