

LGBT, IMMIGRATION, CIVIL RIGHTS AND FAITH GROUPS PRAISE CONGRESS FOR UNITED EFFORT TO END DISCRIMINATION AGAINST LESBIAN & GAY BINATIONAL FAMILIES

WASHINGTON, JULY 15 — A coalition of organizations and leaders from the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT), immigrants' rights, civil rights and faith communities issued the following statement today as members of Congress gathered on Capitol Hill to call for passage of immigration reform legislation that ends discrimination against LGBT binational families:

Today, key Congressional leaders joined forces on Capitol Hill to call on their colleagues to support passage of the Uniting American Families Act (UAFAs) as part of any future immigration reform effort. Tens of thousands of LGBT binational families are counting on this critically important legislation in order to achieve the most basic equality: The freedom to be with their families, and the people they love.

Today's united front in support of UAFAs — with key lawmakers from the Congressional Hispanic Caucus (CHC); Congressional Black Caucus (CBC), Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus (CAPAC); Congressional Progressive Caucus and Congressional LGBT Equality Caucus — could not be more urgent for the families who are facing separation, or already living in exile, because of our country's discriminatory immigration laws. An estimated 17,000 young children are being raised by LGBT parents in binational families and those children face the very real possibility of losing a parent, or leaving the only country they have ever called home. The United States can do better, and we stand with these courageous members of Congress who are leading the way to ensure these families can be together.

We are proud to support the Uniting American Families Act, and urge Congress to heed the calls of lawmakers today and ensure its passage before one more family is separated. We are especially grateful to Senator Patrick Leahy (D-VT) and Congressman Jerrold Nadler (D-NY), who have led the effort on behalf of our families in Congress, as well as Congressman Mike Honda (D-CA), who has worked tirelessly to end discrimination against all immigrant families through his inclusive Reuniting Families Act. Today, we are also heartened to have the steadfast support of key leaders such as Congressman Luis Guterrez (D-IL), Congresswoman Barbara Lee (D-CA), Congressman Jared Polis (D-CO) and others who believe that we must fix our broken immigration system for every family, including LGBT families.

Our constituencies, members and congregations stand ready, willing and able to support passage of legislation that fixes our broken immigration system for all families, including LGBT binational families. No reform can truly be called comprehensive unless it includes LGBT immigrant families as well. Today, leaders made clear that all future immigration legislation must be truly inclusive, and we are proud to stand with them in that call.

We are committed to working, together, for this long overdue and much-needed victory and to honoring our country's commitment to families and its rich history as a nation of immigrants.

Signed,

Anti-Defamation League
AIDS Action Council
Advocates for Youth
CenterLink: The Community of LGBT Centers
Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles (CHIRLA)
The Council for Global Equality
The Episcopal Church
Equality California
Equality Federation
Family Equality Council
Friends Committee on National Legislation
Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders
Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network
Bill Mefford, Director of Civil and Human Rights
- General Board of Church and Society, The United Methodist Church
Hispanic Federation
Human Rights Campaign
Human Rights Watch
Immigration Equality Action Fund
Labor Council for Latin American Advancement
Lambda Legal
Mexican American Legal Defense & Educational Fund
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum
National Center for Lesbian Rights
National Center for Transgender Equality
National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Action Fund
National Immigrant Justice Center
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health
National Queer Asian Pacific Islander Alliance
Out & Equal Workplace Advocates
Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) National
People For the American Way
South Asian Americans Leading Together
Stonewall Democrats
UNID@S
Union for Reform Judaism
Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations