

COMPREHENSIVE IMMIGRATION REFORM IN 2007



by

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The call for comprehensive immigration reform continues in Congress. As the Democrats officially took control of Congress in early January, key Democratic leaders as well as President Bush called for comprehensive immigration reform to be put into place in this year's Congress.

The new majority leader of the Senate (Senator Harry Reid) listed comprehensive immigration reform as one of the Senate's top 10 priorities for this coming year. To indicate its importance, Senator Reid introduced a bill (S. 9) in the Senate on January 4, 2007 called the "Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act of 2007". The introduction of a bill is the first step in an effort to make a law.

The Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act of 2007 (S. 9) has no official text or provisions. The actual text of the bill will be added in the future, hopefully within a couple of weeks. At that point, debate will begin.

Although there is no significant text as of yet for the Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act of 2007, the opening paragraph does state that the purpose of the bill is "to provide for more effective border and employment enforcement, to prevent illegal immigration, and to reform and rationalize avenues for legal immigration . . ." While it is still too early to predict what the actual text of the bill will contain, the opening paragraph gives some insight into what may be included. Thus, I would expect four (4) major areas to be included in the official text of the bill: (1) border security; (2) employment enforcement (efforts to prevent companies from hiring illegal aliens); (3) efforts to stop illegal immigration; and (4) changes to the legal immigration system (such as increased visas in the employment-based and family-based immigration categories in order to reduce the long backlogs and an increase in the H-1B cap).

Please check our website (www.longchangonline.com) for updates on this legislation.

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