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FOR INFORMATION CALL

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Ald. Michael J. Murphy
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City Legislation Pushes For Passage of U.S. Immigration Reform Bill

Ald. Michael Murphy Says McCain-Kennedy Bill Provides Key Legal Framework to Allow Workers to Become Citizens

The City of Milwaukee and thousands of its citizens would benefit from pending federal legislation that would allow immigrant workers to become legal U.S. citizens, tighten border security and set up an improved family unification system for immigrants.

Ald. Michael J. Murphy said he is introducing a Common Council resolution tomorrow that directs the city's intergovernmental relations staff to push passage of the "Secure America and Orderly Immigration Act of 2005" (U.S. Senate Bill 1033) because he thinks it is "good bipartisan legislation" that will strengthen the U.S. in several ways. "The reality is that our economy simply couldn't function without the millions of illegal immigrant workers who contribute their hard work every day," said the alderman, who is the son of Irish immigrants.

"Rather than criminalizing these workers, we need to allow them to gain citizenship so that they can better integrate into American society, strengthen their families and more effectively contribute to their communities, and I think the McCain-Kennedy Bill provides the legal framework for that to happen," Ald. Murphy said.

The McCain-Kennedy Bill would:

- Establish an eventual avenue to legal status and citizenship for most illegal immigrants already living and working in the U.S.

-More-

Council Proposal Backs Federal Immigration Reform Bill/ADD ONE

- Establish a new temporary work visa enabling a wider range of migrants with job offers to enter the U.S. legally. The new work visa would belong to the worker – not the employer.
- Establish stricter immigration enforcement, including tighter border security and a new employment verification system.
- Establish an improved family unification system, which would reduce the delays experienced by immigrants seeking to rejoin their family members in the U.S.

During his recent “State of the Union” address, President Bush acknowledged that the U.S. economy could not function without the contributions of foreign workers, and current law only provides visas for 5,000 low-skill workers every year, which means there’s no way for many of the migrants in low-wage industries to enter the U.S. legally.

Ald. Murphy’s resolution would also put the Council on record as opposing the “Border Protection, Antiterrorism and Illegal Immigration Control Act of 2005” (House Resolution 4437 – passed by the House of Representatives in December 2005). The alderman’s resolution states that HR 4437 is “an immigration reform bill based on enforcement, which criminalizes immigrants already living and working in the U.S., harms U.S. businesses and communities and separates families.”