

Legislation Text

File #: 130536, **Version:** 0

Supporting the Diversity Visa program and urging the United States Senate and the United States House of Representatives to preserve the Diversity Visa program as an integral part of the comprehensive immigration reform legislation.

WHEREAS, The Diversity Visa program preserves opportunities for immigrants to legally reside in the United States and achieve their goals and dreams; and

WHEREAS, The U. S. Senate is currently considering new bipartisan legislation entitled “The Border Security, Economic Opportunity and Immigration Modernization Act of 2013” that would reform our immigration system; and

WHEREAS, The current legislative proposal in the U.S. Senate would eliminate the Diversity Visa program and replace it with a “merit” system that limits consideration to only those who possess certain skills; and

WHEREAS, The Diversity Visa program was established by federal law in 1990 to provide an opportunity for 55,000 immigrants each year from countries that send smaller number of immigrants to the United States to immigrate legally; and

WHEREAS, The Diversity Visa program is an American Dream program that does not require the applicant to have any close family or work ties to immigrate, but just a willingness and determination to come to the United States to pursue one’s dream and contribute to the United States; and

WHEREAS, There are records to show that hundreds of thousands of immigrants who have benefited from the Diversity Visa program have become U. S. citizens and are helping to build the economic, cultural and civic life of our nation, states, cities, municipalities, counties, boroughs and townships in innumerable ways; and

WHEREAS, The City of Philadelphia and the United States of America were founded by immigrants who have traveled different continents and migrated to the United States in search of a better life; and

WHEREAS, The basic values of our nation are of family, economic opportunity and fairness which should also be embedded in our nation’s immigration system; and

WHEREAS, The Diversity Visa program is one of the few options for African immigrants to come to the United States, and in many years as half of all Diversity Visas are issued to immigrants from Africa; and

WHEREAS, If the Diversity Visa program is eliminated, immigration from Africa to the United States would be severely curtailed and African, Caribbean, Latino and Asian immigrants would lose a major opportunity to immigrate legally; and

WHEREAS, Abolishing the Diversity Visa program would limit the opportunities for many immigrants to come to the United States lawfully; now therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the City Council of the City of Philadelphia supports the Diversity Visa program and urges the United States Senate and the United States House of Representatives to preserve the Diversity Visa program as an integral part of any comprehensive immigration reform legislation.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be presented to the United States Congress.