



# End the Immigration Reform Stalemate



## Coming up at the Chamber

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**WED | June 13**  
Aviation Committee Meeting  
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**THU | June 14**  
Education & Workforce Development Committee Meeting  
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**THU | June 14**  
The Connection Point  
Speak Your Business in 30 Seconds or Less  
[more info](#)

**THU | June 14**  
Business After Hours Mixer  
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**FRI | June 15**  
Accenture Pancakes & Politics  
[more info](#)

**MON | June 18**  
Trade Briefing: Doing Business in Shaanxi, China  
[more info](#)

**WED | June 20**  
International Trade & Investment Committee  
Featuring John Husing, Economics & Politics, Inc.  
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**THU | June 21**  
Small Business Council  
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**THU | June 21**  
U.S. Korea Post FTA Round Summit  
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Seldom do I write on the same topic twice in one month, but the recent stalemate over the immigration reform package crafted by a bi-partisan group of U.S. senators has compelled me to share my disappointment. It's not too late to affect change, but now is the time to do so.

The legislation received support from all sides—including President George Bush, Sen. Edward Kennedy and voices from the political center. And polls show that most Americans support reform.

Unfortunately rhetoric surrounding this legislation has resulted in reform stalemate. To begin with, this is not an amnesty bill. Those seeking citizenship will need to wait up to 12 years, pass many hurdles and pay fees to be granted citizenship. They must earn it—they will be given nothing for free. As for the guest worker program, the legislation places restrictions on the number of workers that will be allowed into the country and places a specific time limit on how long they can stay. Individuals can not stay once they meet these limits.

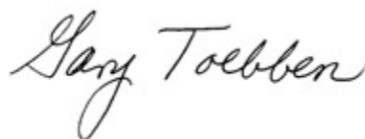
More than 12 million undocumented individuals reside in our country, with that number growing daily. The issue has been at the top of the political agenda for years, yet no comprehensive reform has been adopted. Opponents would rather dig in their heels and continue with the status quo than work toward a compromise.

But the status quo will look different in the near future unless Congress acts soon. Because of the lack of action at the federal level, many states and cities have jumped into the fray with their own immigration laws. State legislatures have introduced more than 570 immigration bills in recent years and in 32 states, one or more bills have passed. Cities are not far behind, with more than 100 cities considering laws to curb illegal immigration.

What we are beginning to see is a patchwork of rules and regulations that often conflict with each other and almost always cause confusion and hardship for businesses and families alike. If these state and local initiatives continue without action at the federal level, our nation will face a social and economic disaster in the years to come. This disaster can be avoided if Congressional members can come together in the next two months on comprehensive immigration reform.

I applaud [Sen. Dianne Feinstein for leading the way](#). We must continue to encourage Sen. Barbara Boxer and other members of our California Congressional delegation to join in these rigorous discussions to find a compromise solution this summer. Our nation and all of our citizens, documented and undocumented, deserve action now.

And that's *The Business Perspective*.



Gary L. Toebben  
President & CEO  
Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce

*The Business Perspective is a weekly opinion piece by Gary Toebben, President & CEO of the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce, produced with the input of Senior Policy Advisor Rusty Hammer.*

by Gary Toebben, President & CEO, Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce

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**Our nation and all of our citizens, documented and undocumented, deserve action now.**

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