



NEWS

SERVICE EMPLOYEES
INTERNATIONAL UNION, CLC

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Kate Ferranti: 212-388-3469/917-968-7853

Matt Nerzig: 212-539-2882/917-584-0787

EMBARGOED UNTIL 4 PM

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THOUSANDS PROTEST ANTI-IMMIGRANT LEGISLATION

Local 32BJ Calls for Overhaul of Immigration System

Washington, DC – At a massive rally outside the Capitol, Local 32BJ harshly criticized the House passage of H.R. 4437 sponsored by Rep. James Sensenbrenner (R-WI) and called on elected officials to pass comprehensive immigration reform legislation that will fix the nation’s immigration system and set undocumented immigrants on a path to citizenship.

“The Sensenbrenner bill is a shocking piece of anti-immigrant, anti-American legislation,” said Jaime Contreras, Local 32BJ District 82 Chair and Chair of the National Capital Immigration Coalition. “It criminalizes and targets millions of immigrants for severe punishment while doing nothing to fix our broken immigration system.”

H.R. 4437 would subject millions of immigrants to deportation as well as imprisonment, and severely reduce due process rights, undercutting the basic tenets of the justice system. Further, it would create a mandatory and dramatic Employment Eligibility Verification System (EEVS) that would expose U.S. workers to possible employment disruptions without creating legal channels for needed workers and disrupting the economy. By failing to create a path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants or put forward plans to regulate the future flow of needed immigrants, reduce family reunification backlogs and protect workers’ rights, the bill does not contribute to national security or to comprehensive and realistic immigration reform.

“Our immigration system is outdated, inadequate and ineffective – but H.R. 4437 is not the answer,” said Mike Fishman, Local 32BJ President. “We need sweeping reform to ensure that immigration is safe, legal, orderly and fair to workers and employers throughout the United States. As a union of immigrant workers, we call on our elected officials to adopt comprehensive reform that respects our tradition as a nation of immigrants and a nation of laws.”

Local 32BJ, along with other labor and immigrant organizations, supports the *Secure America and Orderly Immigration Act*, a bipartisan bill introduced by Senators John McCain (R-AZ) and Edward Kennedy (D-MA). This bill would bring the 11 million undocumented immigrants out of the shadows and set them on a path to citizenship; set up legal channels and realistic caps for workers and family members to enter in the future; provide for tough enforcement; and encourage immigrants to participate in the civic life of the U.S.

The National Capital Immigration Coalition, consisting of forty-five faith, labor, business and community-based organizations from Virginia, Maryland and Washington, DC, including Local 32BJ, sponsored the rally and an interfaith service in protest of H.R. 4437.

With more than 85,000 members, the majority of whom are immigrant workers, in New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia and Washington, DC, Local 32BJ is the largest property services union in the country.

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