

**eLABORate**

**DEMOCRATIC SENATORS IN THE UNITED STATES SENATE RELEASE DRAFT IMMIGRATION LEGISLATION**

Democratic Senators in the United States Senate recently unveiled an outline for a bill to overhaul immigration. The Senate Democrats hope the outline will bolster support for pushing immigration legislation forward this year. The outline requires border protection benchmarks to be reached before undocumented immigrants who are currently present in the United States could begin a process to legalize their status. The outline also includes a plan for biometric Social Security cards; streamlining the process for the legal entry of immigrant workers; and, the creation of a labor market commission to make recommendations about the future flow of immigrant workers.

Specifically, Senate Democrats proposed increasing the number of Border Patrol officers, Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers, worksite enforcement inspectors, and document fraud detection officers. In addition, the outline proposes plans for improved technology at the border and increased resources to combat drug smuggling, human trafficking, and unauthorized border crossing.

The outline also includes a detailed plan for the issuance of biometric Social Security cards to be used to verify the work authorization of all new hires in the United States. According to the outline, the Social Security Administration would be required to begin issuing biometric Social Security cards to all workers no later than 18 months after the enactment of a comprehensive immigration bill. The cards would be fraud-resistant, tamper-resistant, wear resistant, and machine-readable, according to the outline.

Further, the proposal features new fraud and abuse protections for the existing H-1B and L-1 visa programs for highly skilled workers, a mechanism for foreign students with an advanced degree from a United States university to immediately obtain a green card, and reforms to the H-2B nonagricultural, low-skilled seasonal guestworker program that are designed to protect U.S. workers.

The legislative proposal would also authorize the creation of a labor market commission on Employment-Based Immigration. This labor market commission would assess future employment-based immigration needs and, annually publish a report with recommendations to Congress. At this time, it is difficult to determine whether any immigration reform bill will actually be introduced this year or whether an immigration reform bill could pass both houses of Congress.

**PHELPS DUNBAR** LLP  
COUNSELORS AT LAW

NEW ORLEANS BATON ROUGE JACKSON TUPELO GULFPORT HOUSTON TAMPA LONDON

**eLABORate**

Inquiries concerning topics addressed in the eLABORate may be directed to any of our Employment Law attorneys listed below. Your comments, questions, and suggestions are encouraged.

**New Orleans, Louisiana**

M. Nan Alessandra	nan.alessandra@phelps.com	(504) 584-9297
Jane E. Armstrong	jane.armstrong@phelps.com	(504) 584-9244
Kim M. Boyle	kim.boyle@phelps.com	(504) 679-5790
David M. Korn	david.korn@phelps.com	(504) 584-9374
Brandon Davis*	brandon.davis@phelps.com	(504) 584-9312
Jason S. Luter	jason.luter@phelps.com	(504) 584-9201
Taryn Southon Nunes	taryn.southon.nunes@phelps.com	(504) 584-9383
Tobi M. Murphy	tobi.murphy@phelps.com	(504) 568-9130
MaryJo Roberts	maryjo.roberts@phelps.com	(504) 584-9262

**Baton Rouge, Louisiana**

Susan W. Furr	susan.furr@phelps.com	(225) 376-0230
Karleen J. Green	karleen.green@phelps.com	(225) 376-0244
Thomas H. Kiggans	thomas.kiggans@phelps.com	(225) 376-0247
Jessica Coco	jessica.coco@phelps.com	(225) 376-7954
Brandi B. Cole	brandi.cole@phelps.com	(225) 376-0246
Mimi Flowers Plauché	mimi.plauche@phelps.com	(225) 376-0279
Betty Burke Uzee	betty.uzee@phelps.com	(225) 376-0235

**Houston, Texas**

Maureen B. Jennings	maureen.jennings@phelps.com	(713) 877-5523
---------------------	-----------------------------	----------------

**Jackson, Mississippi**

Deborah Shelby Dees	debbie.dees@phelps.com	(601) 360-9334
Gary E. Friedman	gary.friedman@phelps.com	(601) 360-9355
W. Thomas Siler, Jr.	tommy.siler@phelps.com	(601) 360-9357
Mark Fijman	mark.fijman@phelps.com	(601) 360-9716
Todd G. Butler	todd.butler@phelps.com	(601) 360-9366
W. Brett Harvey	brett.harvey@phelps.com	(601) 360-9721
LaToya C. Merritt	latoya.merritt@phelps.com	(601) 360-9749
Seale Pylate	seale.pylate@phelps.com	(601) 360-9342
Saundra Brown Strong	saundra.brown@phelps.com	(601) 360-9729

**Tampa, Florida**

Dennis M. McClelland	dennis.mcclelland@phelps.com	(813) 472-7865
John David Mullen	john.mullen@phelps.com	(813) 472-7867
John E. Phillips	john.phillips@phelps.com	(813) 472-7863
Miguel B. Bouzas	miguel.bouzas@phelps.com	(813) 472-7752
Erin L. Malone	erin.malone@phelps.com	(813) 472-7891
Jason A. Pill	jason.pill@phelps.com	(813) 222-7664
Kamilah L. Perry	kamilah.perry@phelps.com	(813) 472-7881
Olivia Z. Weisman	olivia.weisman@phelps.com	(813) 472-7758

\*Contributing Authors

All rights reserved, Phelps Dunbar LLP publishes this information as a service to clients and friends of Phelps Dunbar LLP and should not be construed as legal or professional advice or as opinion on specific fact.

