



**LULAC of Greater Long Beach, Council 3088**

**One World Trade Center**

**P.O. Box 32364**

**Long Beach, CA 90832**

May 16, 2006

Dear Mayor O'Neil, City Council Members, and Staff:

Last December 6, 2005, when Representative James Sensenbrenner Jr., introduced **'The Border Protection, Anti-terrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act of 2005,'** otherwise known as **HR 4437**, it set off a national debate and reaction that has affected every community in our nation, including Long Beach.

Thomas Gonzales  
President

Robert Herrera  
Vice President

Ericka Gutierrez  
Treasurer

Ginny Gonzales  
Secretary

Ricardo Linarez  
Parliamentarian

Henry Salzer  
Sergeant at Arms

This bill is an attempt to address the flow of illegal entry into the United States from Mexico. However, HR 4437 doesn't address the real problems of immigration. In fact, it nearly completely ignores the real issues that communities like Long Beach face.

HR 4437 includes provisions that would criminalize teachers, doctors, churches, community organizations, or anyone else who would give aid in any way to an undocumented person, as well as authorize all states and local police to enforce federal immigration laws. However, it does nothing to address the plight of the millions of people that remain and who live under the shadows of our economy.

As we have seen over the past month, this issue has set off a firestorm of emotion on both sides of the debate. It is becoming apparent that as long as these high emotions continue to control the debate, a solution will forever remain illusive.

When we remove these emotions from the debate, we find that the vast majority of citizens want an immigration policy that works for all families, businesses, communities large and small, as well as for our law-enforcement entities.

Today, our nation bears the burden of making the difficult decision on immigration policy. A fence cannot or should not be the cornerstone of that policy.

In reading HR 4437 it becomes apparent that this bill does not contain any ideas of communication or dialogue with our neighbors to the South that would address a comprehensive policy of mutual cooperation and benefit.

Further, HR 4437 would militarize the border; this militarization indicates a failure of dialogue and diplomacy. In order to be truly comprehensive, any solution to the immigration situation must include both.

According to the Public Policy Institute of California, the greatest magnet for immigration into our country is the economy and the need to fill jobs. Yet, HR 4437 does not include a way for businesses, many of them in Long Beach, to obtain a pool of willing workers.

We in this country have turned a blind-eye to the issue while big business in many sectors including agriculture, construction, restaurant and domestic services, have reaped the benefits of cheap unorganized labor. We now will have to decide which way our nation will proceed.

In order to hold on to and reflect our American ideals of compassion and fair play, we must remember that the immigration debate is ultimately about people, and families who have come here to raise their standard of living.

We can choose a draconian path that offers no real solutions to immigration problems and is ultimately doomed to failure, or we can choose a comprehensive, humane and dignified solution that brings all stakeholders to the table.

What is left when we remove all of the emotion from HR 4437 is that we have a bill that is impractical, unenforceable, and leaves communities and municipalities to fend for themselves

with regard to the undocumented already here in the United States.

We are a nation of willing and unwilling immigrants. We need a bill that recognizes this fact. We need a bill that works from an enforcement perspective at the border and with regard to employers. We need a bill that is fair and is humane, to the interests of the people currently here working to make a living for their families. It is clear that if this country is to continue to prosper we must allow for those businesses dependent on the undocumented workforce and the workers themselves who want to work here legally to transform their legal status.

The Sensenbrenner Bill or HR 4437 in its current form is not a reasonable bill, for America, for California, or for Long Beach and its citizens. The Port of Long Beach, our many businesses, the diversity of our residents, all makes Long Beach the International City that it is. As such, we cannot afford to sit on the sidelines of this national debate.

LULAC therefore requests this body to offer a resolution against HR 4437. We further ask that in taking a stand, the Long Beach City Council send a symbolic signal to America and to the world that the leadership of Long Beach believes in making sound decisions based on common sense, reality, compassion and courage.

We live in the most diverse city in the nation – let us honor that diversity. Let the city of Long Beach be a beacon of light, of reason and hope, against a sea of displaced emotion and frustration.

Thank you, 

Thomas Gonzales, President of LULAC of  
Greater Long Beach Council 3088