

America deserves a common-sense immigration process

By Maile M. Hirota

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The creation of a common-sense immigration process is vital to the success of our country.

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As a community of immigrants and descendants of immigrants ourselves, we know and understand the hardships of coming to a new country and making a new life. Our grandparents and parents have told us the stories of how they uprooted their families and moved to Hawaii from another country, to work hard and make better lives for themselves and their children. Today, as American citizens, we reap the benefits of their sacrifices and hard work.

The same is true today as it was for our parents and grandparents: People move to make life better for themselves and their families. It's hard to move — to pack up everything and go to a new place takes courage — but we do it to put food on the tables, provide for our families or send our kids to decent schools.

Immigrants move here for the promise of freedom and opportunity in this country, just like our parents and grandparents did.

People move in order to improve their lives, and we believe that moving to make a better life for your family is one of the best things — and one of the hardest things — a person can do.

Like our grandparents and parents knew, new immigrants realize the value of working hard and doing your part in exchange for the blessings of liberty.

As Americans, we all do our part to contribute, and we're all the better for having hard-working new immigrants as contributing members of our communities by being customers in our stores, paying taxes, and giving to local churches and charities.

People in America come from diverse backgrounds and many different places; we are united by a deep respect for those who work hard for living in a shared commitment to the country we all call home. America works best when we all do our part and work together as one nation, indivisible and strong.

The bipartisan Senate immigration reform bill that was introduced last week gives me hope — hope that lawmakers from both parties can come together to pass a common-sense immigration process and find a solution for immigrants, businesses, families and, indeed, for all of America.

America deserves a common-sense immigration process, one that includes a road map for immigrants who aspire to be American citizens. Everyone agrees that the current patchwork of policies and programs is broken, and it breaks up families.

For those currently striving for citizenship, the current maze of regulations provides no light at the end of the



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tunnel, because there's often no line to get into for becoming a fully participating American.

The bill introduced in the Senate is a good start toward legislation that will fix our immigration laws, which tear families apart and hurt American businesses.

As an immigration attorney, I know firsthand the positive effects a bill like this could have for the people and businesses in Hawaii.

This is just the start of the process, and many obstacles will crop up to impede progress in the coming weeks and months.

However, in the midst of unprecedented public support for immigration reform and the need to see meaningful change to address our economic and societal needs, we need to stand together, overcome any obstacles, and see real immigration reform done.