

For the record, my name is Pramila Jayapal and I am the Executive Director of OneAmerica. OneAmerica is an immigrant and civil rights organization and we work in coalition with numerous community, faith, labor, business and law enforcement partners across the state and nationally. We currently coordinate the work around federal comprehensive immigration reform in Washington state, working closely with our elected leaders and partners here and in Washington DC.

I am very pleased that the Port of Seattle is considering a motion in support of comprehensive immigration reform today and would urge all of the Commissioners to support this motion, with ^{two} ~~one~~ small amendments that I hope you will consider supporting. The reality is that our current broken immigration

system deeply affects many workers at the Port as well as many areas of trade and commerce that the Port relies on in order to ensure a healthy and vibrant Port of Seattle. ~~It is both a business imperative & a moral imperative to pass immigration~~

In April 2008, under Commissioner Creighton's leadership, the Port of Seattle hosted a roundtable that brought together disparate business interests, representing agriculture, banking, exports, horse racing, technology, and trade, with some immigrant and community leaders. I was very pleased to serve on that panel. Matthew Harris of the Potato Commission talked about the urgency of passing immigration reform in order to make our economy move. Lydia Tamez of Microsoft said that when U.S. policy toward immigration does not allow business to hire workers in the U.S, those businesses are often forced to move work to where the needed skilled workers are available. And Jon Wyss of Gebbers Farms in NE Washington, one of the largest apple and cherry growers in the country, stated that Washington's ports are the "refrigerators of the world"—and that without immigration reform, the ports will not be able to stay that way.

The reality is that we have an incredibly outdated federal immigration system that has not updated its laws and visa categories and numbers to reflect the needs of our economy or our families. We simply do not have enough workers in particular industries, even in an economy such as this. For example, just last year, an estimated five percent of crops were left on the ground and in previous years, fruit lay rotting in the fields. Increased I9 audits and other workplace raids

without any underlying changes to the broken system have just increased fear and prevented key employers from wanting to speak out.

It is also important to recognize that the Port of Seattle is supported heavily by immigrant workers. Airport entry level jobs are filled by a substantial immigrant workforce—from retail, ground service, and food service to security and cleaning. Most of the 1,800 short-haul drivers in Seattle responsible for moving cargo are immigrants. Taxi cab drivers, rental car shuttlers and numerous other jobs on Port property are filled by immigrant workers who are deeply affected by the broken immigration system and wanting to see the Port speak out on the issue.

I do have ^{two} ~~one~~ small amendments that I would like to respectfully ask you to consider. ^{first} ~~That is~~ to add the phrase “through an earned legalization program” to principle a to make it clear that you are asking that there be a tough but fair process whereby the undocumented population could remain in the country through earned legalization. I hope you will consider ~~the~~ ^{these} changes.

Finally, let me say that I believe all elected leaders at any level are accountable to the communities around them to stand up against abuses of human rights and civil rights. The issue of immigration reform is not just an issue of immigration; it is an issue of what kind of a country will we be and what are we all willing to stand up for? In the wake of the Arizona law that has drawn widespread protest and statements by diverse groups from the NBA to the MLB Players Association to the largest black fraternity in the country, it is an important time for the Port of Seattle to strongly state their support for moving forward comprehensive immigration reform this year. I appreciate your efforts and thank you for the opportunity to provide comments today.

And second that you add "and eliminate the current family backlogs that keep families separated." to principle (b).