

YOUR IMMIGRATION SOLUTION



ATTY. ROBERT REEVES & JEREMIAH JOHNSON

Turning the corner: comprehensive immigration reform and the economy

the “underground” construction industry alone denied an estimated \$272 million in revenue because employers did not pay payroll taxes and another \$70 million in lost personal income taxes. Although comprehensive immigration reform including a legalization program would not recover this loss revenue completely, it is a step in the right direction.

Moreover, the report found that workers with legal status historically earn and spend more, thereby contributing to the economic recovery and ongoing health of the United States. Specifically, after the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act, workers experienced an average hourly wage increase of 15% after four to five years. Furthermore, legal status allowed workers to move into higher paying jobs, leading to an increase in not only federal and state income taxes but also providing immigrants the ability to buy more goods and services. Such an increase creates additional jobs and generates even more revenue from sales and business taxes.

Another organization, the Pew Hispanic Center, released a comprehensive report entitled “A Portrait of Unauthorized Immigrants in the United States.” The report estimates that of the approximately 11.9 million unauthorized immigrants who live in the United States, 8.3 million work without authorization. These unauthorized workers make up over 5% of the overall labor force, and are almost 10% of California’s labor force! Allowing these workers to obtain legal status would necessarily add to the overall strength of the economy. In fact, a Congressional Budget Office study found that legalizing the millions of unauthorized workers and their families would add tens of billions to the U.S. Treasury. The study also noted that the increased revenue would not only come through more taxes paid, but also through fees and fines that are likely to be included in any legalization program.

President Obama’s approach to immigration reform includes such a legalization program, a change within the immigration bureaucracy and an increase in the number of visas available for immigrants to keep families together and meet the demand for jobs that employers cannot fill. This increase of visa

numbers will be particularly welcomed in communities where visa backlogs can span 10 to 20 years, as in the case of the Philippines and Mexico. As for undocumented immigrants already in the United States, President Obama supports a legalization program that allows these immigrants, who are in good standing, to pay a fine, learn English and eventually become citizens.

The President can not reform the immigration system in a vacuum. While comprehensive immigration reform may no longer be the administration’s number one priority amid these economic times - these economic times are changing. For sure there were still be significant obstacles to comprehensive immigration reform to come. However, everyday there are more and more groups and organizations; friends and family; neighbors and co-workers who think comprehensive immigration reform is a good idea. Just last week, two national federations of labor, the AFL-CIO and Change to Win, have jointly endorsed a proposal for such a reform.

Over the past year, immigrants and their families have seen hard times – both economically and by the way of an increase in immigration raids in their communities. Yet in the past, politicians have failed to deliver promised reform. As such, the American electorate embraced change, and they voted for change. If recent reports are any indication of times ahead, then immigrants and their families can also expect much needed change, but first we must get through this year of hard economic times. Reeves & Associates continues its commitment to providing its clients with accurate and reliable immigration advice not only during the difficult times, but also during the changing times ahead.

Atty. Reeves has represented clients in numerous landmark immigration cases that have set new policies regarding INS action and immigrants’ rights. His offices are located in Pasadena, San Francisco, Las Vegas and Makati City.
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The analysis and suggestions offered in this column do not create a lawyer-client relationship and are not a substitute for the personalized representation that is essential to every case.
 (Advertising Supplement)

The Voice of FilAmerica

Political empowerment is still a treasure that eludes us as a community here in America. While we are the second largest Asian American community in the United States, we have yet to harvest the power that comes from our numbers. The Voice of FilAmerica features elected and appointed officials – regardless of political affiliation – in the different US states who are of Filipino ancestry. As your Filipino American community newspaper, the Asian Journal recognizes the fact that we all have a responsibility towards bringing political empowerment to fruition, especially for our future generations. It is our hope to have our voices heard all over America.

Dennis Apuan
 Colorado State Legislator

by JOSEPH PIMENTEL
 AJPress

HE went from sweeping floors to becoming a member of the Colorado State House of Representatives.

Fil-Am Dennis Apuan is serving his first term as a member of the Colorado State House of Representative. He serves House District 17, which includes southwestern Colorado Springs and the Fort Carson military base.

The 44-year-old Apuan narrowly won his seat by a margin of less than 600 votes last year. He won just over 51 percent of ballots cast in the race. His victory was the only Republican-held House seat won by Democrats in 2008.

Apuan was born in the Philippines and arrived to the US at the age of 20.

At the age of 33, he moved from Los Angeles to Colorado Springs.

He began his life in Colorado as a janitor sweeping floors at the Broadmoor Community Church. However, he moved up and became the church’s business administrator.

Throughout that time, he was a relentless advocate and non-profit leader. He worked as a community organizer and a regional director for the Colorado Progressive Coalition and for four years, served as vice chairman of the El Paso County Democratic Party.

He’s also been a member of the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs Diversity Strategic Planning Team, a program director and chairman of the Pikes Peak Justice and Peace Commission, and of First Congregational Church in Colorado Springs.

Apuan also was never afraid of fighting for what he believed in.

In 2003, Apuan along with a few other activists were arrested for protesting nuclear weapons at Peterson Air Force Base. He’s also participated in a number of other non-violent protests against the war in the Middle East.



He began his political career in 2008. When a state house seat was being vacated by Stella Garza-Hicks, a retiring Republican representative, Apuan decided to run for her seat.

He took a short leave of absence at the Colorado Progressive Coalition to make a run at the House.

He had no opposition in the Democratic primary. However, he faced Republican Catherine “Kit” Roupe, who had been favored to win the race, for the vacant seat in the 2008 general election.

Roupe tried to characterize Apuan as an anti-war and anti-military protester but Apuan said those were false claims.

Apuan won by a narrow margin of 600 votes.

Since being sworn in January 2009, Apuan has been kept busy. He is serving in the House Judiciary and Finance Committees.

Apuan has vowed to lower health-care costs; fostering jobs in clean energy and reduce business tax cuts as his priority while in office.

His vote against House Bill 1317 in Colorado has already made an impression on some of Colorado residents.

“I am writing in to thank my state representative, Dennis Apuan, for supporting the troops at Fort Carson by voting against House Bill 1317,” wrote Calvin Morris of Colorado Springs in the Colorado Springs The Gazette newspaper. “That bill would prohibit the sale of public lands for the expansion of the Piñon Canyon Maneuver Site. The Army uses that area for important military training exercises before sending troops into battle. The bill is bad for our troops, and I’m glad our representative understands why. As a veteran, I can speak to just how essential it is to get the proper training before going into war... I applaud Apuan for breaking with his Democratic caucus to support the troops at Fort Carson, and am thrilled that we have a strong representative willing to stand up for his district.” ■

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