

A true plan for immigration reform

By Marisa DeFranco | Posted: Tuesday, September 2, 2014 3:00 am

I have a real plan for immigration that honors our nation's rich history as a nation of immigrants while fixing the holes and cracks that have allowed our system to become broken over the years. I am the only person the 6th Congressional race who has a plan and the experience to back it up. I am an immigration attorney and have spent years working for responsibility in immigration, and I have watched a broken system continue to grow the problem.

My plan:

- (1) **Implement strong fines** for employers violating the law and exploiting immigrants, requiring a corporation to pay 5-10 percent of gross revenue;
- (2) **Increase border and port security.** Increase the inspection rate from the current 4 percent to 50 percent in four years. This increases jobs and security. Double the number of immigration judges. Deport immigrants with felony convictions faster. Increase Customs and Border Protection agents;
- (3) **Create a path to legalization**, not citizenship, for undocumented immigrants who refuse to go through the same process as legal immigrants;
- (4) **Repeal the law banning re-entry for three and 10 years.** Replace it with two-to-four-year bans;
- (5) **Create an "Essential Worker Visa."** The path to fixing our country's immigration problem only becomes visible when we take our collective heads out of the sand. Because undocumented immigrants broke our laws by crossing the border without inspection, or by overstaying their visas, there must be a penalty, but the solution doesn't stop there. We're not going to deport our way out of this crisis.

My plan, the DeFranco Plan, calls for earned legalization as a solution. It takes citizenship off the table for undocumented immigrants who do not go back to their home countries to begin the full, legal immigration process. It creates a path to legal living and working in the U.S., where the immigrant goes to the back of the immigration line, behind all current green card applicants. They would also pay a

penalty and back taxes and pass an English test.

The DeFranco Plan repeals the 10-year ban on re-entry and replaces it with two-to-four-year bans. Congress passed a shortsighted 10-year re-entry bar, but, in reality, the law only caused more undocumented immigrants to stay in this country and not return to their home countries, knowing they would face a 10-year ban.

The DeFranco Plan also creates an Essential Worker Visa to make sure we are not facing the same problem 20 years from now. We Create a Real Essential Worker Visa (CREW) similar to the current seasonal worker visa. CREW visa requirements will be: Employers must advertise for U.S. workers and prove they cannot find such workers; employers must pay prevailing wages; and criminal prosecution and high penalties for any employer who violates the law. The key distinction between a Real Essential Worker and a Current Seasonal Worker would be that the employer could sponsor the Essential worker for a green card while she or he is working in the U.S.

And I know what I'm talking about. I have been an immigration attorney for 17 years. I was named a Top Woman of Law by Massachusetts Lawyers Weekly and have been recognized by the National Legal Aid and Defender Association's Beacon of Justice Award for my pro bono service.

I am the only candidate in the 6th Congressional District race with a true plan for immigration reform, and my plan creates more good-paying jobs for Americans while presenting real solutions for everyone.

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