

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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**CONTACT:**

Shay M. Farley (Montgomery)

Alabama Appleseed Center for Law &amp; Justice, Inc.\*\*

334/263-0086 or [shayfarley@bellsouth.net](mailto:shayfarley@bellsouth.net)**ALABAMA APPLESEED CALLS FOR PROMPT, FAIR, AND JUST  
NATIONAL IMMIGRATION REFORM LEGISLATION**

This week, the U.S. Senate continues debate of the compromise, bi-partisan Immigration Reform bill (S. 1348). To date, over 100 amendments have been filed and it is expected that several dozen will be brought to a floor vote before discussions conclude this week. This legislation is overdue and we implore our Senators and Representatives to consider and pass a bill that leads to a fair and humane immigration system. Further, we urge our leaders to hold the higher moral ground and establish a system that recognizes and corrects the abuses and mistakes of our current system, while ensuring adequate protections to immigrants, citizens, and national security alike.

Our immigration system is broken. Millions of people within our borders live in a shadowy legal never-never land, vulnerable to abuses from employers, criminals, even governmental officials themselves. The answer is comprehensive immigration reform at the national level.

Alabama Appleseed, part of a national network of public interest advocacy centers committed to promoting systematic change to correct inequitable social issues, has worked with the Hispanic/Latino immigrant population for several years on a variety of issues. We believe the foundation for effective national immigration reform that promotes our collective interests, citizens and newcomers alike, rests on a few key principles: 1) A straightforward path to earned, permanent citizenship, without unreasonable preconditions, which removes uncertainty and creates opportunities for newcomers and communities, alike; 2) New legislation must guard against the creation or institutionalization of an underclass in our country; 3) All people in the United States, no matter their immigration status, have constitutional and legal rights, consistent with our democratic society, and access to such rights must not be unlawfully abridged; and 4) Immigration reform must place high priority on the welfare of immigrant children and children of immigrants, to ensure that their families are kept together and that they are allowed to reach their full potential.

An effective immigration system requires a smart, targeted means of enforcement, but enforcement alone, without addressing the underlying problems of a broken system, cannot serve the interests of our country. Fair enforcement practices are critical to rebuilding trust among immigrant communities and protecting the security of all.

Lack of federal initiative and direction has led to increased piecemeal state and local laws which divert and overburden already limited resources and tear communities apart. Alabama Appleseed urges members of Congress to enact an approach that is safe, efficient, fair, and accountable. At this vital time, we need our leaders to demonstrate that it is possible to have an immigration system that respects the rights of all, protects individuals fleeing persecution, supports individuals seeking a better life, secures our nation and its citizens, and acknowledges the economic, social and cultural contributions of immigrants as part of our nation's great tradition.

Simultaneously with the distribution of this press release, Alabama Appleseed is writing Senators Shelby and Sessions, as well as other key members of Congress, urging them to vote for an immigration bill consistent with the principles set forth in this press release.

\*\*Founded in 1999, Alabama Appleseed is a nonprofit and nonpartisan, public interest advocacy organization that identifies significant needs in the state, tackles their root causes, and crafts practical, lasting solutions through legal advocacy, community involvement, and policy expertise. Alabama Appleseed's statewide office is located in Montgomery at 309 N. Hull Street. Alabama Appleseed's current advocacy projects are: Hispanic Financial Access; Hurricane Katrina Advocacy projects; Work Supports Advocacy; Self-Sufficient Standards/Living Wage; Restorative Justice; and Judicial Elections Reform.