

## Senate Passes Immigration Reform Bill

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On June 27, 2013, the U.S. Senate voted 68-32 to pass a comprehensive immigration reform bill. The bill would put the nation's 11 million unauthorized immigrants on the path to U.S. citizenship and invest \$46 billion to increase border security.

The Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act of 2013 (S.744), drafted by a bipartisan group of senators known as the "Gang of Eight," would represent a substantial change in U.S. immigration laws. The legislation would overhaul the legal immigration system by eliminating backlogs in the family and employment-based immigration systems. It would eliminate certain family preferences and amend the definition of "immediate relative" to include the child or spouse of a lawful permanent resident. It would increase the number of employment-based immigrant visas by eliminating the annual numerical limitations for foreign nationals of extraordinary ability, outstanding professors and researchers, multinational executives and managers, doctoral degree holders, and certain physicians.

The bill proposes to create a merit-based point system based on a combination of education, employment, and length of residency in the U.S. It would also increase the number of nonimmigrant H-1B professional worker visas available to U.S. companies. Also, it would make it easier for companies to hire temporary non-professional workers and agricultural workers. The legislation would make the current voluntary E-Verify system mandatory for all employers.

Although the bill faces strong opposition in the House of Representatives, the House could adopt the Senate bill. However, it is more likely that it will draft its own version of the bill. In another article we will provide more detail addressing key areas of particular interest for employers including the bill's changes to the E-Verify system, nonimmigrant visas, and immigrant worker status. [Barley Snyder](#) will continue to monitor developments on comprehensive immigration reform as they evolve.

If you have any questions about the Senate bill or comprehensive immigration reform, please contact Attorney Silas Ruiz-Steele, at 610-898-7153 or [sruizsteele@barley.com](mailto:sruizsteele@barley.com).

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