

(Washington DC) The House Republican Leadership halted progress on the immigration bill by stipulating that field hearings will precede House-Senate negotiations. These field hearings are planned for the August recess nine months after the House debated and passed its immigration bill. In response, Congressman Charlie Gonzalez issued the following statement:

"This is another example where Republican leadership in the House allows politics to trump policy. Why would they hold field hearings almost a year after the House Judiciary Committee first held hearings on immigration? It is clear that Republican leaders simply wish to extract some presumed political advantage instilling fear and insecurity instead of seeking realistic solutions to the problems created by illegal immigration.

We should concentrate our time and resources on policies that will reduce the entry of undocumented workers into the United States. Since this is a multi-faceted problem, we need a multi-faceted solution. In contrast, House Republicans have pushed a simplistic bill that is not practical and would ultimately harm our economy. Moreover, they have refused to negotiate with Senate Republicans and the President who have supported a comprehensive bill that does a better job of addressing the complexities of this problem.

Clearly House Republicans do not want to sit down with the Senate and work out differences so a comprehensive immigration bill can move forward. Instead of working with Senate Republicans, House Republicans have used numerous delaying tactics, and field hearings will serve only to stall work on a serious problem."

Because the House and Senate passed different immigration bills, a conference committee must reconcile the different provisions until a single bill is produced that both Houses must pass. Even though the Senate immigration bill passed on May 25, 2006, members of the conference committee have not yet been named.

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