STATE OF ARIZONA

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GOVERNOR

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The Hon. Nancy Pelosi
United States House of Representatives
235 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-0508

The Hon. Harry Reid
United States Senate
528 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-2803

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Majority Leader Reid:

Last week, the Senate once again failed to take action on comprehensive immigration reform. One of the practical effects of this failure is that Arizona, and states across the nation, must now continue to address this escalating problem on their own.

For years now, Arizona has been forced to act independently to stem the flow of illegal immigration. The latest example is House Bill 2779, the Legal Arizona Workers Act, which I signed into law today.

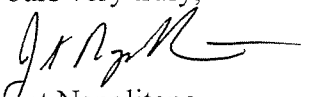
House Bill 2779 is the most aggressive state enforcement action in the country against employers who knowingly or intentionally employ unauthorized aliens. Effective January 1, 2008, this new law requires Arizona employers to use the federal government's Basic Pilot Program (BPP) or its successor program, to verify the employment authorization of all newly hired employees. As you know, the BPP currently accommodates fewer than 15,000 businesses nationwide. With this new state mandate, Arizona will add 130,000-150,000 new businesses to the BPP, which could strain the system. Under House Bill 2779, an employer's usage of the BPP will offer some protections against the bill's sanctions if an employers is found to have employed an unauthorized alien. This will be an incentive for employers to use the BPP.

In light of Arizona's new law and the likely legislation that will result in states across the country, I urge you to promptly review the current BPP to ensure that it is capable of handling the increase in usage that will result next year from Arizona's decisive action today. It is the federal government's obligation to ensure seamless access

and availability to employers throughout the nation. Congress should also supply any additional funding that may be needed to modernize and perfect the system.

For years now, I have spoken out on the desperate need for comprehensive immigration reform. Today, I renew my call on Congress to enact such legislation. The United States Congress has a responsibility to act swiftly and definitively to solve this problem at the national level.

Yours very truly,



Janet Napolitano
Governor

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