



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CBTU President Praises Senate Action on Immigration Reform

Black Labor Leader Warns GOP of “Electoral Backlash” If Reform Bill Stalls in the House

Statement of Rev. Terry Melvin
President, Coalition of Black Trade Unionists
June 28, 2013

In a week of unprecedented public policy benchmarks, the United States Senate has passed a sweeping immigration reform bill that could bring millions of people out of the shadows and strengthen the fabric of our democracy. The Senate bill is far from perfect, but it will – for the first time – provide a path to citizenship for an estimated 11 million undocumented immigrants who are our neighbors or co-workers or playmates of our children.

They should not be treated as pawns in House Republicans’ partisan gamesmanship with the Senate and the White House. Speaker John Boehner certainly ought to know that killing immigration reform now will only doom his party to a prolonged electoral backlash. He should exert real leadership and persuade xenophobic House members to not blow up this rare but necessary bipartisan consensus.

We will work diligently with our allies in the House to make the immigration bill more inclusive, with more protections for workers, more access to needed benefits, less militarized emphasis on border security, and a shorter, less arduous path to citizenship than 13 years, as the Senate bill calls for.

CBTU also strongly backs AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka, who has called on President Obama “to ease the deportation crisis that is wrecking workforces, families and communities. More than a thousand aspiring Americans are being deported every day for no reason other than the absence of a working immigration system in the United States of America.”

CBTU will continue to mobilize our members and allies across the country to contact their Members of Congress, urging them to pass meaningful immigration reform legislation with a fair, dignified path to citizenship that would honor leaders like Cesar Chavez, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Sen. Ted Kennedy.

For more information about CBTU, visit www.cbtu.org

CBTU, which was founded in 1972, is the largest, independent voice of more than 2.2 million African American workers in labor unions today. With more than 50 chapters in major U.S. cities and one in Ontario, Canada, CBTU is dedicated to addressing the unique concerns of black workers and their communities. CBTU President Rev. Terry Melvin is also the secretary-treasurer of the powerful New York state AFL-CIO.