

from the office of

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KENNEDY AT IMMIGRATION RALLY: I STAND WITH YOU

***65 PROTESTS FROM COAST TO COAST, LARGEST IMMIGRANT
MOBILIZATION IN HISTORY***

Washington, D.C. – Today, Senator Edward M. Kennedy joined over 200,000 for a rally supporting his plan for comprehensive immigration reform. Demonstrations took place across the country, in 65 cities, for the “National Day of Action for Immigrant Justice”. Last week, comprehensive immigration legislation spearheaded by Senators Kennedy and McCain fell short of the votes needed to move forward. Leaders in the labor, business and religious community came together in an unprecedented way to meet this challenge and Senator Kennedy has vowed to continue his fight for tough, fair legislation that deals with our national security and economic challenges in a way that is consistent with our values and the American Dream.

“Some in Congress want to turn America away from its true spirit,” Senator Kennedy said, “They believe immigrants are criminals. That’s false. They believe any of us who help immigrants – even our priests – are criminals, too. That’s false. They say you should report to deport. I say report to become American citizens. More than four decades ago, near this place, Martin Luther King called on the nation to let freedom ring. Freedom did ring – and freedom can ring again. It is time for Americans to lift their voices now -- in pride for our immigrant past and in pride for our immigrant future.”

The Kennedy-McCain plan combines tough enforcement measures that will protect our borders and increase national security and provide a path to earned citizenship. Demonstrators from coast to coast are demanding humane immigration solutions that provide a path to citizenship, unite families, deal with the future flow of immigrants in a legal and compassionate way, and ensure workplace and civil rights protections, all of which are included the Kennedy-McCain plan for comprehensive immigration reform.

Below are Senator Kennedy’s remarks:

**KENNEDY REMARKS AT IMMIGRATION RALLY
(AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY)**

Thank you, Jaime Contreras for that warm introduction.

Buenos tardes! Gracias por darme la oportunidad de estar en este evento. Y gracias por demandar justicia para todos los inmigrantes.

I look across this historic gathering and I see the future of America. As President Kennedy proclaimed a half century ago, we are a Nation of Immigrants. And today, we stand together as brothers and sisters to shape America's destiny – old Americans, new Americans, future Americans – all joined together for the common good.

Let me ask you some questions. Are you ready? (Estas listo?)

Do you have a job? (Tienes trabajo?)

Do you love your family? (Amas a su familia?)

Do you love your community? (Amas a su comunidad?)

Do you love America? (Amas a America?)

You are what this debate is about. It is about good people who come to America to work, to raise their families, to contribute to their communities, and to reach for the American dream.

This debate goes to the heart of who we are as Americans. It will determine who can earn the privilege of citizenship.

It will determine our strength in separating those who would harm us from those who contribute to our values.

It will determine our future progress as a nation and our future economic growth.

Some in Congress want to turn America away from its true spirit. They believe immigrants are criminals. That's false.

They believe any of us who help immigrants – even our priests – are criminals, too. That's false.

They say you should report to deport. I say report to become American citizens.

More than four decades ago, near this place, Martin Luther King called on the nation to let freedom ring. Freedom did ring – and freedom can ring again.

It is time for Americans to lift their voices now -- in pride for our immigrant past and in pride for our immigrant future.

We stand for the future. (Nosotros apoyamos el futuro.)

We stand for our families. (Nosotros apoyamos nuestras familias.)

We stand for our faith. (Nosotros apoyamos nuestra fe.)

I stand with you. And you and you and you and you.

Are you with me? (Estan connmigo?)

John McCain and I have a plan. It is a strong plan. It is a fair plan. It is a plan for America's future.

And today we are making that future happen.

Will you support us? (Me apoyan?)

Will you support us? (Me apoyan?)

Will you support us? (Me apoyan?)

Well, I'm here today to say that we will support you, too. (Nosotros vamos a apoyar a ustedes tambien.)

We will never give up. We will never give in.

Hasta la Victoria!

Si se puede!

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