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Subject: Immigration Bill stalled for the time being

We dodged another Federal bullet yesterday. Below you'll find the details. After the first cloture vote failed, Senators Tester and Akaka spoke in favor of the amendment we supported but it did not come up for a vote. I will, and I know NGA will continue to monitor this, and I'll let you know if any expansion of the purpose of REAL ID pops up in legislation up here.

Marcia, if you come to DC sometime this summer or fall for an event or meeting, let me know, I think it would be useful to do drop-bys to our delegation and inform them of the direction South Carolina is headed on REAL ID.

Thanks,

Blair

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SENATE FAILS TO INVOKE CLOTURE ON IMMIGRATION BILL

Yesterday, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) pulled the immigration bill (S. 1348) from the Senate floor after three failed attempts to invoke cloture (by votes of 33 to 63, 34 to 62, and 45 to 50). Prior to the cloture votes, the Senate approved an amendment by Senator Byron Dorgan (D-N.D.) (by a vote of 49 to 48) that would sunset the guestworker program after five years; and an amendment by Senator James Inhofe (R-Okla.) (by a vote of 64 to 33) to make English the official language of the United States.

In addition, during yesterday's consideration, Senator Jon Tester (D-Mont.) and Senator Daniel Akaka (D-Hawaii) spoke in favor of an amendment that would have stricken from the overall bill all references to Real ID dealing with the Employment Eligibility Verification System (EEVS). NGA yesterday released a statement expressing the Governors' concerns that the Senate's proposed use of Real ID driver's licenses and identification cards for employment authorization and identity was premature.

The Senate rejected several amendments, including one by Senator Tom Coburn (R-Okla.) (by a vote of 54 to 42) that would have required the President to certify and Congress to agree that current immigration laws were adequately enforced before the new guestworker program could take effect; another by Senator John Ensign (R-Nev.) (by a vote of 42 to 55) that would have revised the merit based system's permanent residency to award more points for immigrants who are highly skilled workers, who served honorably in the military, or who have health insurance; and another by Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-N.Y.) (by a vote of 44 to 55 on a budget point of order) that would have reclassified the spouses and children of legal residents as immediate family for visa purposes. Both Majority Leader Reid and Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) stated that they will continue working on the bill and that it might return to the agenda at some future date.