

## **Reuniting Families Act**

This legislation introduced as Senate Bill 1085 by Sen. Robert Mendez (D-NJ) on May 20, 2009, would reform the family-based immigration system and speed up the process for family members of legal immigrants to secure visas. Among other provisions, S. 1085 would enable the immediate relatives (husbands, wives, and children) of legal permanent residents to legally enter the country more quickly; recapture family visas from prior years that were lost to bureaucratic delay; reduce family-visa backlogs from sending countries; and ensure that the widows and orphans of legal permanent residents are able to remain in the United States after the death of a sponsoring family member.

ACT includes the following:

- Facilitates family immigration by raising the per-country quota on immigrants from 7% to 10% and allowing for the use of close to 400,000 unused family visas that accumulated over the period 1997-2002
- For many individuals who are legal permanent residents ("LPRs") with petitions pending for a spouse, probably the most significant part of the proposed bill is to allow permanent residents the ability to petition as "immediate relatives," like in the case of U.S. Citizen petitioners.

This would allow immediate relatives of permanent residents to adjust from an undocumented status to a conditional residency status and visas for immediate relatives to be available.

