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### **Bush Administration Immigration Ombudsman Applauds President Obama's Executive Order on Immigration Reform**

Prakash Khatri, the nation's first Immigration Ombudsman during the administration of President George W. Bush, today announced his support for President Obama's Executive Order to provide administrative relief to millions of unauthorized immigrants in this country.

"I firmly support the immigration reform measures announced by the president," Mr. Khatri said. "The executive actions taken by President Obama will help bring out of the shadows millions of undocumented immigrants who contribute a tremendous amount to our society and economy every day. The executive order is an important and long-overdue first step towards normalizing these people."

While the president's Executive Order is expected to directly benefit only about five million unauthorized persons, it will affect more people than the amnesty provisions signed into law by President Reagan in 1986. That 1986 amnesty resulted in legalizing the status of slightly more than three million people.

The president's new executive order, combined with his previous executive order of June 2012, could benefit some 600,000 of the estimated 1.5 million unauthorized Asians in the United States. Additionally, as many as 400,000 highly skilled Science Technology Engineering and Math (STEM) college graduates, mostly from Asia, will benefit from the announced changes.

International students who complete their degrees can expect even more liberal Optional Practical Training (OPT) provisions which could extend their OPT beyond 29 months. While the provisions are not yet final, all indications are that the OPT provisions may be extended to persons who earned an undergraduate STEM degree but received a graduate degree in a non-STEM field.

"I may be a registered Republican and former official in the Bush Administration, but I support President Obama's initiative because I believe it will work. It is time for the nation's political leaders to set aside their destructive political partisanship and instead work to resolve this issue that affects so many people," said Mr. Khatri.

*Prakash Khatri is an immigration attorney in Bethesda, Maryland ([www.khatrilaw.com](http://www.khatrilaw.com)). In 2003, President Bush appointed Mr. Khatri as the United States' first Citizenship and Immigration Services Ombudsman at the then-newly established Department of Homeland Security. Before being appointed Ombudsman, he managed the Immigration Compliance Department for Walt Disney World in Florida. In 1984, at the age of 22, he became the youngest attorney admitted to the Florida Bar and was in private practice for 14 years before joining Disney.*

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