



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on July 17, 2013

Black Leaders Rally in D.C. Against “Gang of Eight” Immigration Bill

It has been called a jobs bill for the millions of illegal immigrants who have streamed into America through its porous borders. It’s S. 744, euphemistically called the “Gang of Eight” immigration bill after the “bipartisan” team that introduced it last April and arranged for its Senate passage in late June. The measure, which the House has thus far held at arm’s length, would grant amnesty to some 12 million illegal aliens in the United States, dramatically increase legal immigration, and offer a path to citizenship for many of these millions — all while doing nothing to shore up the nation’s nearly open borders and improve border security. Most crucially, members of the Black American Leadership Alliance (BALA) warn, the immigration “reform” bill would effectively take jobs out of the hands of America’s disadvantaged and low-skill workers — particularly those in the African-American community — and give them to the millions of immigrants who would gain instant legal status.



On July 15 members of BALA joined conservative legislators and other leaders in Washington, D.C. for a rally designed to send a strong signal that a core of Americans are standing against the immigration “reform” bill. Among the legislators speaking at the BALA-sponsored event were U.S. Senators Ted Cruz (R-Texas) and Jeff Sessions (R-Ala.), U.S. Representative Steve King (R-Iowa), and former Congressman Allen West (R-Fla.).

Rally organizer Leah Durant, founder of BALA, said that the purpose of the event, which drew an estimated 3,000 participants, was to demonstrate the strong opposition to the Senate-passed immigration bill, particularly among black leaders, who argue that giving amnesty to millions of illegal aliens now in the United States will effectively flood the job market with a labor force that will take jobs that have traditionally been filled by low-skilled American workers, particularly those in the black community.

“It is our strong belief that now is not time to permit another amnesty that adds millions more workers to swamp our labor markets and dramatically increase competition for scarce U.S. jobs,” Durant told Breitbart News in an interview before the event. She added that those at the rally were concerned about “making sure that America’s jobs are preserved for American workers at a time when nearly 22 million Americans are either out of work or underemployed.”



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The BALA website promoting the rally noted that while “labor participation in the United States is at its lowest rate in over 30 years,” S. 744 would “increase legal immigration levels by 50 percent and provide amnesty to over 11 million people who have entered the country illegally. We stand against these proposals, as they will result in adding millions more to the U.S. labor force, putting millions of American citizens out of work.”

In addition to Durant, a number of other black leaders from around the nation spoke at the rally, emphasizing the need to stop the bill in order to protect the interests of the millions of Americans who would be harmed by it. Representative of their collective voice was that of the Rev. Stephan Broden, a Dallas pastor who traveled to Washington, D.C. to speak and stand with the other leaders in solidarity against the bill.

The Rev. Broden told *The New American* that S. 744 effectively supports illegal immigrants while “working against the best interest of natural-born citizen of these United States.” He said that the “pathway to citizenship connected with this bill will adversely impact the millions of Americans currently unemployed.”

Broden emphasized the message, made by a number of the black leaders who spoke at the rally, that through the bill entry-level jobs that have traditionally been easily available to low-skilled workers “will now go to those illegals who will become citizens and will more likely work for minimum wage or below. The business community will make these aliens a priority hire above American workers.”

He noted that under the bill businesses could even be fined if they don’t hire an immigrant with a Registered Provisional Immigrant (RPI) designation over a U.S. citizen or a legal immigrant. “This is not an America-friendly bill,” he said. “It is an assault on our system, and especially the rule of law which is a founding principle in our Constitution.”

“The first duty of our elected officials is to serve the interest of ‘we the people,’” emphasized the black pastor. “It is clear that S. 744 is designed to aid and support illegal aliens above the best interest of Americans.” He noted that with America’s 14 percent black unemployment — including a whopping 33 percent unemployment among black youth — the jobs picture among the poor and minority community is not good. “The penalty clause against businesses is anti-American, and the economic impact to low-skilled workers — especially the black community — will be devastating,” he said.

In addition to sponsoring the rally, members of BALA signed and sent an [open letter](#) to the Senate’s “Gang of Eight” who drafted the legislation, along with the Congressional Black Caucus and “senators from those states having the highest rates of black unemployment.”

The letter stated in part: “Each Member of Congress must consider the disastrous effects that Senate Bill 744 would have on low-skill workers of all races, while paying particular attention to the potential harm to African Americans. Credible research indicates that black workers will suffer the greatest harm if this legislation were to be passed. We are asking that you oppose Senate Bill 744 because of the dramatic effect it will have on the availability of employment for African-American workers.”

The letter also noted that many low-income black Americans “compete with immigrants, particularly illegal immigrants, for low skilled jobs due to skill level and geography, and there are simply not enough of these jobs to go around.” The black leaders pointed out that “nearly 51% of African Americans do not have a higher education. In 2011, 24.6% of blacks without a high school diploma were unemployed. Even blacks with a high school diploma were unemployed at a rate of 15.5% that same year. Passing legislation to add additional workers to an already swamped labor market will only exacerbate these



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statistics.”

The black leaders concluded their epistle by imploring the senators “to recognize the devastating effects amnesty and mass immigration has on low-skilled workers, particularly those in the black community,” to oppose S. 744 when it next comes up for a vote in the Senate, and to instead support common-sense policies that will “reduce overall levels of legal and illegal immigration.”



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