



June 27, 2011

Senator Patrick Leahy
437 Russell Senate Building
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Leahy:

I am writing to express Microsoft Corporation's support for the Uniting American Families Act. As an innovation leader, our most critical asset is the brainpower of the people in our workforce. Our human talent is the key to Microsoft's ability to generate new ideas and new products, and to create new U.S. jobs, and we place top emphasis on attracting and keeping the best and brightest.

Today's immigration laws create a particularly serious barrier to this goal by failing to provide immigration benefits to the same-sex permanent partners of U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents. This barrier imposes tremendous hardships on a significant number of talented employees and recruits who, along with their foreign national partner or spouse, are forced to choose between: abandoning successful careers and established lives in the U.S. and moving to a country where they may remain together; living indefinitely in separate countries; or, separating permanently. This barrier also imposes an economic burden on Microsoft and other U.S. employers by impacting the productivity of key employees and creating substantial costs as we transfer employees to subsidiaries in other countries, where possible, to mitigate this hardship. More importantly, we are faced with the reality of losing some of our best employees as they deal with this challenge.

The provisions of the Uniting American Families Act would overcome this outdated barrier. Such a law would also bring U.S. immigration policy law into line with the growing number of countries—including economic competitors such as Sweden, Germany, the Netherlands, Canada, the United Kingdom, France, and Australia—that already provide immigration benefits to the same-sex permanent partners of citizens and permanent residents, recognizing that it is both fair and economically smart to do so. Passage of the Uniting American Families Act would permit key employees to keep their families together and remain as contributors to the U.S. economy, and it would allow Microsoft to build and keep the best possible talent within our workforce.

We commend you for your continued leadership on this very important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Karen F. Jones".

Karen F. Jones
Vice President, Deputy General Counsel
HR Legal Group