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WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Congressman John B. Larson (CT-01) expressed his outrage that the version of the Commerce-Justice-State Appropriations Act that was passed by the House today did not contain the Latino and Immigrant Fairness Act. The act would establish legal parity between Central American and Caribbean refugees and update the registry date so that long-time residents that have been in the United States since 1986 will qualify to remain here permanently. The legislation would also allow those who are already in the U.S. and on the verge of gaining their immigration status, to remain in the country while the process is being completed. It passed this evening by a vote of 206-198, with Larson voting against the bill.

“It is important that fairness becomes a more integral part of our immigration policy,” said Larson. “Unfortunately, as it is now, our policy is somewhat inconsistent and unfair and this legislation would have changed that. I am disappointed that it was not included in the appropriations bill that was voted on today, and that is why I voted against it.”

The President is expected to veto the legislation for the same reason.

“This act would stop the needless and painful separation of families by allowing those who are close to receiving their immigration status to remain in the country, which I view as compassionate as well as practical,” said Larson. “It will also assist many groups who were unjustifiably excluded from the opportunity to apply for permanent residency by updating the registry date, so that people who have been contributing to our communities and our economy can have that opportunity.”

Fifty-five percent of Hispanics in America are native-born U.S. citizens, and 70 percent already have U.S. citizenship. However, a large number of Hispanics seek permanent residency status, and more have relatives in foreign countries that would like to be reunited. Larson said that he felt the current immigration policy does not apply fairly to all immigrant groups and needlessly separates families.

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