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Kaya: Filipino Americans for Progress Applauds President Obama for Issuing an Executive Action to Address Broken Immigration System, Urges Congress to Take Action

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Washington, D.C. – Kaya: Filipino Americans for Progress applauds President Obama for taking executive action to protect many undocumented immigrants from deportation. However, lasting progress requires legislation and we call upon Congress to act and pass comprehensive immigration reform.

Although a tremendous reprieve for as many as 5 million immigrants, deferred action ultimately does not resolve the status of undocumented immigrants, including the estimated 340,000 undocumented Filipino American immigrants in the United States. In addition, DREAMers, who were allowed to apply for deferred action in 2011, still risk losing their families to deportation as deferred action was not extended to their parents. Finally, there is still no solution to the problems plaguing our legal immigration system, especially the backlog in family-sponsored petitions. The delays caused by this backlog have particularly impacted Filipino American immigrants, some of whom must wait as long as 23 years to be reunited with their families.

“This is undoubtedly big news for our community,” said Romeo Ymalay, Co-Chair of Kaya: Filipino Americans for Progress. “Many Filipino Americans experience first-hand the tremendous difficulties caused by our current system. But President Obama’s action is only the first step. Much more needs to be done to finally fix our broken and unjust immigration system.”

Although the President has done his part to improve the lives of immigrants, only Congress has the authority to enact meaningful and lasting fixes through legislation. We call upon Congress to pass comprehensive immigration reform that will resolve our country’s immigration crisis. Such reform must include: 1) a clear path to citizenship for the 12 million undocumented immigrants living within our borders; 2) recognition of the importance of keeping families together by addressing the current backlog in family visas; 3) humane and equal treatment of all immigrants through guaranteed representation in court proceedings and; and 4) an end to indefinite detentions. The problem is acute but the moral imperative is clear. The time to act is now.

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