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SENIOR WHIP
DEMOCRATIC CAUCUS

CONGRESSWOMAN SHEILA JACKSON LEE OF TEXAS

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

STATEMENT

**IN SUPPORT OF JACKSON LEE AMENDMENT #017
TO H.R. 5203
THE "VISA INTEGRITY AND SECURITY ACT OF 2016"**



MAY 25, 2016

- Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk, the Jackson Lee Amendment #017, an amendment that would require the Department of Homeland Security to establish fee guidelines for any expenses associated with genetic testing, taking into consideration the ability of the petitioner or applicant to pay.

- Thank you for this opportunity to briefly explain my amendments.
- Mr. Chairman, H.R. 5203, as currently drafted is flawed and misguided.
- This bill would effectively treat all immigrants and temporary visa applicants as if they are criminals even if the individual is an immediate relative of a U.S. citizen, a spouse of a member of the U.S. Armed Forces, or a skilled worker who has been legally studying and living in the United States with no criminal record for over a decade.
- My amendments would help alleviate significant the concerns with this bill, notably the requirements for DNA testing – at the expense of the petitioner applicant – for all applications and petitions predicated on a biological relationship.
- The result will be significant additional costs for each family-based immigration applicant.

Jackson Lee Amendment #017

- Mr. Chairman, I urge adoption of the Jackson Lee Amendment #017, which would require the Department of Homeland Security to establish fee guidelines for any expenses associated with genetic

testing, taking into consideration the ability of the petitioner or applicant to pay.

- H.R. 5203 does nothing to account for the enormous costs of DNA testing for low-income families.
- Currently, DNA testing may cost more than \$500 per test per individual.
- This cost will have to be assumed by many low-income families, including members of the U.S. Armed Forces, refugees, asylees, and survivors of domestic violence and trafficking who are already struggling to make ends meet.
- In addition to the test costs, families living in remote locations will have the added burden of ancillary travel costs required to complete the genetic testing obligation.
- By having the Department of Homeland Security establish guidelines for DNA testing fees, which would take into consideration an applicant's ability to pay, the financial burden of this amendment will be ameliorated and will not disproportionately burden low-income families.
- Accordingly, I urge my colleagues to support the Jackson Lee Amendment #017.
- Thank you.