

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 30, 2021

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
United States House of Representatives
H-232, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable John Yarmuth
Chairman
Committee on the Budget
204-E Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Chairman Yarmuth,

We, the undersigned members, respectfully request that you include a pathway to citizenship for essential immigrant workers and their families, Dreamers, and TPS holders in the COVID-19 reconciliation recovery package given that essential immigrant workers have been, and will continue to be, key to the health and safety of all Americans during the pandemic and will be critical for the economic recovery of the country. As we continue to confront a public health and economic catastrophe that will soon have claimed the lives of more than 450,000 Americans exacerbated deep racial, gender, and economic inequities, it is vital that we include protections for immigrant workers to secure the health of our nation and lay the foundation for a robust and dynamic economic recovery.

An estimated five million¹ undocumented immigrants, including 202,500² DACA recipients and 131,300³ TPS holders, are serving our country everyday as essential workers. They are providing health care as doctors, nurses, and home health aides, and keeping health care settings safe and open as custodians, food servers, and administrative workers. They are protecting the nation's food security, from working on farms and food processing facilities, to working in grocery stores and restaurants. They are first responders, and they are teachers. Undocumented essential workers have stepped up to serve our country in a time of crisis and should be able to apply for U.S. citizenship. The inclusion of protections and a pathway to citizenship for undocumented essential workers and their families would boost economic output and increase average wages for all workers, while playing an important role in addressing the disproportionate impact that the pandemic has had on communities of color. According to President Obama's Council of Economic Advisers⁴, the President's 2014 executive actions providing lawful temporary status to five million immigrants would have boosted economic output in terms of GDP from \$90 billion to \$210 billion over ten years, and would have increased average wages of native-born workers by 0.1% over ten years.

The economic benefits from permanent protection are even more striking. A 2013 study by the Center for American Progress found that providing a path to citizenship for 11 million undocumented immigrants would increase cumulative U.S. Gross Domestic Product over 10 years

¹ <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/immigration/reports/2020/12/02/493307/protecting-undocumented-workers-pandemics-front-lines/>

² <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/immigration/news/2020/04/06/482708/demographic-profile-daca-recipients-frontlines-coronavirus-response/>

³ <https://www.americanprogress.org/press/release/2020/04/14/483197/release-130000-tps-holders-serving-essential-workers-coronavirus-crisis/>

⁴ https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/default/files/docs/economic_effects_of_immigration_ea_february_2015_update_final_v2.pdf

by as much as \$1.4 trillion⁵, cumulatively increase the income of all Americans by up to \$791 billion, and create as many as 203,000 jobs each year over that same period. A pathway to citizenship for undocumented essential workers would raise the wage floor and in turn benefit all workers, beyond direct beneficiaries. The inclusion of these protections is not just a necessity for economic recovery, it is an issue of economic and racial justice for communities that have been the most vulnerable⁶ to the crisis and left out in previous relief packages.

As you continue to work on assembling a COVID-19 reconciliation package and begin work on an economic recovery and jobs package, we urge you to include a pathway to citizenship for essential immigrant workers, Dreamers, and TPS holders, as well as their families, in order to ensure a robust recovery that is inclusive and equitable for all Americans regardless of their immigration status.

Sincerely,

Raul Ruiz, M.D.
Member of Congress

Lucille Roybal-Allard
Member of Congress

Linda T. Sánchez
Member of Congress

Rosa L. DeLauro
Member of Congress

Adam Smith
Member of Congress

Alice L. Hastings
Member of Congress

Andy Levin
Member of Congress

Ayanna Pressley
Member of Congress

Bennie G. Thompson
Member of Congress

Darren Soto
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Donald Norcross
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Earl Blumenauer
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Nydia M. Velázquez
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Cori Bush
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Doris Matsui
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Eleanor Holmes Norton
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Joaquin Castro
Member of Congress

Pramila Jayapal
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Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress

J. Luis Correa
Member of Congress

Alan Lowenthal
Member of Congress

André Carson
Member of Congress

Anthony G. Brown
Member of Congress

Bobby L. Rush
Member of Congress

Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress

Donald M. Payne, Jr.
Member of Congress

Dwight Evans
Member of Congress

Emanuel Cleaver, II
Member of Congress

⁵ <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/immigration/reports/2013/03/20/57351/the-economic-effects-of-granting-legal-status-and-citizenship-to-undocumented-immigrants/>

⁶ <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/race/news/2020/05/04/484339/workers-color-disproportionately-risk-serious-complications-coronavirus/>

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