

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 13, 2021

The Honorable Bernie Sanders
Chairman
Senate Committee on the Budget
624 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

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

Dear Chairman Sanders and Chairman Yarmuth,

We applaud your commitment to ensuring an equitable and robust economic recovery from the devastating effects of the coronavirus pandemic. As you develop the budget resolution for fiscal year 2022, we urge you to include bold reforms to our immigration system so that it meets the needs of the American people now and prepares us for a vibrant and economically prosperous future. While we continue to build broad support for the U.S. Citizenship Act, we stand ready to work with you to pass immigration reforms through the budget reconciliation process.

The economic benefits of immigration reform are significant and well-established.¹ Immigrants “boost the nation’s capacity for innovation, entrepreneurship, and technological change,” create about one-fourth of new businesses, and represent about one-fifth of the total labor force.² In 2013, the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) found that immigration reform would increase real Gross Domestic Product relative to current law projections by \$700 billion in 2023 and \$1.4 trillion in 2033.³

Unfortunately, our immigration laws have not been updated in more than 30 years. This has kept families apart for decades, limited our ability to attract and retain top talent, and forced millions to live their lives in a perpetual state of uncertainty. Approximately four million family-based immigrants and 1 million foreign workers and their family members are waiting in the immigrant visa backlog.⁴ An estimated 1.6 million U.S. citizens are married to an undocumented immigrant and 4.4 million U.S. citizen children have at least one undocumented parent, with no opportunity

¹ *The Economic and Fiscal Consequences of Immigration*, National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (2017), <https://doi.org/10.17226/23550>.

² *Id.*

³ *The Economic Impact of S. 744, the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act*, Congressional Budget Office (2013), <https://www.cbo.gov/publication/44346>.

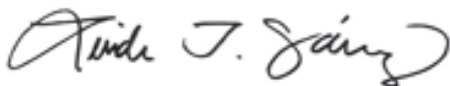
⁴ *Frequently Requested Statistics on Immigrants and Immigration in the United States*, Migration Policy Institute (2021), <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/frequently-requested-statistics-immigrants-and-immigration-united-states-2020#visa-backlog>.

for their loved ones to obtain the stability that comes with permanent resident status.⁵ Further, an estimated five million undocumented immigrants were essential workers during the COVID-19 pandemic.⁶ Updating our immigration system and creating an earned path to citizenship is essential to speeding our recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and ensuring a prosperous economic future for America. Toward this end, we strongly support investments in our immigration system to:

- Provide an opportunity for lawful permanent resident status (LPR) status and a path to citizenship for Dreamers and recipients of Temporary Protected Status (TPS) and Deferred Enforced Departure (DED);
- Provide an opportunity for LPR status and a path to citizenship for our nation's farmworkers who kept food on our tables throughout the pandemic, and other essential workers;
- Repeal the three- and ten-year unlawful presence bars to admissibility that have hindered family unification;
- Expand opportunities for family-based immigrants to reunite with their sponsoring family members in the United States while they wait for an immigrant visa;
- Update existing statutory provisions, such as registry (INA § 249), to provide long-term residents an opportunity to adjust to LPR status;
- Ease the pressure on the immigrant visa backlogs by recapturing unused immigrant visas, modifying the per-country caps, and creating new exemptions from the numerical limitations on visas for certain priority immigrants, such as essential workers or STEM graduates; and
- Invest in infrastructure and technology at ports of entry to improve border management and facilitate trade and travel.

Reforming our immigration system is long overdue, and we stand ready to use every legislative tool at our disposal to create an immigration system that reflects the needs of our country in the 21st century.

Sincerely,



Linda T. Sánchez
Member of Congress



Lucille Roybal-Allard
Member of Congress

⁵ *Unauthorized Immigrants in the United States*, Migration Policy Institute (2020), https://www.migrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/publications/mpi-unauthorized-immigrants-stablenumbers-changingorigins_final.pdf

⁶ *Protecting Undocumented Workers on the Pandemic's Front Lines*, Center for American Progress (2020), <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/immigration/reports/2020/12/02/493307/protecting-undocumented-workers-pandemics-front-lines/>



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CC: Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Majority Leader Chuck Schumer