

February 24, 2022

The Honorable Joseph Biden
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Biden,

We, the undersigned Hispanic civil rights organizations, write to urge you to delay no further in using your wide array of executive authorities to protect America's undocumented workers and their families. As we anticipate your State of the Union address and statements of unequivocal support for immigration reform, we wish to impress upon you the urgency to act and our expectation that your Administration will move forward alone, if needed, to protect our communities.

Our organizations, together with our members and affiliated community-based partners, reach millions of Hispanics contributing to the American fabric every day. For decades we have been on the frontlines advocating for the elimination of the systemic barriers that block Latinos from realizing their full potential and participating fully in the experiment that is America. Over this period, we are proud to have seen many gains for our community even as much work remains.

Mr. President, you campaigned on delivering lasting protections for immigrant families who have long been part of America's workforce and communities. We are frustrated that the much-needed immigration reforms that the nation and our communities need and deserve continue to evade us. It has been nearly 40 years since Congress passed consequential reforms to stabilize and regularize the status of many long-time undocumented residents living and contributing to the American economy and society from the shadows. The current impasse between your Administration and Congressional leaders on your Build Back Better Agenda – which contemplates relief for millions of undocumented individuals – has deepened frustrations and angst that the chance for transformative change is yet again slipping by – at a time when Democrats control key levers of power no less.

Immigration remains a top issue for millions of Latinos. Polls will correctly identify the pandemic response and the economy as top of mind for many Latinos, but focusing on topline, alone, could lead some to internalize the wrong types of assumptions about the community's relationship to immigration policy. Latinos' concerns about improving job quality, accessing affordable healthcare, and the availability of pandemic supports, are intricately tied to systemic barriers like a family member lacking immigration status or the threat of deportation. According to a Pew Research Center survey of Latino adults from this year, **4 in 10 Latinos worry that**

they or someone close to them could be deported. For many, the through-line between immigration status and concerns about jobs, healthcare access, and the pandemic cannot be separated.

Immigration is also deeply personal for Latinos. Of the **8 in 10 Latinos** living in America who is a U.S. citizen, the majority report knowing someone close to them who is undocumented. Our undocumented brothers and sisters are part of American families, who contribute to America in countless ways. Many are raising the next generation of Americans, indeed, **nearly 6 million U.S. citizens kids** (4.5 million thought to be Latino) reside with an undocumented parent or loved one.

As our organizations have long maintained, stabilizing immigrant workforces and their families is common sense and good for the nation. The current moment is a case in point: our nation is experiencing an unprecedented labor shortage — currently, **the U.S. has 11 million jobs open** that need hardworking and loyal employees. Immigration reforms will lay the foundation for an equitable economic recovery that includes a diverse labor force often taken for granted but deeply integrated into the U.S. economy. With enough workers across all sectors, businesses could address their supply chain challenges, better meet the demand for products and services, and control costs at a time when consumers are deeply concerned about surging prices.

Mr. President, we need action on meaningful immigration reforms this year. We are entering the 3rd year of the pandemic, which has wrought disproportionate health and economics impact on Latinos and communities of color. Meanwhile our communities continue to be overrepresented in the essential workforce, fueling America's recovery. And, while we expect that your Administration will continue to work with Congress on a legislative solution, we can't wait any longer.

We are counting on you to use all the tools in your executive authority toolbox to provide meaningful immigration relief for long-time undocumented Americans. For us, this means centering protections from deportation while providing these individuals the opportunity to live and work lawfully in our great country. At a minimum, we urge you to consider: (a) using your Temporary Protected Status and/or Deferred Enforced Departure authorities to protect nationals from certain Central American and other countries living in the U.S. who cannot safely return; (b) meaningfully strengthen and modernize the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals policy; and (c) exercising your parole or other authorities to stabilize a key component of the essential workforce that is helping America respond to the pandemic.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We have appreciated the open lines of communication between your administration and leaders of Hispanic communities, including most recently our chance to engage you over 6 months ago on these and other issues important to Latinos.

We look forward to resuming this dialog with you soon.

Sincerely,



cc: Ron Klain, Chief of Staff to the President
Ambassador Susan Rice, Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy
Jake Sullivan, National Security Advisor