

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

August 10, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Schumer, Speaker Pelosi, and Minority Leader McCarthy:

As you continue to negotiate the next bill to address the COVID-19 pandemic, we urge you to ensure that the final legislation provides critical protections and support for immigrants and their families. Since the passage of the CARES Act (P.L. 116-136), it's even more clear that immigrants are helping our nation survive. We urge you to follow the roadmap created by the Coronavirus Immigrant Families Protection Act (H.R. 6437) to truly meet the needs of immigrant families at this critical moment, and we thank leadership in the House for the passage of the Heroes Act (H.R. 6800), which includes many vital immigration provisions.

Simply put, immigrants are essential. While these workers have kept the nation fed and cared for, many make low wages and lack health insurance at a time when health care is more important than ever. And in addition to essential work under difficult working conditions, immigrant communities and communities of color have been disproportionately affected by the spread and detrimental health impacts of COVID-19.

With unemployment rates over 11 percent -- higher than they were during the Great Recession -- and with more than 1 in 6 households with children experiencing hunger, the need for financial support is urgent. The CARES Act excluded from stimulus payments any family that had an Individual Tax Identification Number (ITIN) taxpayer. The exclusion of immigrant families from economic stimulus payments is deeply unjust and resulted in millions of U.S. citizen spouses and children being denied the relief they desperately need. All families including those with Individual Tax Identification Number (ITIN) taxpayers must be eligible for financial assistance.

As a relief bill is negotiated, we also urge you to support the availability of COVID-19 testing, treatment, and vaccines, and to ensure that everyone has adequate access to these health care services, regardless of immigration status. Congress expanded COVID-19 testing through Medicaid for the uninsured in prior coronavirus relief legislation. We also ask that in any subsequent coronavirus relief legislation, you ensure that all low-income communities, including immigrants, can access Medicaid-funded COVID-19-related medical care such as treatment and

vaccines, alongside coverage for testing. In addition, many essential workers, including healthcare workers, are DACA or TPS holders. These frontline workers who are risking their lives to save others must be able to maintain their work authorization and access key coronavirus relief measures. Since the enactment of the CARES Act and the House passage of the Heroes Act, the Department of Homeland Security has taken steps to dismantle DACA, even after the U.S. Supreme Court ordered the agency to reinstate the program in June. The litigation impacting the fate of many TPS recipients also hangs in the balance with a federal court decision expected soon. No one should have to worry about losing their immigration status, especially in the middle of a pandemic.

Finally, immigration enforcement during the pandemic, including the continued use of detention and new immigration raids and arrests, serves only to place immigrants, their families, and communities at increased risk of COVID-19. As months have passed during this pandemic, the rapid spread of COVID-19 in custodial settings and the risk to those in detention has become clear. Congress should require U.S. Immigration & Customs Enforcement (ICE) to prioritize detainees for release. Congress must also ensure that immigration enforcement is not funded by any coronavirus relief package and must maintain safeguards to prevent the administration from transferring or reprogramming funds related to COVID-19 for the purposes of immigration enforcement.

We appreciate your continued leadership in these negotiations and urge you to continue fighting for immigrant families, so they have what they need to survive this pandemic. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



/s/ Judy Chu
Member of Congress

/s/ Grace F. Napolitano
Member of Congress

/s/ Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
Member of Congress

/s/ Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress

/s/ Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress

/s/ Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress

/s/ Rashida Tlaib
Member of Congress

/s/ Mark Takano
Member of Congress

/s/ Bonnie Watson-Coleman
Member of Congress

/s/ Nanette Diaz Barragán
Member of Congress

/s/ Bill Foster
Member of Congress

/s/ Mark Pocan
Member of Congress

/s/ Jerry McNerney
Member of Congress

/s/ Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress

/s/ Tony Cárdenas
Member of Congress

/s/ Jesus G. "Chuy" Garcia
Member of Congress

/s/ Jimmy Panette
Member of Congress

/s/ Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress

/s/ Adam Smith
Member of Congress

/s/ James P. McGovern
Member of Congress

/s/ Ayanna Pressley
Member of Congress

/s/ Peter Welch
Member of Congress

/s/ Bobby L. Rush
Member of Congress

/s/ Albio Sires
Member of Congress

/s/ Donald S. Beyer Jr.

Member of Congress

/s/ Ruben Gallego
Member of Congress

/s/ David E. Price
Member of Congress

/s/ Anthony G. Brown
Member of Congress

/s/ Karen Bass
Member of Congress

/s/ Joseph P. Kennedy, III
Member of Congress

/s/ Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress

/s/ Henry C. "Hank" Johnson
Member of Congress

/s/ José E. Serrano
Member of Congress

/s/ Barbara Lee
Member of Congress

/s/ Adriano Espaillat
Member of Congress

/s/ Juan Vargas
Member of Congress

/s/ Thomas R Suozzi
Member of Congress

/s/ Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress

/s/ Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress

/s/ Jason Crow

Member of Congress

/s/ Joaquin Castro
Member of Congress

/s/ Lloyd Doggett
Member of Congress

/s/ Mark DeSaulnier
Member of Congress

/s/ Lucille Roybal-Allard
Member of Congress

/s/ Mike Quigley
Member of Congress

/s/ Ilhan Omar
Member of Congress

/s/ Darren Soto
Member of Congress

/s/ Suzan Delbene
Member of Congress

/s/ Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress

/s/ Rosa L. DeLauro
Member of Congress

/s/ Dina Titus
Member of Congress

/s/ David N. Cicilline
Member of Congress

/s/ David Trone
Member of Congress

/s/ Ann Kirkpatrick
Member of Congress

/s/ J. Luis Correa

Member of congress

/s/ Jahanna Hayes
Member of Congress

/s/ Filemon Vela
Member of Congress

/s/ Lisa Blunt Rochester
Member of Congress

/s/ Frederica S. Wilson
Member of Congress

/s/ Eliot Engel
Member of Congress

/s/ Alan Lowenthal
Member of Congress

/s/ Denny Heck
Member of Congress

/s/ Deb Haaland
Member of Congress

/s/ Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress

/s/ Lori Trahan
Member of Congress

/s/ Sylvia R. Garcia
Member of Congress

/s/ Veronica Escobar
Member of Congress

/s/ Jimmy Gomez
Member of Congress
/s/ Donald M. Payne, Jr.
Member of Congress

/s/ Marcy Kaptur
Member of Congress

/s/ Al Green
Member of Congress

/s/ Terri A. Sewell
Member of Congress

/s/ Ro Khanna
Member of Congress

/s/ Norma J. Torres
Member of Congress

/s/ Grace Meng
Member of Congress