



THE CITIZENSHIP FOR ESSENTIAL WORKERS ACT

Topline: The Citizenship for Essential Workers Act provides undocumented essential workers with a fast, accessible, and secure path to citizenship, beginning with immediate adjustment of status to legal permanent resident. This legislation is a critical part of a just and inclusive COVID-19 recovery.

WHO ARE UNDOCUMENTED ESSENTIAL WORKERS?

- There are 5.2 million undocumented immigrants working in jobs that have been designated essential during the COVID-19 pandemic. This accounts for **almost 3 out of 4 undocumented workers in the United States.**
- From janitors cleaning hospital floors, to farm workers picking America's crops, to EMTs and nurses saving lives, undocumented essential workers have done the jobs that can't be done remotely - putting their lives on the line so other Americans would not have to.
- As a result of their high rates of exposure, **immigrant essential workers and their families have borne high costs, being likelier to contract and die from COVID-19** which contributes to the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on communities of color.
- Of the approximately 5 million undocumented essential workers, around 1 million would be defined as "Dreamers" under the American Dream and Promise Act, with many holding DACA status. The other 4 million plus undocumented essential workers largely lack any protection from deportation, meaning **a worker deemed essential today could be deported tomorrow.**
- In addition to helping Americans stay healthy and fed during the COVID-19 crisis, **undocumented essential workers are also an engine of economic prosperity.** Undocumented workers contribute up to \$79.7 billion in federal taxes annually and \$41 billion in state and local tax contributions across the nation.

SOURCES:

[1] <https://www.fwd.us/news/immigrant-essential-workers/>

[2] <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7241973/>

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

WHAT DOES THE CITIZENSHIP FOR ESSENTIAL WORKERS ACT DO?

- Adjustment of Status to Legal Permanent Resident under the Citizenship for Essential Workers Act is **open to any non-citizen worker in the sectors of:**
 - Health care
 - Agriculture
 - Construction
 - Emergency response
 - Sanitation
 - Food
 - Restaurants
 - Hotels and hospitality
 - Meat, fish, and poultry processing
 - Domestic work
 - Childcare
 - Disaster recovery
 - Home health and residential care
 - Manufacturing
 - Warehousing
 - Transportation and logistics
 - Janitorial
 - Laundry services
 - Any other worker deemed essential by the Department of Homeland Security or state or local government.
- The Citizenship for Essential Workers Act **will also include undocumented workers who worked in essential industries but lost employment** due to COVID-19, including leaving the job due to unsafe working conditions, **as well as undocumented relatives of an essential worker who died from COVID-19.**
- Applicants for adjustment of status will be required to pay a reasonable fee and go through a background check. **All information provided or disclosed in an application for this act may not be used for enforcement purposes.**
- The Citizenship for Essential Workers Act also **aims to preserve family unity**, allowing the Secretary of DHS or the Attorney General to waive one or more grounds of inadmissibility and deportability. The legislation also repeals the three- and ten-year bars for re-entry into the United States.

WHY SUPPORT THE CITIZENSHIP FOR ESSENTIAL WORKERS ACT?

- Undocumented workers have been essential during the pandemic and will be just as essential during the recovery. Over 60 top economists recently made that case in a letter urging the Biden administration to include a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants as part of COVID-19 relief, pointing that **such a policy would increase prosperity and reduce poverty for all Americans.**
- This legislation is **the broadest stand-alone pathway to citizenship** proposed by Congress for any specific group of immigrant workers and **can be part of a broader COVID-19 relief and economic recovery package.**

SOURCES:

[4] <https://www.fwd.us/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Economists-Letter-on-Legalization-and-Recovery.pdf>

GROUPS IN SUPPORT OF THE CITIZENSHIP FOR ESSENTIAL WORKERS ACT:

- CASA
- BROCKTON INTERFAITH COMMUNITY (MA)
- COALITION FOR HUMANE IMMIGRANT RIGHTS (CHIRLA)
- CONGREGATION ACTION NETWORK (DC, MD, VA)
- CONGREGATIONS RISING ARIZONA ORGANIZING NEIGHBORHOODS
- ESSEX COUNTY COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION
- FAITH IN ACTION (NATIONAL)
- FAITH IN ACTION BAY AREA
- FAITH IN ACTION NEVADA
- FAITH IN FLORIDA
- FAITH IN INDIANA
- FAITH IN NEW JERSEY
- FAITH IN NEW YORK
- FAITH IN THE VALLEY (CA)
- FWD.US
- GRANITE STATE ORGANIZING PROJECT (NH)
- IMMIGRATION HUB
- INDIVISIBLE
- L.A. VOICE (CA)
- LA RED/ FAITH IN ACTION (NATIONAL)
- MAKE THE ROAD CONNECTICUT
- MAKE THE ROAD NEVADA
- MAKE THE ROAD NEW JERSEY
- MAKE THE ROAD NEW YORK
- MAKE THE ROAD PENNSYLVANIA
- MASSACHUSETTS COMMUNITIES ACTION NETWORK
- MISSOURI FAITH VOICES
- NATIONAL DOMESTIC WORKERS ALLIANCE (NDWA)
- NATIONAL IMMIGRANT JUSTICE CENTER (NIJC)
- NATIONAL IMMIGRATION LAW CENTER (NILC)
- NM COMUNIDADES EN ACCIÓN Y DE FÉ
- ORANGE COUNTY CONGREGATION COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION (CA)
- PICO CALIFORNIA
- POWER INTERFAITH (PA)
- RESILIENCE FORCE
- SAN DIEGO ORGANIZING PROJECT (CA)
- TOGETHER COLORADO
- UFW FOUNDATION
- UNIDOSUS
- UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISTS FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE
- UNITED FARM WORKERS (UFW)
- UNITED INTERFAITH ACTION OF SOUTHEASTERN (MA)
- VERMONT INTERFAITH ACTION (VT)

