

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

April 16, 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 Congress responds to the critical needs of our country during the COVID-19 pandemic, we urge you to ensure that the vital protections and economic lifelines provided in coronavirus relief legislation are accessible to all communities, regardless of immigration status or limited English proficiency. COVID-19 has caused one of the greatest public health and economic crises our Nation has ever faced, and it requires a whole-of-society approach. A response that leaves out immigrants—many of whom are on the front lines in our fight against COVID-19—will be ineffective and detrimental to our efforts to stop this pandemic.

As the COVID-19 outbreak is challenging our already-strained medical system, we must keep in mind that immigrants make up a disproportionate share of nurses, home health aides, and health care facility workers. Nearly 1.7 million immigrants work in the health care industry. There are 29,000 DACA recipients who are health care workers, while another 12,700 DACA recipients support the health care industry in crucial roles such as custodians and administrators. In addition, there are 11,600 Temporary Protected Status (TPS) holders who are health care workers. Therefore, it is vital that Congress ensures that immigrant workers, including these frontline workers who are risking their lives to save others, are able to maintain their work authorization and access key coronavirus relief measures.

Moreover, during a time when more than ninety percent of Americans, as of April 8, have been ordered to stay at home except to get essential services, we are relying on farmworkers, grocery store workers, and other essential service providers to meet our basic needs. Many of these indispensable workers are immigrants who face additional vulnerabilities such as low incomes and lack of health insurance coverage. As these workers endure the challenges of this pandemic to provide for our critical needs, we request that you extend the coronavirus cash assistance Congress provided in the CARES Act to include immigrant families who file taxes with an Individual Tax Identification Number (ITIN). In 2015 alone, 4.35 million people paid more than \$13.7 billion in net taxes using an ITIN, according to the American Immigration Council. By

excluding ITIN filers and their family members from access to cash payments, spouses and children in mixed-status immigrant families will be denied critical economic support, including 5.1 million children, the vast majority of whom are U.S. citizens.

As Congress is taking bold steps to provide coverage of COVID-19 testing, treatment, and vaccines, it must 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 ask for additional clarity to ensure that all uninsured individuals, including immigrants, may qualify. 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.

We further request that you modify immigration policies that deter immigrant families from obtaining the medical care they need during this public health emergency, such as the public charge rule and immigration enforcement actions around sensitive locations. Despite U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services' announcement that those obtaining COVID-19 testing or treatment will not be penalized under the public charge rule, the rule continues to have a widespread chilling effect. It has discouraged even those not subject to the rule, including U.S. citizens and legal permanent residents, from getting the health care and essential services they need due to fear and confusion about the rule's impact. Suspending the public charge rule and immigration enforcement actions around sensitive locations, such as hospitals, COVID-19 testing sites, domestic violence shelters, food banks, and sites providing food and nutrition services for women, infants, and children, would help ensure that vulnerable populations are able to access critical coronavirus services.

Accordingly, we strongly urge you to build on the critical steps Congress has taken to protect families and workers in prior coronavirus relief packages by including the above-mentioned common sense measures in the upcoming relief legislation. We also ask that you provide robust funding for government agencies and community based-organizations to provide information about these coronavirus services in at least the languages described as most encountered in the 2016 FEMA Language Access Plan. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator

/s/ Kamala D. Harris
United States Senator



Judy Chu
United States Representative

/s/ Edward J. Markey
United States Senator

/s/ Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator

/s/ Tim Kaine
United States Senator

/s/ Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator

/s/ Jacky Rosen
United States Senator

/s/ Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator

/s/ Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator

/s/ Bernard Sanders
United States Senator

/s/ Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator

/s/ Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator

/s/ Cory A. Booker
United States Senator

/s/ Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator

/s/ Ron Wyden
United States Senator

/s/ Robert P. Casey Jr.
United States Senator

/s/ Jack Reed
United States Senator

/s/ Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator

/s/ Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator

/s/ Robert Menendez
United States Senator

/s/ Tom Udall
United States Senator

/s/ Brian Schatz
United States Senator

/s/ Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator

/s/ Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator

/s/ Martin Heinrich
United States Senator

/s/ Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator

/s/ Sherrod Brown
United States Senator

/s/ Thomas R. Carper
United States Senator

/s/ J. Luis Correa
Member of Congress

/s/ Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress

/s/ James P. McGovern
Member of Congress

/s/ Jesús G. "Chuy" García
Member of Congress

/s/ Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress

/s/ Grace Napolitano
Member of Congress

/s/ Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress

/s/ Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress

/s/ Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress

/s/ Barbara Lee
Member of Congress

/s/ Jahana Hayes
Member of Congress

/s/ Ilhan Omar
Member of Congress

/s/ Peter Welch
Member of Congress

/s/ Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress

/s/ Alan Lowenthal
Member of Congress

/s/ Rashida Tlaib
Member of Congress

/s/ Frederica Wilson
Member of Congress

/s/ Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress

/s/ Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress

/s/ Ayanna Pressley
Member of Congress

/s/ Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
Member of Congress

/s/ Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress

/s/ Terri Sewell
Member of Congress

/s/ Ruben Gallego
Member of Congress

/s/ Sylvia R. Garcia
Member of Congress

/s/ Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress

/s/ Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress

/s/ Ted Deutch
Member of Congress

/s/ Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress

/s/ Bobby L. Rush
Member of Congress

/s/ Jason Crow
Member of Congress

/s/ Bill Foster
Member of Congress

/s/ John B. Larson
Member of Congress

/s/ Steven Horsford
Member of Congress

/s/ Henry C. “Hank” Johnson, Jr.
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/s/ Ed Perlmutter
Member of Congress

/s/ Dina Titus
Member of Congress

/s/ Darren Soto
Member of Congress

/s/ Mark Pocan
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/s/ Mark Takano
Member of Congress

/s/ Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan
Member of Congress

/s/ Adam Smith
Member of Congress

/s/ Ted W. Lieu
Member of Congress

/s/ Joaquin Castro
Member of Congress

/s/ David N. Cicilline
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/s/ Joseph P. Kennedy
Member of Congress

/s/ Adriano Espaillat
Member of Congress

/s/ Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress

/s/ Kathy Castor
Member of Congress

/s/ Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress

/s/ Al Green
Member of Congress

/s/ Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress

/s/ Thomas R. Suozzi
Member of Congress

/s/ TJ Cox
Member of Congress

/s/ Mike Thompson
Member of Congress

/s/ Grace Meng
Member of Congress

/s/ Ro Khanna
Member of Congress

/s/ Gilbert R. Cisneros Jr.
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/s/ Doris O. Matsui
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/s/ Rosa L. DeLauro
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/s/ Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.
Member of Congress

/s/ Linda T. Sánchez
Member of Congress

/s/ Jerry McNerney
Member of Congress

/s/ Jackie Speier
Member of Congress

/s/ Jim Langevin
Member of Congress

/s/ Deb Haaland
Member of Congress

/s/ Bennie G. Thompson
Member of Congress

/s/ José E. Serrano
Member of Congress

/s/ Jared Huffman
Member of Congress

/s/ Lucille Roybal-Allard
Member of Congress

/s/ Karen Bass
Member of Congress

/s/ Nanette Diaz Barragán
Member of Congress

/s/ Tony Cárdenas
Member of Congress

/s/ Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress

/s/ Juan Vargas
Member of Congress