

## ***Write Here! Write Now!***

**Contact:** [advocacy@uusj.org](mailto:advocacy@uusj.org) or 202.600.9132

**Delivery of Letters - Organizers:** All Letters due by June 10, 2021

Try doing an individual letter online [HERE](#) or submit letters [Submission Form \(upload\)](#)

**Email by Thursday**, June 10 by 6 pm ET to [advocacy@uusj.org](mailto:advocacy@uusj.org).

**Mail to:** UUSJ c/o Paulette DeMers, 1530 1st Ave N #303, Moorhead MN 56560

### **Tell Your Senators to Support Pathways to Citizenship for Essential Workers, Dreamers and TPS Holders**

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**Why Are We Writing?** We have a rare moment to urge passage of legislation that will treat hard-working, tax-paying undocumented immigrants equitably and compassionately. Several bills put forward strive to do so, but all face challenges to become law. One principle runs throughout -- the need for real and viable pathways to citizenship.

**Why now?** After years of cruel treatment, immigrants who have lived, worked and contributed to America now have a window of opportunity through several bills to gain needed pathways to citizenship. These workers deserve the same rights as US citizens.

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**Background:** We seek permanent protection and a path to citizenship for the undocumented immigrants who have long contributed to this country economically and socially, particularly Dreamers, Temporary Protected Status (TPS) holders, and those essential workers on the frontlines during this pandemic and their families. An estimated 5 million undocumented individuals—nearly 3 in 4 of all undocumented immigrants in the workforce—are working every day alongside other Americans in essential roles as doctors, nurses, and home health aides, custodians, food servers, and administrative workers. They protect the nation's food security in farms, food processing facilities, grocery stores and restaurants. They are first responders and teachers. These workers have stepped up for our country and put their lives—and the lives of their loved ones—on the line when we needed them most. They will play an equally critical role in rebuilding our economy and our country in the years ahead. But even as they have continued to perform essential work, they have often been left out of the relief packages and treated as an afterthought in vaccine programs.

The Biden proposal for comprehensive immigration reform (US Citizenship Act) provides for an earned roadmap to citizenship for 11 million undocumented immigrants, including over 700,000 Dreamers who are DACA holders and over 300,000 Temporary Protected Status holders (TPS). The bill includes much more, but is not progressing in Congress. Meanwhile, the House has passed the Dream and Promise Act (HR 6) and Farm Workforce Modernization Act (HR 1603) to offer legalization for DACA, TPS and farm workers, sending the bills to the Senate, which has referred them to the Judiciary Committee. HR 6 has been separated into a DREAM Act (S 264) and SECURE Act (for TPS, S 306). A proposed Citizenship for Essential Workers Act has been introduced in both the House and the Senate. But passage of any except the DREAM Act will be challenging. Advocates are urging that the Senate consider incorporating legalization of essential workers as part of the infrastructure and jobs bill, which if passed through the reconciliation process, could be approved with 51 votes. We will advocate for earned pathways to citizenship for as many of the 11 million undocumented immigrants as can be supported through any of these bills and strategies.

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**UU Grounding:** Our UU faith affirms the worth and dignity of all people and calls for justice, equity and compassion in human relations. UUs have long advocated for fair and humane immigration reform of our nation's laws.

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**Key Message:** Our country has failed to live up to what should be the most fundamental lesson of this past year -- that we can only beat this virus and rebuild our economy if we work together. That includes treating our fellow community members equitably, regardless of citizenship status.

**Ask:** We ask the Senate to pass legislation -- in whatever way is strategically possible -- that provides for expedited pathways to citizenship for DACA and TPS holders, farm workers and all other essential workers as well as their families who have helped Americans survive this pandemic.

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### Suggested Talking Points

*(use your own examples, tell your story, and/or draw on some of these suggested points)*

- These undocumented immigrants are contributing members of our community, living and working here, adding to our diversity, paying billions in taxes, putting billions in our economy.
  - Many have family members -- spouses and children -- who are US citizens. The uncertainty with which they live and the inequitable treatment (lack of access to services and education) they suffer is unjust. The risk of family separation through deportation is cruel.
  - It is past time to recognize their critical role in keeping America healthy, fed, housed and educated during the pandemic -- at risk to themselves and their families -- by offering lawful permanent residence and citizenship if they meet basic, fair criteria.
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### Sample Letter to Your Senators

*[Use your own words. Speak from your heart -- this is only a sample letter. Follow the link below to see if your senators are co-sponsors of any of the bills, if yes thank the senator.]*

*[Today's date]*

Dear Senator \_\_\_\_\_, *[write to both of your Senators]*

I'm a Unitarian Universalist from *[optional: name of congregation and location]*, and supporter of the Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice. A fundamental principle of our faith is respect for the worth and dignity of all persons and justice, equity and compassion in human relations.

I urge you to take action to pass legislation enabling essential workers, Dreamers and Temporary Protected Status holders to earn lawful permanent residence and eventually citizenship.

*[To support the message include in your own words a personal experience, a story, or concern relating to the importance of immigrants in our health, education, services, retail, food and manufacturing industries. Or use a talking point from above to adapt.]* As the Senate considers the upcoming infrastructure and jobs package, please include relief which recognizes the contribution of undocumented essential workers including offering a roadmap to citizenship.

*[adapt a closing such as ... I look forward to hearing about your plans to enable Dreamers, TPS holders and essential workers to gain equitable, compassionate treatment through pathways to lawful status]*

Sincerely, *[YOUR NAME and include your COMPLETE ADDRESS]*

**(See other side for Why We Are Writing, Background, UU Grounding, and Instructions for Delivering Letters)**