Federal Update

President Biden’s Address to Congress and First 100 Days

Highlights

● President Biden sends a comprehensive immigration reform bill to Congress on Day 1, which we know as the U.S. Citizenship Act of 2021.

● President Biden pro-immigrant executive action since taking office:
  ○ Interior enforcement: Implementation of changed enforcement guidelines for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), narrowing the categories of removable noncitizens for arrest and removal, may be the administration’s.
  ○ Public Charge: Reversed the Trump public charge rule, which subjected green-card applicants and those renewing temporary visas to a forward-looking “wealth test.”
  ○ USCIS Fees: Rollback an increase on citizenship and immigration applications, including asylum.
  ○ DACA: Directed DHS and DOJ to provide recommendations to improve and potentially expand this program

Lowlights

○ We urge the administration to repeal Title 42, which is being used to expel immigrants at the border; to-date 302,072 deportations have occurred under this rule.

○ We are a nation of immigrants and we urge this Administration to fulfill its commitment to increase the refugee caps.

Immigration Hearings in the House

● CHIRLA submitted a statement for the record as part of the April 27, 2021 hearing by the House Committee on Homeland Security, Subcommittee on Border Security, Facilitation, and Operations titled “Unaccompanied Children at the Border: Stakeholder Perspectives on the Way Forward”

● CHIRLA submitted a statement for the record as part of the April 28, 2021 hearing by the House Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee of Immigration and Citizenship, titled “Why Don’t They Just Get In Line’ Barriers to Legal Immigration.”

● Next week on May 12, the Senate Judiciary Committee’s Subcommittee on Immigration, Citizenship, and Border Safety, chaired by U.S. Senator Alex Padilla (D-CA) will hold a hearing on immigrant essential workers. As the Judiciary Committee is the first stop for most immigration bills, this is an important first step.
Immigration Relief via Budget Reconciliation

In a CHIRLA-led organizational letter, 150 California organizations urged President Biden and Vice President Harris to embrace legalization for all 11 million undocumented immigrants. As highlighted in a new report by the Congressional Hispanic Caucus and the U.S. Congress Joint Economic Committee, a pathway to citizenship would boost our economy, create jobs, and uphold our values.

Advocacy Weeks of Action

Value Our Families Campaign

Here are our key asks:

- Include clearing the family-based and employment-based green card backlogs in their individual member requests to appropriators.
- Support an inclusive path to citizenship for the 11 million undocumented immigrants, DACA recipients/Dreamers & Temporary Protected Status holders.
- Support/cosponsor the following bills:
  2. Dream Act of 2021 which would allow immigrant youth without lawful status who were brought here as children to earn lawful permanent residence and eventually American citizenship; sponsors: Senator Lindsey Graham (SC) Senator Dick Durbin (IL); SECURE Act of 2021 which would allow qualified TPS recipients to apply for legal permanent residency; sponsor: Senator Van Hollen (MD), Carden (MD) and Shumer (NY). Urge passage of both bills in the Senate.
  3. Guaranteed Refugee Ceiling Enhancement Act of 2021 (GRACE Act) which would set a minimum floor for the annual refugee admissions goal ("Presidential Determination") at 125,000. The bill would also ensure that the administration treats the Presidential Determination as a goal to reach and would help facilitate congressional oversight over the administration’s operations of the resettlement program. Senate sponsor: Senator Ed Markey (MA). House sponsor: Rep. Zoe Lofgren (CA).

Other important legislation

- The NO BAN Act (H.R.1333), introduced by Representative Judy Chu (CA 29), would ensure that no future President or administration has the power to institute another
Muslim ban or any other discriminatory ban on the basis of religion. **Status:** On April 21, the bill passed the House of Representatives with bipartisan support.

- The **Access to Counsel Act (H.R.1573)**, introduced by Representative Pramila Jayapal (WA 7), would ensure that U.S. citizens, green card holders, and others with legal status are able to consult with an attorney to help them understand their rights when going through the inspection process at borders and ports-of-entry. **Status:** On April 21, the bill passed the House of Representatives.