



# The Biden-Harris Immigration Agenda Matters for Kids

The Biden-Harris Administration's first weeks in office started with strong first steps on immigration and COVID relief. These measures will help children in immigrant families after four dark years of policies that harmed them. Below are talking points on some of the key policy changes and their implications for children in immigrant families.

## On DACA:

- The executive order to preserve and strengthen the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, will grant the over 1 million individuals who are DACA recipients or DACA eligible with the security to live and work in the United States without fear of deportation.
- For the 1 in 4 DACA recipients who are parents of U.S. citizen children, this executive order acts as an important first step on the way to a permanent pathway to citizenship and long-term stability for their families.
- We urge Congress to pass inclusive legislation that puts DACA recipients and all undocumented immigrants on a path to citizenship. This would stabilize families, reduce anxiety in children, and treat immigrants with the dignity they deserve.

## On the Census:

- The Biden Administration will close out the 2020 Census with integrity, not politics. They have confirmed that the Census will count everyone present in the United States, regardless of immigration status.
- Children are already one of the most undercounted populations each Census, and the efforts to exclude noncitizens would disproportionately impact children in immigrant families.
- An accurate count will ensure that children in immigrant families are receiving the resources they need to thrive.
- We urge the Administration to strengthen the integrity of the Census by working to build back trust with immigrant families, acknowledging their value and contributions rather than scapegoating and rejecting them.

## On the Muslim and African Bans:

- The Biden Administration ended the Muslim and African bans, which barred over 40,000 people from entering the United States from over a dozen countries.
- This discriminatory and racist policy will no longer act as a barrier to families seeking to reunify or visit one another.

- We urge Congress to strengthen the law, so that no future administration can discriminate against people based on their race, religion, or country of origin.

## **On Migrant Protection Protocols and Zero Tolerance Policy:**

- The Department of Homeland Security is ending the harmful Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP), or “Remain in Mexico” policy, which turned away thousands of children and families seeking safety in the United States.
- MPP is responsible for the deaths of children who were turned away from the United States during their time of need and pushed into danger. The end of this rule means that children and families will no longer be rejected for seeking safety.
- The Department of Justice rescinded the so-called Zero Tolerance policy that further criminalized immigrants seeking safety in the United States, and separated thousands of children from their parents.
- Hundreds or more children remain separated from their family members to this day because of this policy and should be reunited immediately.
- We urge Congress to codify the rejection of these policies into law, so no future administration can enact them, and to further decriminalize entering the United States.
- We also urge the Administration to center the wellbeing of children in the U.S. asylum process, including by preserving family unity with parents, siblings, grandparents, and other family members and caregivers.

## **On Immigration Enforcement:**

- The Biden Administration announced multiple changes to immigration enforcement on day one of the new administration that allow immigrant families across the country to sleep easier, including limiting deportations so that fewer children and families will be torn apart.
- The Biden Administration also announced a 100-day moratorium on deportations. While that decision currently faces legal challenges, the rest of the memo remains in place and, if followed, should dramatically curtail deportations from the United States and protect families with children.
- Over 5 million children in the United States have at least one undocumented parent. Immigration enforcement, or even the threat of it, has serious short and long-term effects on the mental and physical development of these children.
- Immigration enforcement also disproportionately harms Black immigrants and their children. Black immigrants are more likely to be detained, often for longer periods of time, and forced to pay high bonds to achieve their freedom.
- As the administration reviews its existing policies, we urge them to take into account the impact immigration enforcement has on children and change policies to center family unity and racial justice. Allowing deported parents to return to their children is a necessary step as our country attempts to heal and grow stronger.

## **On the Path to Citizenship:**

- The U.S. Citizenship Act of 2021, announced by President Biden, is a bold and vital proposal to ensure immigrants have a just pathway to citizenship.
- Under this legislation, undocumented immigrants would be eligible for five years of temporary legal status before applying for a green card. Dreamers, TPS recipients, and farmworkers could apply for green cards immediately and become eligible for citizenship after three years.
- Over 5 million children in the United States have a parent who is undocumented or a DACA or TPS recipient. This legislation gives these children the security they need to grow up without fear.
- We urge Congress to take swift action to pass new immigration laws that recognize immigrants' contributions and prioritize the wellbeing of all children. Such reforms must also ensure immigrants and their children can access social supports they need to thrive, regardless of where they are on the path to citizenship.