

For Immediate Release: December 7, 2021

CONTACT: ivonne.rodriquez@maketheroadstates.org

Reps. Ocasio-Cortez, Espaillat, Meng, Correa, García, and Others Joined Impacted Immigrants to Urge Senate to Include a Pathway to Citizenship in BBB

A livestream of the press conference can be found [here](#).

Washington, DC - Earlier today, Representatives Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (NY-14), Adriano Espaillat (NY-13), Grace Meng (NY-06), Lou Correa (CA-46), Jesús “Chuy” García (IL-04), Dina Titus (NV-01), Mondaire Jones (D-NY), Tony Cárdenas (CA-29), Jimmy Gomez (CA-34), Jamaal Bowman (D-NY), Mark Takano (CA-41), and Ro Khanna (CA-17) joined scores of immigrant rights leaders for a press conference to call on the Senate to include a pathway to citizenship in the Build Back Better Act.

Currently, the proposed immigration provisions in the Build Back Better Act only provide temporary relief to undocumented immigrants, not a pathway to citizenship. A path to citizenship for millions of DACA and TPS holders, and other essential workers, is critical to America’s recovery and would strengthen this country’s economy.

Those gathered went in depth about the urgent need for permanent solutions for millions of people. Directly impacted community members from Make the Road New York, Minkwon Center, the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights, HANA Center, Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, and Make the Road Nevada also shared their stories.

“Throughout these past few months, Bronx and Queens families, as well as our grassroots immigrant advocates, have been united and unfaltering in their message: Democrats promised a pathway to citizenship, and we must deliver one,” **said Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez**. “As the Build Back Better Act heads to the Senate, we must fight to ensure that we do not squander this once-in-a-generation opportunity. The Senate must establish a pathway to citizenship and finally provide Dreamers, TPS holders, farm workers, and essential workers with the stability and equal recognition they deserve.”

“We’ve fought tirelessly to ensure immigrant communities in New York City – and around the nation – were not left behind once more,” **said Congressman Adriano Espaillat**. “Following House passage of the Build Back Better Act, we now urge our colleagues in the Senate to further this work by reinstating a pathway to citizenship for the millions of Dreamers, TPS holders, farm workers, and essential workers who are counting on us to deliver on our promise. If our nation is to fully recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, we must provide comprehensive reform – and a pathway to citizenship – to ensure our immigrant communities are unequivocally included in our relief efforts. We must not abandon the immigrant communities that helped our nation during the height of the pandemic – and that’s why we’re calling on the Senate to act now.”

“The House passed version of the Build Back Better Act delivered urgently needed relief to undocumented immigrants, but fell short of the pathway to citizenship that I’ve been fighting for and that immigrants deserve. Last month, we sent a letter calling on Senate leadership to include a pathway to citizenship for all who deserve to call the country they live in home,” **said**

Congressman Jesús “Chuy” García. “The immigrant communities I represent in Chicago deserve the certainty that comes with an earned pathway to a green card and citizenship – anything less would be a moral failure. Senate Democrats must find the courage to include a pathway to citizenship for all in the Build Back Better Act.”

“We are a nation of immigrants whose contributions are a proud part of our heritage and vital cornerstone of our communities,” **said Congresswoman Barbara Lee.** “Undocumented immigrants have lived in the shadows for far too long. Every single Dreamer, TPS holder, farmworker, and essential worker in this country deserves a chance at the American Dream — and we have a chance to make that dream a reality with Build Back Better Act. The Senate has a moral obligation to deliver a pathway to citizenship for millions for families.”

“Americans want an immigration reform that will secure the freedom and prosperity of our Dreamers, TPS recipients, farmworkers, and essential workers. Now, after decades of failed promises, the Senate has the opportunity to keep that commitment and deliver a pathway to citizenship that is good for America in the Build Back Better Act. We can't truly 'Build Back Better' if the people who do so much of the building are left out of the blueprint,” **said Congressman Lou Correa.** “Time and time again, undocumented immigrants have delivered for our Nation, even when it's continued to leave them behind. They are our friends and neighbors, and many Dreamers have only known their lives here in the United States. I am calling for my colleagues in the Senate—Democrats, and Republicans to pass a pathway to citizenship and ensure we protect the millions of immigrants who have stood through our side to make sure America is Build Back Better.”

“The Build Back Better Act is a once in a generation piece of legislation and opportunity to provide a pathway to citizenship for millions of immigrants,” **said Congresswoman Grace Meng.** “Immigrants in New York and across the nation deserve more than a temporary status. That is why I urge my colleagues in the Senate to reinstate a pathway to citizenship for Dreamers, TPS holders, farm workers, and essential workers. As so many different communities would feel the support and aid the Build Back Better Act would provide, our immigrant communities cannot be left out of this vital bill that will help continue to pull our nation out of the turmoil caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.”

“As a mother of two and a DACA recipient, what I want most is to remain together with my children, without the fear of being separated. For years, undocumented people have relentlessly fought for a pathway to citizenship, a permanent solution that we deserve and that will allow our communities to continue to thrive,” **said Eliana Fernandez, Long Island Coordinator at Make the Road New York and a DACA recipient.** “We urge Senator Schumer and Democratic leadership to use every tool at their disposal, including disregarding the parliamentarian's advisory opinion, to keep their promises and get us to the finish line. For our country to truly deliver an inclusive recovery, we must ensure that a path to citizenship is restored in the final version of the Build Back Better bill.”

“The battle for a pathway to citizenship is thirty-plus years ongoing,” **said DACA recipient & Community Organizer with Minkwon Center for Community Action, Woojung (Diana) Park.** “Thirty years of undocumented immigrants' families separated, silenced, and disenfranchised. Thirty years of phone calls, of “maybe next year,” of dreams of holding one another. Why must we continue the past pain of our brothers and sisters, in a fight that already has a morally just and accessible solution? There are 11 million undocumented immigrants in the United States. When over [79% of Americans across the aisle](#) support a pathway to citizenship for immigrants, and immigrant communities are clear that what we need is a pathway

to citizenship, there is no reason for Congress to not deliver. Now, more than ever, we need the strength, vision, and solidarity of Democrats. The very best holiday gift would be for Congress to create permanent solutions for the millions of us awaiting justice.”

“The prospect of temporary programs does not give us any sense of relief or safety,” **said Jazmín Cerda, organizer with Brighton Park Neighborhood Council, a member of the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights.** “Citizenship is what we deserve, it’s what we were promised, it’s what we expect, and we will do whatever it takes to accomplish it.”

”The Build Back Better Act passed by the House made groundbreaking investments in climate remediation, education and children’s welfare. But for immigrants, it provided only temporary work permits,” said **Angelica Salas, executive director of CHIRLA.** “The Senate can and must do better. Including a registry update in the Senate version makes the bill more equitable. Currently, nearly everyone benefits from the bill -- except immigrants. Our lives in this country are permanent. Truly transformative, significant immigration relief should reflect this. It must be as permanent as the contributions we make daily to the country and the investments we have made here throughout our lives.”

Participating groups included: Make the Road New York (MRNY), Make the Road Nevada (MRNV), Make the Road Pennsylvania (MRPA), Center for Popular Democracy, the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA), Fair Immigration Reform Movement Action (FIRMA), Hamkae Center, HANA Center, Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (ICIRR), Brighton Park Neighborhood Council (Chicago), MinKwon Center, NAKASEC Action Fund, and Woori Center.

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