



Legalization is Critical for an Equitable American Economic Recovery

As the White House puts together its Build Back Better economic recovery and jobs package to move through Congress on a second budget reconciliation package, it is critical that the bill include a path to citizenship for undocumented essential workers and their families, Dreamers, and Temporary Protected Status (TPS) holders. **Doing so would generate significant economic growth, increase wages for all Americans, and create new jobs, helping to fuel the recovery.** The more people who can legalize, and the quicker the pathway not just to legal status, but citizenship, the greater the economic and fiscal benefits.

A Stronger Economy

- A [2013 Center for American Progress \(CAP\) study](#) found that legal status and a pathway to citizenship for 11 million undocumented immigrants would **increase the nation's cumulative GDP over a decade by between \$832 billion to \$1.4 trillion.**¹
- Similarly, the [Congressional Budget Office found that S.744](#), the 2013 comprehensive immigration reform bill, would increase GDP by 3.3% by 2023 and by 5.4% by 2033.
- A [2017 CAP study](#) of the economic impacts of the Dream Act found that if everyone eligible for the Dream Act was put on a pathway to citizenship, the cumulative gains to GDP over a decade would be between \$400 million and \$1 trillion.
- A [2015 CAP study](#) of the economic impacts of the Deferred Action for Parents of Americans (DAPA) initiative found that by granting temporary status—which brings positive, but still smaller benefits than citizenship—to 3.7 million people, the cumulative gains to GDP over a decade would be \$164 billion.
- The [White House Council of Economic Advisors](#) found in 2014 that the DAPA initiative would increase long-run GDP by up to 0.3%.

More Income for All Americans and More Taxes Generated

- CAP's [2013 study](#) found that a path to citizenship for 11 million immigrants would cumulatively increase wages for *all* Americans by between \$470 billion and \$741 billion over a decade.
 - Over that same decade, the state and federal taxes paid by these formerly undocumented immigrants would increase by between \$109 and \$184 billion, injecting critical new revenue across the country.
- CAP's [2015 study on the DAPA initiative](#) found that over a decade, the cumulative increase in wages for all Americans would be \$88 billion.
- The 2014 [White House Council of Economic Advisors](#) analysis of DAPA concluded that it would increase the wages of all American workers by 0.1% over a decade.

¹ The lower bound estimate refers to a scenario where immigrants received legal status immediately, but no citizenship within 10 years; the upper bound estimate refers to a scenario where immigrants received legal status and citizenship immediately.

- CAP's [2017 study of the Dream Act](#) found that the bill would ultimately raise the average incomes of all Americans by between \$82 and \$273 annually.

More New Jobs Created

- CAP's [2013 study](#) found that putting 11 million people on a pathway to citizenship would create on average 121,000 to 203,000 new jobs for all Americans each year over ten years.
- CAP's [2015 study on the DAPA initiative](#) found that it would create 20,000 average annual jobs over a decade.

A Rising Tide Lifts All Workers

- An estimated [93 percent](#) of undocumented immigrants are people of color, so providing a path to citizenship in the economic recovery and jobs package will help to advance racial equity throughout the economy.
- And because of their lack of legal status, undocumented workers face heightened vulnerability to [workplace discrimination and abuse](#), poorer wages, and working conditions that [harm all American workers](#)--a just recovery that increases worker power is one that levels the playing field for all.
- The general [consensus among labor economists](#) is that there is no evidence that immigrants take American jobs in large part because they frequently complement—but do not compete with—American workers.
- The people who would be granted lawful status and a path to citizenship in this bill are largely longtime residents *already in the workforce* in just deemed essential during the pandemic.
- Providing these individuals and their families with permanent protection and a path to citizenship will provide stability in workplaces that will remain critical as we move to recovery and rebuilding even as it helps to strengthen worker protections and stimulate additional economic growth and job creation throughout the country.

Protecting Undocumented Workers on the Frontlines, Including DACA Recipients and TPS Holders, Helps Ensure an Equitable Recovery

- An estimated [five million undocumented immigrants](#)—nearly 3 in 4 of those in the workforce—are on the front lines of the United States' response to the coronavirus pandemic, keeping all Americans safe, healthy, and supported.
- Across the country, [202,500 DACA recipients](#) are working to protect the health and safety of Americans as the country confronts COVID-19.
 - DACA recipients such as paramedic [Jesus Contreras](#) and [Dr. Ever Arias](#) are providing critical medical services to help those affected by COVID-19.
- An estimated [131,300 Temporary Protected Status \(TPS\) holders](#) from El Salvador, Honduras, and Haiti are helping to support the nation by serving as essential workers. These individuals are continuing to report for duty as home health aides, repair workers, food processors, and more.