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April 19, 2021

Dear Senator Mark Warner and Senator Tim Kaine:

We, the undersigned Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) organizations, urge you to include a pathway to citizenship for the over 11 million undocumented immigrants (including 1.7 million AAPIs) without criminal exclusions in the American Families Plan.

Without the security of U.S. citizenship, millions of immigrants and their families live in fear of being separated from their loved ones through deportation and are denied access to critical public benefits and rights like healthcare, higher education, driver's licenses, and gainful employment, even as they pay taxes and otherwise live life in the U.S. like legally residing residents. As a consequence of our faulty immigration system, more than 3.5 million immigrants have been deported from the United States. Families and communities have been torn apart and separated, inflicting irreversible psychological trauma between parents and children, brothers and sisters, and spouses and loved ones.

Anti-Asian violence does not come only in the form of a man with a gun in Atlanta, or in racially motivated attacks in cities from New York to California. It comes in government policies that put thousands under threat of removal and deposits many of them in the very nations from which they and their families fled. In March of this year, 33 Vietnamese Americans were deported. The Korea Times reported on April 13 that the number of Korean Americans facing deportation is at an all-time high. Among the top ten nationalities of individuals with pending cases before immigration court include China and India according to TRAC Immigration's 2021 reporting from Syracuse University.

Moreover, it has been nearly 60 years since a meaningful overhaul of our broken and cruel immigration system. We are at a rare and critical political juncture, in which the enactment of immediate and permanent protection to immigrant communities is possible. **We urge you in your role as members of the Senate Budget Committee to seize this political opportunity in the form of the American Jobs and Families Plan by supporting measures that would include a path to citizenship.**

There is no long-term economic recovery plan for the United States that excludes immigrants. A 2013 study by the Center for American Progress found that providing a path to citizenship for 11 million undocumented immigrants would increase cumulative Gross Domestic Product over 10 years by as much as \$1.4 trillion, increase the income of all Americans by up to \$791 billion, and create as many as 203,000 jobs each year over that same period. Legalization's impact on GDP, overall income of all Americans, and job creation by the hundreds of thousands are all factors central to President Biden's vision of infrastructure recovery and sustainability after a pandemic.

Enclosed is a personal message from an AAPI member who supports our Citizenship For All Campaign.

My name is Amy Lee and I am from Centreville, Virginia. I have been living in the U.S. for almost 18 years. I still don't have a green card. Since my divorce, I've been raising my three kids alone. Without a green card, I cannot get a driver's license. I had to walk to my job and that made my options for work very limited. Even so, I had to work for my three kids.

My job for the last five years was so physically toilsome, I found a new job. However, I was fired within the first five days of training. That was yesterday. The reason was that, because of my undocumented status, I could not obtain a hygiene permit.

I have to find another job. But I don't have a car, I don't have a working permit, I'm old and I cannot speak English. Looking for a new job is always a devastating process for me.

While I lived in the U.S. for 17 years, I've rented out many apartments. However, with no credit and no social number, my children had to switch schools every time we moved.

As you all probably know, changing schools is stressful for children. They were always having to make new friends, adapt to new programs.

Every time we'd get a new apartment, landlords would want a higher deposit since I am an undocumented immigrant. It put a strain on all of us financially. In addition, I could not do things I want to do as a mother such as drive my kids to school or help out with after school activities.

Eating, and surviving at the most basic level as humans, were all we could focus on. We could not enjoy things such as cultural enrichment, or entertainment. With DACA, my kids have obtained the most basic right—to be able to live in the U.S. However, the folks who drive these kids to school, act as their guardian and provide the essential necessities in life are their parents. Parents should be able to take responsibility in developing the independence of their children.

Children need DACA to live and grow in the U.S. But first, and for the children as well, the parents must have the right to survive in this land. Please remember that the adults who raise our DREAMer children are people like me, the parents. I wish to raise mine, just the same way you get to raise your own children. Thank you.

The fact is, immigrant communities cannot wait any longer. As you consider the long-term recovery of this nation's economy and communities, we urge you to include a pathway to citizenship for the over 11 million undocumented immigrants, without criminal exclusions, in the American Families Plan. The lives of 11 million undocumented immigrants and their families, communities, and networks depend on it.

Should you have any questions about this letter or to set up a meeting, please contact Yasmin Yoon ([yyoon@nakasec.org](mailto:yyoon@nakasec.org)) and Sookyung Oh ([soh@nakasec.org](mailto:soh@nakasec.org)).

Sincerely,

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Afghan Diaspora for Equality and Progress  
Asian and Latino Solidarity Alliance

Asian Pacific Islander Queer Society  
The Dream Project  
Korean American Rainbow Parents DC  
Korean Queer and Transgender Organization  
Virginia House of Delegates - Mark Keam  
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