



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Office of the Governor

Ralph S. Northam
Governor

April 21, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue,
NW Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As Governor of Virginia, I am grateful for your leadership in taking bold steps to propose economic and equity initiatives that significantly help ease the burden Americans have experienced during this global health pandemic. I ask you now to include a pathway to citizenship for essential immigrant workers and their spouses and children, as well as children who have qualified for the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program and Temporary Protected Status (TPS) holders, as part of your broader commitment to equitable economic recovery in the second economic recovery package.

I fully support the White House Executive Order on Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities. These essential workers, many of whom are immigrants of color play a critical role in aiding our nation's recovery from the health pandemic and economic devastation. They are filling key positions within the health care industry and caring for and supporting the millions of Americans affected by COVID-19. They are also serving as "frontline" critical infrastructure workers during the pandemic beyond those in the healthcare industry, including agriculture, food services, transportation workers, caregivers and custodians. They have stepped up during the national crisis, shouldered the risk of COVID-19, but are restricted from full integration on the basis of their immigration status. Ultimately, granting a path to citizenship to these essential workers would boost economic output, increase average wages, and raise the productivity of labor and of capital.

My administration strongly supports your initiatives towards strengthening overall racial equity, which includes the integration of immigrant or "New American" communities. In Virginia we established a formal statewide Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, Office of New Americans (ONA), and an ONA Advisory Board, which works to foster an inclusive and welcoming Commonwealth. Supporting the inclusion of a path to citizenship for immigrant essential workers would lead to the meaningful integration of approximately 140,000 Virginia essential workers, including 2,700 essential workers who have qualified for the DACA program and 6,700 essential workers who have been granted TPS.

To secure the health of our nation and support the stabilization of our economy, these essential workers deserve a path to citizenship. On behalf of the Commonwealth of Virginia, we ask that you underscore your commitment to racial equity and economic recovery by incorporating into the second reconciliation economic package, a pathway to citizenship and immigrant integration for essential workers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ralph S. Northam".

Ralph S. Northam

cc: Senator Tim Kaine
Senator Mark Warner
Congressional Delegation