

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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UnidosUS President and CEO: Undocumented Essential Workers Who Put Their Lives on the Line for the Country Deserve Citizenship

WASHINGTON, DC— In response to Rep. Joaquin Castro (D-Texas) and Sen. Alex Padilla (D-Calif.) introducing legislation that would fast-track citizenship for essential workers who are undocumented, Janet Murguía, president and CEO of UnidosUS, the nation's largest Latino civil rights and advocacy organization, issued the following statement:

“This new legislation that would grant undocumented essential workers an accelerated track to citizenship is a critical step to giving permanent relief to an estimated 5 million workers.

“Essential workers have put their lives on the line for this country, so it’s imperative that we allow them a sensible and real pathway to citizenship. These American heroes are perfect illustrations of the values that this country should stand for. Through their sacrifice and hard work, they have selflessly helped to carry this nation through a pandemic, while at the same time having to worry about the uncertainty of their legal status. This bill can protect those who have spent so much effort protecting us by caring for our sick and elderly, keeping our communities safe, stocking our grocery shelves, and putting food on the table for all Americans. Providing much-needed stability to this essential workforce is also good for our country as we will continue to need to lean on them on our road towards economic recovery.

“In addition to supporting this legislation, the Biden administration must also include essential workers in its subsequent pandemic recovery packages—including via reconciliation, if needed—and we look forward to working with the administration and with Congress to make sure that happens.

Undocumented immigrant workers have been among the most disproportionately affected during this crisis, and it is time to repay them with the relief they deserve.”

With more than 500,000 lives lost to COVID-19, now is the time to ensure to include everyone in America in the pandemic response. UnidosUS has been at the forefront of illustrating the ways in which Latino communities have faced disproportionate harm from the pandemic, and why the very essential immigrant workers keeping the United States afloat should be legalized to assure the recovery everyone seeks. For more information please see this [White Paper](#) and [COVID-19 Dashboard](#).

UnidosUS, previously known as NCLR (National Council of La Raza), is the nation’s largest Hispanic civil rights and advocacy organization. Through its unique combination of expert research, advocacy, programs, and an [Affiliate Network](#) of nearly 300 community-based organizations across the United States and Puerto Rico, UnidosUS simultaneously challenges the social, economic, and political barriers that affect Latinos at the national and local levels. For more than 50 years, UnidosUS has united communities and different groups seeking common ground through collaboration, and that share a desire to make our country stronger. For more information on UnidosUS, visit www.unidosus.org or follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#).