

July 27, 2022

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Vice Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Chris Murphy
Chairman
Subcommittee on Homeland Security
Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Homeland Security
Committee on Appropriations

Dear Chair Leahy, Vice Chair Shelby, Chair Murphy, and Ranking Moore Capito:

On behalf of the National Partnership for New Americans (NPNA), the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA), and the 88 undersigned local, state, and national organizations, we respectfully request that you continue to support naturalization by providing much needed funding to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) and the USCIS Citizenship and Integration Grant program. The United States House Committee on Appropriations provided \$683.3 million in funding to USCIS and \$30 million for the USCIS Citizen and Integration Grant Program in the fiscal year 2023 Homeland Security and Financial Services and General Government Appropriations Bills. The funding for USCIS to, among other things, reduce the agency's historic backlog will be essential to supporting immigrants in the United States and help to restore and strengthen our immigration system. Additionally, the much-needed increase in funding for the USCIS Citizenship and Integration Grant Program will support legal permanent residents (LPRs) in their naturalization process and allow them to fully take part in American civic and economic life.

We respectfully request that you consider increases to these funding amounts. USCIS is facing unprecedented levels of pending cases and requires additional funding to address them. The FY 2023 Homeland Security bill includes funding for the E-verify Program, application processing, the reduction of backlogs within asylum, field, and service centers, and for Refugee, Asylum, and International Operations Program. Although this is a \$273.8 million increase in funding from FY 2022, it is far less than the President's Budget request of \$903 million in discretionary funding. Without the additional funding, USCIS cannot fully address these backlogs. We also request that this and any other DHS funding be prohibited from being utilized or transferred towards enforcement purposes by Immigration and Customs Enforcement or Customs and Border Protection.

In addition to providing funding to address the backlog, we request a funding level of \$100 million for the USCIS Citizen and Integration Grant Program, or at a minimum \$40 million to help with the full integration of Legal Permanent Residents into our society. At the current

funding level, the Citizenship and Integration Grant Program reaches less than one percent of the naturalization-eligible population. Currently, there are 9 million LPRs eligible to naturalize, and [32 percent](#) of the naturalization-eligible population are eligible for an application fee waiver, meaning they have an income below 150 percent of the federal poverty level. This group of LPRs could benefit from an increase in funding for the grant program. In addition to this, [three million](#) naturalization-eligible people reported they speak little or no English, and many LPRs cite language barriers as an obstacle to naturalization. The grant program supports LPRs in learning English and gives many LPRs the resources to naturalize successfully. An increase in funding would allow more LPRs to access the assistance supported by the grant program and be more prepared for the naturalization process.

In addition to allowing more LPRs to naturalize, funding the Citizenship and Integration Grant program supports USCIS in creating a more efficient immigration system. Naturalization preparation gives immigrants a better chance of passing the naturalization exam, allowing for a more efficient process. Giving LPRs access to an immigration attorney through the grant program can also support creating an efficient system. Having an attorney familiar with the process and requirements can help reduce errors and requests for information and reduce the time an officer spends adjudicating a case, creating a more efficient immigration system. Funding for the grant program is an integral part of creating a more efficient immigration system.

Thank you for your time, and again, we respectfully request that you continue to support naturalization and provide the much-needed funding to USCIS and the USCIS Citizenship and integration grant program.

If you have questions or would like additional information, please contact Diego Iniguez-Lopez at diego@partnershipfornewamericans.org.

Sincerely,

National

Advocating Opportunity

African American Ministers In Action

Alianza Americas

Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC

Asian and Pacific Islander American Vote (APIAVote)

Bend the Arc: Jewish Action

Bridges Faith Initiative

CASA, Inc.

Church World Service

Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR)

Empowering Pacific Islander Communities (EPIC)

Four Directions INC

Freedom Network USA

Hispanic Federation

Human Rights First
Immigrant Legal Resource Center
Immigrants Rising
Japanese American Citizens League
Language & Communication Associates
NALEO Educational Fund
National Council of Asian Pacific Americans
National Education Association
National Immigration Law Center
National Immigration Project (NIPNLG)
National Korean American Service & Education Consortium (NAKASEC)
National Network for Arab American Communities (NNAAC)
National Partnership for New Americans (NPNA)
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
OCA – Asian Pacific American Advocates
Poder Latinx
Service Employees International Union (SEIU)
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas Justice Team
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center
UnidosUS
Union for Reform Judaism
Welcoming America

State and Local

Asian American Federation
Asian Americans Advancing Justice | Chicago
Asian Law Alliance
Asian Pacific Development Center
Asian Services in Action (ASIA)
Berrien Immigrant Solidarity Network
Boulder Valley Unitarian Universalist Fellowship
Canal Alliance
Catholic Charities Dallas
Catholic Immigration Legal Services
Catholic Legal Services, Archdiocese of Miami
Central American Resource Center - CARECEN- of California
Central American Resource Center of Northern CA - CARECEN SF
Central Valley Immigrant Integration Collaborative
Chinese Information and Service Center (CISC)
Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA)
Coalición de Derechos Humanos
Comunidades Unidas
Dominicanos USA
El Vínculo Hispano / Hispanic Liaison
Emerald Isle Immigration Center

Florida Immigrant Coalition
Good Shepherd Lutheran Church
HANA Center
HIAS Pennsylvania
iHICA! Hispanic Interest Coalition of Alabama
Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights
Immigrant Welcome Center
Interfaith Welcome Coalition - San Antonio
Korean Community Service Center
Latin American Coalition
Lutheran Social Services of the National Capital Area (LSSNCA)
Maine Immigrants' Rights Coalition
Maine People's Alliance
Make the Road New York
Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition (MIRA)
Miami Valley Immigration Coalition
Michigan United
Mountain State Justice, Inc.
Mujeres Latinas en Accion
Nebraska Appleseed
New Americans Fund
North Carolina Justice Center
OCA-Greater Houston
OneAmerica
Project Citizenship
Promise Arizona
Salt Lake County Mayor's Office for New Americans
SEAMAAC, Inc.
Seattle Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs
Services, Immigrant Rights and Education Network (SIREN)
Somos Un Pueblo Unido
The International Institute of Metropolitan Detroit, Inc
Unidos MN