

June 29, 2021

The Honorable Krysten Sinema  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mark Kelly  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senators Sinema and Kelly,

As 53 faith leaders from multiple diverse faith traditions in Arizona, we come to you with urgency, knowing that the COVID-19 crisis has profoundly impacted already marginalized groups in society including Black, Latino, indigenous, immigrant, and refugee communities.

**We respectfully request that you include a pathway to citizenship** for essential immigrant workers, farmworkers, people with DACA, TPS, and DED, and their families **in the upcoming recovery packages you have prioritized through reconciliation**. An inclusive legislative proposal on immigration relief, which recognizes the dignity of all, is long overdue.

Our immigrant family members and neighbors, who are integral parts of our state, deserve the protection and opportunity of a clear path to citizenship. Any package should recall the worth and dignity conferred by our Creator, and not exclude or discriminate against anyone based on interactions with our nation's racist criminal justice system. Instead, we're hopeful that a package maximizes eligibility for relief, stabilizing the workforce, ensuring that families stay together, and our communities can thrive.

Essential workers have faced the most significant risks amid the pandemic. And we know that countless immigrant members of our congregations, places of worship, and communities in Arizona have worked throughout the pandemic as essential workers, providing the basic goods and critical services which have helped us all make it through this terrible season.

And yet, we as a people have treated our immigrant "essential" workers as expendable, as exploitable - extracting their labor while disregarding their humanity. We have excluded them from full citizenship (over [two-thirds](#) of undocumented workers in the US are essential workers) and denied them the full fruits of their contributions to our economy and community life.

While making up only [17%](#) of about 156 million working people in the US, immigrants are disproportionately represented in COVID-19 frontline occupations and essential industries, including being childcare workers, healthcare workers, custodial staff, school employees, and farmworkers, to name a few examples. In Arizona, approximately [120,000](#) undocumented immigrant workers are at the frontlines of keeping us all healthy and fed during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Essential immigrant workers have been, and will continue to be, key to our communities' health and prosperity during the healing of our state and our nation from the pandemic and looking at the future. Immigrants in Arizona, including [1,095](#) people with TPS and [23,800](#) people with DACA, are serving on the frontlines—despite their families and communities receiving little or no relief themselves.

One important step we can take in the coming weeks is to recognize immigrant essential workers and their families for the gifts they bring into their communities, their resiliency, and their contributions to our society by creating a roadmap to citizenship - which Arizonans support. Recent polling from [Data For Progress](#) found that [66% of Arizonans](#) polled were in support of legislation that would create a path to citizenship for essential workers and other undocumented immigrants. We must not exclude some people from relief, keep them in limbo, or punish them twice for having prior contact with a racist and biased criminal legal system.

After years of attacks on our communities, the Trump administration's immigration policies, and a year at the frontlines of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Biden Administration and Congress can and must secure a pathway to citizenship for essential immigrant workers, farmworkers, people with DACA, TPS, and DED, and their families immediately as part of any recovery package being passed in reconciliation.

In doing so, we can take a step toward the state of "right relationship" we seek with our Creator, our neighbors, and all of creation.

Sincerely,

Suzanne Hesh, Epsicopal Church  
Salena Petersen-Keesecker, Guadalupe Presbyterian Church detention ministry  
Wendy Emmert  
Sara Busey, Alliance for Action, Good Shepherd UCC Church, Sahaurita, AZ  
Mary Lynn Walters, Memorial Presbyterian Church  
Dave Fronske, San Francisco de Asis Parish Catholic Church  
Sue Becker, St Elizabeth Seton  
Sister Nancy Wellmeir, Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur  
Rev. Foster, Cooperative Baptist Fellowship West  
Sister Tracey Horan, Sisters of Providence  
Cynthia Vasquez, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary  
Jaret Ornelas, SJ, Kino Border Initiative  
Bishop Deborah Hutterer, Grand Canyon Synod-ELCA  
Rev. Dr. William Lyons, Southwest Conference United Church of Christ  
Rev. Erin Tamayo, PCUSA  
Jo Vredenburg, AFN and Desert Palm UCC, Tempe  
Rev. Edward Hunt, Presbyterian Church USA  
Rev. David Ragan, Beatitudes Campus  
Rev. Randy Mayer, The Good Shepherd United Church of Christ

Dr. Warren H. Stewart, Sr., African American Christian Clergy Coalition  
Rev. Dr. Elizabeth B. Johnson, United Church of Christ  
Rev. Dr. Eric O. Ledermann, University Presbyterian Church of Tempe, AZ  
Carol Consalvo, Sr. VP of Policy & Advocacy, National Council of Jewish Women  
Rev. Richard Doerrer-Peacock, Desert Palm United Church of Christ  
Rev. Raymond Kenneth Kennon, The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)  
Rev. Alison Harrington, Southside Presbyterian Church  
Becky Klein, Desert Palm UCC  
Rev. Teresa Cowan Jones, Sacred Space  
Rev. Dr. John Fife, Southside Presbyterian Church  
Rev. Bart Smith, St. Mark's Presbyterian Church  
Rabbi Debbie Stiel, Paradise Valley  
Rabbi Stephanie Aaron, Congregation Chaverim  
Rabbi Herschel Aberson, Temple Beth Sholom of the East Valley  
Rabbi Stephanie Aaron, Congregation Chaverim  
Rabbi Susan Schanerman, Congregation NefeshSoul  
Rev. Christiane Heyde, Unitarian Universalist  
Benjamin Messer, Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Phoenix  
Cantor Ross Wolman, Temple Chai  
Nancy Lam, Arizona State University; Christian Community Development Association  
Frank Bergen, Episcopal Church of St. Matthew  
Brother Robert Brady, OFM  
Rev. Sandra Britton, United Church of Christ  
Sister Liane Delsuc, Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur  
Susan Doherty, Our Lady of the Angels Community  
Julianne Hartzell, Catholic Congregation  
John Kneip, Catholic  
Sister Mary Virginia Leach, Dominican Sisters of MSJ  
Sister Eileen Mahony, Sisters of St. Agnes  
Rev. Bill Remmel, Society of the Divine Savior  
Reverend Peggy Roberts, Presbyterian  
Jean Rivers, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and Methodist  
Ruha Themlock, Baha'i Faith  
Ms. Ruth Wootten, Lutheran (ELCA)