

Voces de la Frontera: Immigrants & allies in Madison, WI shut down street in front of Sen. Baldwin's office to call on Democrats to include citizenship in the Build Back Better Bill, say temporary status not enough

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(MADISON, WI) – Immigrants and allies in Madison, Wisconsin joined 10 other cities in a national day of civil disobedience actions called “11 Cities for 11 Million” to demand that Democrats fulfill their promise to pass a path to citizenship this year. In Madison, they shut down the street in front of Democratic Senator Tammy Baldwin's office, and only a few blocks away from Congressman Mark Pocan's office. Immigrant rights groups also organized civil disobedience actions in Los Angeles, Washington DC, New York City, Las Vegas, Phoenix, Philadelphia and more.

[Livestream video](#) of the event is available. In addition, video of the action and professional photos by Claudio Martinez, are available in our [media toolkit](#).

This national action occurred just one day after the House Judiciary Committee released immigration reforms in the Build Back Better reconciliation package that failed to follow through on a key campaign promise to pass a path to citizenship for millions of undocumented essential workers, Dreamers, TPS recipients and farmworkers. Instead, the new provision provides temporary work permits that an estimated [7-8 million](#) of the 11 million undocumented immigrants would qualify for.

The House aims to vote on the final package sometime before next week.

Latinx and Korean immigrant essential workers, DACA recipients, rural Wisconsin farmers, local elected officials and members of the LGBTQ community gathered outside of Sen. Baldwin's office on Thursday afternoon as part of the "11 Cities for 11 Million" action.

Christine Neumann-Ortiz, Executive Director of Voces de la Frontera, said at the rally, "We are here sending a message to Congressman Mark Pocan who has an important role in the Progressive Caucus to say that we need him to stand up for immigrants - the vast majority of which have been living here for 10, 20 or 30 years. How can you just offer people who've been living here for so long, who've built lives here, temporary work permits? These people worked through the pandemic and helped mobilize their friends and family to vote. We are here to tell you that we're counting for you. Stand up for immigrants and get citizenship in the reconciliation bill. We deserve nothing less than a path to citizenship in the Build Back Better Bill!"

She continued, "Senator Baldwin, it is not okay to be silent. We need you to speak up, as others have done, to say you will support disregarding the parliamentarian in the Senate, because the Parliamentarian is not a King or a Queen. It is not mandated to follow their biased advice when they say that it is okay to give away historic tax cuts to the richest of the rich, but we cannot provide a path to citizenship for immigrants. That's why we need Democrats to act now. Disregard the parliamentarian, citizenship now!"

Gabby Benavente, immigrant essential worker in education and DACA recipient, said, "I was brought to this country from Peru at the age of 9. I'm the proud daughter of immigrants: my mom cleans houses every day and my dad is a construction worker who builds the infrastructure of this country. I'm proud to be a teacher, Dreamer and a transgender woman. Senator Baldwin has built a reputation around standing for LGBT rights. But you can't say you stand with LGBT people if you don't stand with all of us. LGBT immigrants face specific challenges that need to be addressed because many of us come from countries where we might not feel safe going back. While this country is not perfect, it is the one place that I call home. I'm here to demand that my rights - immigrant rights - are prioritized."

Michael Slattery, dairy farmer from Manitowoc County and member of the Wisconsin Farmers Union who participated in the civil disobedience action, said, "Who's

processing our cheese, our vegetables, our fruit? It's immigrants and largely undocumented immigrants. They are essential to our society. It's time that the Democrats in the House and Tammy Baldwin in the Senate stand up for immigrants and stop exploiting people."

Jenny Kim, immigrant from South Korea and member of NAKASEC, a national Korean immigrant rights organization, said, "I've lived in silence and hid behind people's shadows all my life. I cannot wait anymore. We cannot wait anymore. We need permanent solutions and action now. We need a pathway to citizenship because we deserve to live freely as human beings without the fear of separation or deportation."

Recently, [national polling](#) has shown that Biden's popularity amongst Latinxs has dropped to 23% approval based on his handling of immigration. [New polling](#) in eight battleground states including Wisconsin showed that a majority of voters across the political spectrum strongly support a path to citizenship or permanent protections for immigrants, with 71% of voters supporting a pathway to citizenship and 58% supporting a work permit program.