

Voces De La Frontera: Wisconsin state & local elected officials urge colleagues to join them in calling on congress to create pathway to citizenship this year

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(STATEWIDE) - Yesterday, state and local elected officials from across Wisconsin joined Voces de la Frontera to urge their colleagues to join them in signing onto a [letter](#) to U.S. Congressional Democrats and the Biden Administration to pass citizenship for millions of immigrants this year (**view the recording [here](#)**). To date, over 500 state and local elected officials from across the country have signed onto this letter and, in Wisconsin, over 50 elected officials have signed on. The deadline for local and state elected officials to sign on is Monday, August 30, 2021. Elected officials who are interested in signing on can contact Voces' Political Director, Fabi Maldonado, at fabi@vdlf.org.

It's been 35 years since the last meaningful pathway to citizenship was enacted for immigrants in this country, and reform and relief for millions of immigrant essential workers, Dreamers, TPS holders and their families is long overdue. The need for an inclusive response to the pandemic makes it even more urgent to pass a clean pathway to citizenship this year, as it would allow immigrant essential workers to have access to health care, encourage them to get vaccinated, and help them work more safely in frontline jobs.

Earlier this month, the U.S. Senate passed a historic reconciliation budget bill that includes over \$100 billion for a pathway to citizenship for millions. Next, Congress will convene later this month to vote on this bill. This is a historic opportunity for President Biden and Congressional Democrats to deliver on their overdue promise to honor the sacrifices that immigrant essential workers have made to keep the rest of our country safe and our economy running.

State Representative and Milwaukee County Supervisor Sylvia Ortiz-Velez, who represents the largest Latinx population in the state of Wisconsin, commented about why she signed onto the letter: “I’ve met many people who have no pathway at all to citizenship and who have only known our country as home. I ask that we recognize the contributions that millions of immigrants have made in our communities by passing a pathway to citizenship this year.”

Fitchburg Alder Joe Maldonado, who represents the most racially and socio-economically diverse district in Dane County and also signed onto the letter, said, “It’s critically important that we support a pathway to citizenship for all immigrants and recognize DACA students who’ve lived here the majority of their lives, who work here, pay taxes and face barriers to simple things such as attending college or receiving federal financial aid. I urge my colleagues in municipalities throughout the state of Wisconsin to support a pathway to citizenship and urge their federal elected officials to do the same.”

Ryan Clancy, Milwaukee County Supervisor representing parts of Milwaukee’s majority Latinx south side, said, “Everywhere we look, including in my district in Milwaukee County, we know that immigrants are invested in our community, and it’s time for us to invest in them because it’s the right thing to do. It’s been 35 years since the last meaningful federal immigration legislation. Our community cannot and will not wait longer for this sort of common sense investment. I ask that other local and state electeds join with me in demanding federal immigration reform and a pathway to citizenship not in another 35 years, but in 35 days.”

Alondra Garcia, a bilingual Milwaukee Public School teacher and DACA recipient said, “As a Milwaukee Public School teacher I have some students who are U.S. citizens but their parents are not. During this pandemic we’ve seen how those without legal status are denied federal stimulus, access to health care and more. This discrepancy happened within families, including my own, as well as in my classroom and my community. It broke my heart. I’m demanding that our elected representatives vote in support of immigration reform. It’s been nearly 40 years since we’ve seen legislative action, and we’re tired. It’s time to take action.”

Dulce Cervantes, Racine School Board Member, said, “I have the immense pleasure of representing the largest Latinx community in Racine, but I am also a teacher, a mother, and an immigrant. This country was built through the hard work of immigrants and immigrants are still an important part of our community as well as our future. This moment in history could change the lives of many of my constituents, their families, and more specifically, our children. The political moment to pass immigration reform with a pathway to citizenship is now! Not only will immigration reform benefit undocumented families, but it will benefit our economy. In order to Build Back Better, we need to make sure that no one is left behind. Please support a pathway to citizenship through reconciliation, make sure that our whole community is covered!”