

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Re: Racial Equity & Immigration Policy

Dear President Biden,

The undersigned organizations write to respectfully urge you to immediately take all actions within your authority to protect undocumented immigrants, many of whom have resided here for years, throughout the United States. Hundreds of thousands of these long-term undocumented immigrants, including those from African and Caribbean diasporas, uniquely contribute to our society, economy, and local communities. They are part of the workforces that will power the modernization of the nation's infrastructure and the efforts to address climate change. But the nation also has a moral imperative to protect these communities: immigration is one of the key civil rights issues of our time.

Immigration protections help stabilize communities, especially those facing inequities due to racial identity within the various structures of our society. Indeed, the lack of legal immigration status harmed many communities of color during the COVID-19 pandemic, with many being [cut](#) out of public support or, worse, [afraid](#) to access these lifesaving resources even when they or family members were eligible. Legal immigration status, temporary or otherwise, could have encouraged many of these historically marginalized communities to come forward and seek the assistance they needed during the pandemic.

Moreover, research shows that Black immigrants and their families fare worse in our immigration system, in part due to the unacceptable but [well-documented](#) occurrence of over-policing of Black communities in America. The Black Alliance for Just Immigration (BAJI) and the NYU School of Law Immigrant Rights Clinic, for example, [report](#) that even though Black immigrants make up less than nine percent of the undocumented population in the U.S., they constitute twenty percent of immigrants facing deportation based on criminal issues. The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) further reports that "Black immigrants are nearly three times more likely to be detained and deported because of an alleged criminal offense," and in 2019, the lengthiest documented ICE detentions were imposed on Black African immigrants. The AFSC [report](#) also observes that certain Black immigrant communities experience disparate treatment in bond determinations—for example, the average for immigration bonds for Haitian immigrants was \$16,700, 54% higher than for other immigrant groups.

These findings represent but a few of the injustices of the immigration system towards the Black community - which only increased with the cruel changes enacted by the Trump Administration, including the travel ban, which virtually blocked immigration from several African countries; the,

family separation policy; and attempts to end Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for several countries, including Haiti.

There is a moral imperative for us to reform our immigration system and overcome the mistakes of our past, particularly as the Black immigrant population represents one of the most rapidly growing immigrant communities in the U.S. As [reported](#) by Axios, the Black immigrant population has increased by 475% over the last 40 years and is expected to continue growing. Today, there are more than [600,000](#) undocumented Black immigrants in the U.S., many of whom are long-term residents with strong family and community ties (population size source: AFSC). Due to the lack of congressional action on immigration reform, undocumented Black immigrants face uncertainty about their futures in the U.S.

We therefore urge the Administration to take every executive and agency action possible to help ensure that we begin to move to a more fair and equitable immigration system. A number of our organizations have endorsed the solutions in the report titled [2023 Immigration Priorities: A Blueprint for the Biden-Harris Administration](#). We believe all of these solutions should be on the table as the administration builds a suite of solutions focused on affirmative relief, including: **(1) TPS designations and redesignations for nationals in the U.S. who can't return to their home countries due to armed conflict, natural disaster, or other emergent humanitarian reasons, including nationals from Sudan, South Sudan, Cameroon, and other African nations, as well as Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Honduras, as soon as possible; (2) protections by any tool necessary for DACA recipients; and (3) reduction of overly long case backlogs and other related actions.**

We urge your immediate attention to these issues this year, and stand ready to work together to develop a plan to protect vulnerable immigrant groups.

Sincerely,

Undersigned Organizations

Haitian Bridge Alliance
NAACP Legal Defense & Educational Fund, Inc.
NAACP
National Urban League
Southern Poverty Law Center
The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights