



UNITED STATES HISPANIC  
LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

**Testimony of the United States Hispanic Leadership Institute  
in Support of Resolution 21-4398**

The United States Hispanic Leadership Institute (USHLI) is a Chicago-based nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that has registered over 140,000 newly naturalized citizens to vote in Illinois, from countries throughout the world, and over two million new voters nationally overall.

Chartered in 1982, USHLI's mission is to help empower the United States by strengthening its people by promoting education, equal opportunity, legalization and naturalization of immigrants, leadership development, and civic participation. In recognition of its quality of work, USHLI is only the 4<sup>th</sup> Hispanic organization in history to be honored and decorated by a US President at the White House for its service for the nation (and the only one in Illinois), and by the Government of Mexico for its service to the Mexican and Mexican American community in the United States.

USHLI stands in full support of this resolution, calling on the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress to enact a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants through the budget reconciliation process.

Ten years ago, undocumented immigrants, workers and students, were promised immigration reform with a pathway to legalization and citizenship. The promise was broken. Instead, over three million were deported in eight years and 1-2 million more in the last five. Millions of immigrant families are separated now because too many Americans have lacked the moral courage to do the right thing. It's time for America to stand up for immigrants who kept them safe, healthy, and fed during the worse pandemic in our lifetime, and fulfill its promise and cleanse its moral conscience.

Tens of millions of Americans will be retiring during the next 10 years and deserve to maintain a decent standard of living. This can be assured only by having a young and well-educated workforce with a strong work ethic. Legalized and naturalized undocumented immigrants in America today would increase our GDP by \$1.7 trillion over the next 10 years. It is not fiscally responsible to tolerate injustice and blind to the long-term economic gain in passing immigration reform.

The presence of undocumented immigrants in American society is not adequately valued because it is largely unknown. Their purchasing power is nearly \$215 billion annually. They pay over \$30 billion in federal, state, and local taxes annually. This is a community of givers, not takers.

Many ill-informed persons argue against immigration reform because supposedly they take jobs away from Americans, when study after study has found that the opposite is true. Today, there are tens of millions of Americans who have jobs because of the economic activity generated by undocumented immigrants.

It's time for Americans to stop biting the hands that feed them.

Politically, the only way we're going to pass any semblance of immigration reform is through the budget reconciliation process. The DREAM Act was introduced 20 years ago and is still awaiting passage. The American Dream has been a nightmare for an entire generation of children, who have grown to be more American in practice, productivity, and accomplishment than many who sacrificed nothing to be Americans.

It's time for DACA and TPS recipients (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) and (Temporary Protective Status), and other undocumented immigrants, to have a pathway to legalization and citizenship. This is favored by the vast majority of the American people. It's time for our elected officials to get behind the people who elected them to do the right thing.

USHLI respectfully urges Cook County Commissioners to send a message to members of the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress, especially the Illinois delegation, and adopt this resolution.

Respectfully,

Dr. Juan Andrade, Jr.  
President, USHLI