



Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street
Chicago, IL

Legislation Text

File #: 21-0495, Version: 2

PROPOSED SECOND SUBSTITUTE TO PROPOSED RESOLUTION #21-0495

COOK COUNTY CALLS UPON THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO IMPLEMENT POLICIES TO PROTECT THE IMMIGRANT COMMUNITY AND STRENGTHEN THE IMMIGRATION SYSTEM IN THE UNITED STATES

WHEREAS, the United States is a nation of diverse immigrants; and

WHEREAS, one in seven individuals residing in the United States are immigrants according to 2018 American Community Survey (ACS) data; and

WHEREAS, a strong and vibrant community cannot function until *all* people living and working, regardless of their race, skin color, national origin, religion, creed, gender, sexual orientation, disability status, or place of birth, have equal rights and protections under the law; and

WHEREAS, the country's already flawed immigration system has been further damaged in recent years which has encouraged and normalized discrimination and harassment against the immigrant community; and

WHEREAS, the system has forced the separation of thousands of families seeking asylum including nursing mothers from their young children. According to a recent communication received by the United States Department of Justice, nearly 700 children have yet to be reunited with their parents; and

WHEREAS, it has been attempted through Executive Order to end protections under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program for nearly 800,000 individuals who came to the United States with their families as children; and

WHEREAS, these individuals should be properly recognized as members of our country, in many instances the only country they have ever known. Instead, the previous federal administration's attempts to end DACA have created panic and distress in the DACA-eligible community; and

WHEREAS, the Muslim Ban has restricted travel from targeted nations with predominantly Muslim populations, leading to family separation, discrimination, and injustice; and

WHEREAS, furthermore, these inhumane policies have caused post-traumatic stress among other serious mental health harms; and

WHEREAS, as the ongoing pandemic has disproportionately impacted immigrant communities across the country, the previous federal administration continued to implement anti-immigrant policies like public charge that discourage immigrant families from seeking medical services and other essential resources; and

WHEREAS, the pandemic was also used as a pretext to shut down refugee resettlement and other immigration to the United States; and

WHEREAS, the Social Security Administration should rescind any employment terminations resulting from "no-match letters" and those who did lose employment due to this should be re-hired; and

WHEREAS, local jurisdictions and municipalities have the right to designate themselves as sanctuary spaces without fear of retaliation or jeopardizing federal support and funding.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Cook County Board of Commissioners calls upon the Biden administration and the 117th Congress to protect the human rights of immigrants through, but not limited to, the following means:

1. Immediately rescinding the numerous executive orders, proclamations, and other policy changes that the previous federal administration used to confuse, intimidate, exclude, and remove immigrants;
2. Enacting a moratorium on all deportations until both Congress and the administration are able to reform immigration law and policy;
3. Providing access to adequate healthcare, affordable housing, and vital social services by removing restrictions that have excluded vulnerable segments of the immigrant community;
4. Enacting inclusive immigration solutions that include:
 - a. An immediate reinstatement of recently gutted refugee programs, and a return to preexisting asylum law and procedures;
 - b. Legislation prioritizing a path to citizenship for the undocumented population in the United States, without criminal carveouts;
 - c. Separating the criminal justice and immigration systems;
 - d. Ending federal support of for-profit detention facilities and the use of local jails for detaining immigrants;
5. Prioritization of alternatives to detention in the immigration adjudication process, including for individuals subject to mandatory ICE custody.
5. Immediately reuniting the nearly 700 children with their parents who were separated at the border, providing necessary counseling and trauma-informed care for the children and their immediate family members that have been impacted by the inhumane “zero tolerance” policy, and providing a path towards U.S. citizenship for these individuals;
6. Establishing a process for the reunification of all families that have experienced deportation without due process or as a result of unjust laws and policies;
7. Working directly with impacted immigrant communities and advocates to develop and implement pro-immigrant policies and legislation to begin the long process of rebuilding the trust between the immigrant community and the federal government that has been undermined during the last several years;
8. Implementing transparent, robust oversight, and accountability measures for the abuse that has been reported within immigration detention centers, including the county jails with which ICE contracts;
9. Divesting from immigration enforcement, detention, and deportation infrastructure and instead investing in initiatives that uphold the rights of immigrants and empower them to thrive.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED THAT, suitable copies of this resolution be presented to the Biden administration and the 117th Congress.