

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

June 26, 2023

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

Dear President Biden,

As we commemorate Immigrant Heritage Month and Caribbean American Heritage Month in June, we write in solidarity with America's immigrant communities – particularly those from African and Caribbean diasporas who have long been an integral part of our society. We urge you to heed our moral imperative to provide much needed relief to these individuals, many of whom have resided in the United States for years and have made significant contributions to our communities. By exercising your existing legal authorities, we request you provide relief to these communities who yearn for stability, justice, and the opportunity to contribute to our great nation.

This month, as we honor the rich tapestry of immigrant experiences that have shaped our nation, we are reminded of another milestone – the 11th anniversary of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. First announced on June 15, 2012, DACA has persisted as a beacon of hope for countless undocumented individuals and their families, including Black immigrants. It remains an incredibly successful and popular policy, yet the threat it faces in the courts continues to cast a shadow of uncertainty over the lives and aspirations of hundreds of thousands of immigrants.

Black immigrants are the fastest-growing immigrant group in the U.S. They bring unique perspectives, diverse talents, and valuable skills that enrich our nation. They have forged deep connections and are an integral part of our country. According to Pew Research Center, the Black immigrant population has increased by 475% over the last 40 years, and today more than one-fifth of America's Black population are either foreign born or second generation.¹ Furthermore, there are approximately 600,000 undocumented Black immigrants in the U.S., many of whom are long-term residents with strong family and community ties.²

However, despite their boundless contributions, Black immigrants often encounter systemic barriers and confront disproportionate challenges within our immigration system. For example, Black immigrants are more likely to be detained and deported based on alleged criminal offenses compared with other immigrant groups.³ In fact, while composing fewer than 9% of the

¹ <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2022/01/27/key-findings-about-black-immigrants-in-the-u-s/>

² <https://afsc.org/news/immigration-black-issue#:~:text=The%20disproportionate%20policing%20of%20Black%20immigration%20detention%20and%20deportation%20machine.>

³ <https://oir.sccgov.org/sites/g/files/exjcpb1026/files/sobi-deprt-blk-immig-crim-sys.pdf>

undocumented population, Black immigrants represent 20% of all immigrants facing deportation due to criminal issues. Certain Black immigrant communities experience discriminatory treatment in bond determinations, with higher bond amounts imposed on individuals from Haiti, among others. Additionally, Black immigrants from Caribbean countries are disproportionately denied their right to asylum.⁴

The policies of the Trump Administration only served to exacerbate the harmful impacts of the long-standing disparities within our immigration system. From a discriminatory travel ban targeting African countries, to family separation policies that inflicted long-lasting harm on Black immigrant families arriving at the border, to frequent attempts to terminate Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for foreign nationals from places like Haiti, Black immigrant communities seem to disproportionately face any number of burdens not placed on other immigrant groups. These measures instilled fear and disrupted the lives of countless individuals and families, and to this day we continue to hear about the lasting effects of these policies from our constituents.

For these reasons and more, we request you to advance policies that promote immigration relief for longtime residents – a crucial step towards addressing these concerns and restoring community trust. Further, we urge your administration to utilize all available executive and agency powers to provide immediate relief and protection for undocumented immigrants, including those from African and Caribbean diasporas. We recommend those actions should include the following:

1. Bestowing TPS designations and redesignations for foreign countries who meet the statutory definition including nationals from Haiti, Sudan, South Sudan, Cameroon, Mali, Democratic Republic of Congo, Mauritania, Nigeria, and other African nations.
2. Protecting DACA recipients, who currently face increased uncertainty due to existing court challenges, by employing all necessary tools at your disposal to provide additional paths to lawful status.
3. Addressing the unacceptably long green card and work permit backlogs impacting families, including those living in mixed-status homes here in the U.S.

Ours is a nation of immigrants, and diversity will always be our country's strength. Our willingness to accept newcomers into our nation is a key component of our global influence and soft power. It is imperative we prioritize comprehensive immigration reform, so we can address the inequities faced by Black immigrants within our immigration system. We must foster our immigration system which upholds the values of justice, fairness, inclusiveness, and compassion.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter. We look forward to collaborating with your administration to achieve meaningful and lasting change for all migrant communities.

Sincerely,

⁴ <https://afsc.org/news/immigration-black-issue#:~:text=The%20disproportionate%20policing%20of%20Black,immigration%20detention%20and%20deportation%20machine.>

Yvette W. Clarke

Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress

Sheila Jackson Lee

Sheila Jackson Lee
Member of Congress

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Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.

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Member of Congress

Bonnie Watson Coleman

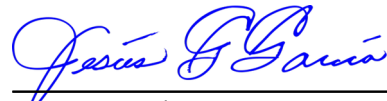
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Shontel M. Brown
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Delia C. Ramirez
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Jesús G. "Chuy" García
Member of Congress



Joaquin Castro
Member of Congress



James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



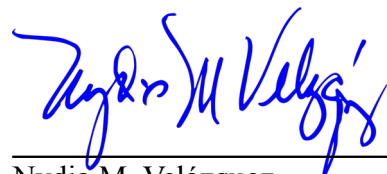
Gwen S. Moore
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Maxine Waters
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Nydia M. Velázquez
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Nanette Diaz Barragán
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Jamaal Bowman, Ed.D.
Member of Congress



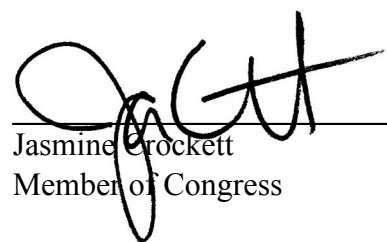
Donald M. Payne, Jr.
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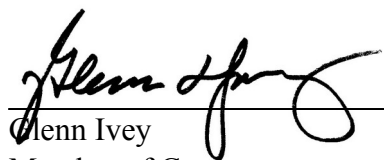
Joyce Beatty
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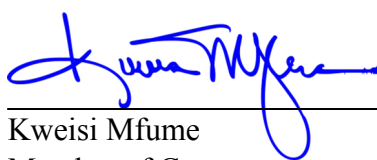
Ilhan Omar
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Jasmine Crockett
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Glenn Ivey
Member of Congress



Kweisi Mfume
Member of Congress



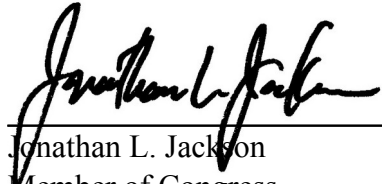
Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
Member of Congress



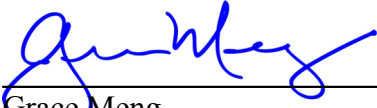
Pramila Jayapal
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Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress



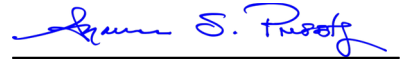
Jonathan L. Jackson
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Grace Meng
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Adam Smith
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Ayanna Pressley
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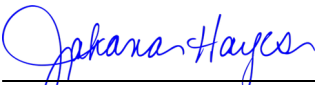
Tony Cárdenas
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C. A. Dutch Ruppertsberger
Member of Congress



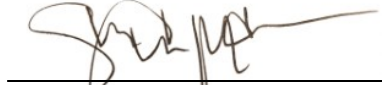
Kathy Castor
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Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick
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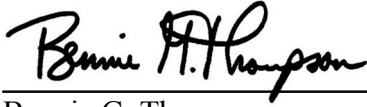
Greg Casar
Member of Congress



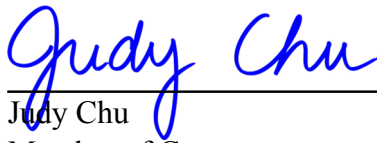
Sydney Kamlager-Dove
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Zoe Lofgren
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Bennie G. Thompson
Member of Congress



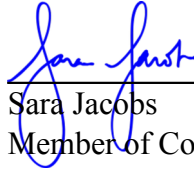
Judy Chu
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Troy Carter
Member of Congress



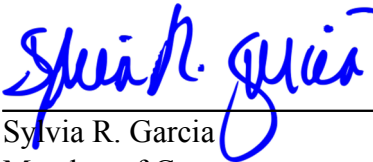
Darren Soto
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Sara Jacobs
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Stacey E. Plaskett
Member of Congress



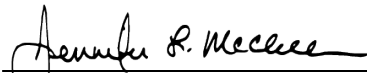
Sylvia R. Garcia
Member of Congress



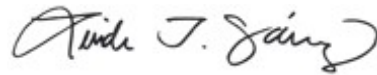
Marilyn Strickland
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