

**The Honorable Salud Carbajal**  
**Representative for California's 24<sup>th</sup> Congressional District**  
**House Committee on Judiciary Member Day Hearing Testimony**

Chairman Nadler, Ranking Member Jordan, and Members of the Judiciary Committee,

Thank you for holding this Member Day hearing today. I appreciate the opportunity to speak about some of my priorities, especially around immigration that you have jurisdiction over. I am grateful for the work the Committee has already done in shepherding passage of the American DREAM and Promise Act, the Farm Workforce Modernization Act, and holding hearings to examine our current immigration policies to reflect our nation's current needs.

While the change in Administration has brought some relief from the zero-tolerance policies that separated families in the previous Administration, we still have much work ahead of us to create a fair immigration system that reflects our values, invest in smarter border security, and keeps families together.

My father immigrated to this country and worked as a farmworker picking specialty crops in Oxnard, California. He instilled in me the value of hard work, and showed me that if you work hard and play by the rules, you can get ahead. As a teenager picking lettuce, onions, and other crops during my summers, I never would have thought that I would one day be a sitting Member of Congress. Nevertheless, I have the opportunity to advocate that we continue to build these ladders of opportunity so others that want to provide a better life for their families can fulfill their American Dream. That is why I was proud to co-lead the effort with Subcommittee Chair Zoe Lofgren to pass the Farm Workforce Modernization Act. And while, we have made significant progress in the House and ensured bipartisan support for this legislation, I urge all the Member of this Committee to continue to support the legislation

But, I also want to bring attention to another issue of utmost importance. That is the issue of separating military families due to how broken our current immigration system works. Our servicemembers who have risked their lives to serve our country and sacrificed so much already deserve our respect and support. Instead, many have been separated from their families due to our current immigration system. There are too many stories of servicemembers from our country who have experienced having their families being torn away due to laws that prevent their parents from living in this country. That is why I have introduced H.R. 454—the Protect Patriot Parents Act. This bill would make parents of military servicemembers eligible to apply for lawful permanent residency.

Unfortunately, this legislation was inspired by the story of my constituent, Cesar Flores, an active-duty member of the U.S. Air Force, whose mother, Juana Flores, was cruelly ripped from him, his daughter, and the rest of his family. Cesar served our country, but our country, in that instance, did not serve him.

While actively serving in the U.S. Air Force, he suddenly had to worry about his mother's well-being after being removed to a country she hasn't called home in over two decades. As a veteran and immigrant, myself, I find it immoral that a person could sign up to serve this country, putting their life on the line, only to come back to a home without their family. This is why I think it is important that this Committee take up my legislation, H.R. 454—the Protect Patriot Parents Act.

Our servicemembers deserve our gratitude and admiration for serving our country. And their families deserve to remain together, not apart. We have a civic responsibility to protect our servicemembers and citizens, their families, and to prevent families from unnecessary suffering because of archaic laws.

As policymakers, it is also upon us to make our immigration system fair. Holding a hearing on the Protect Patriot Parents Act would be an important first step towards this goal.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony and I look forward to working with the Committee on passing legislation to address these issues.