

BOUNDLESS

2101 4th Ave. • Suite 850 • Seattle, WA 98121 • 1-855-268-6353 • be@boundless.com • www.boundless.com

Statement of Boundless Immigration Inc. Submitted to the Immigration and Citizenship Subcommittee of the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on the Judiciary

Boundless Immigration Inc. submits this statement for the record to provide the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Immigration and Citizenship with data relevant to its February 11, 2021 hearing on “The U.S. Immigration System: The Need for Bold Reforms.”

Boundless is a Seattle-based technology company that empowers families to navigate the immigration system more confidently, rapidly, and affordably.

This statement includes sections on the following topics, with links to more detailed resources:

- I. Family-based immigration
- II. Naturalization
- III. Undocumented immigrants

I. Our Family-Based Immigration System Too Often Keeps Families Apart

As part of his proposed immigration bill, the [U.S. Citizenship Act of 2021](#), President Biden calls for [an overhaul of family-based immigration](#) and an undoing of the Trump administration’s [systematic dismantling](#) of the legal immigration system.

One of the most egregious policies enacted in recent years is the [public charge rule](#), essentially an income test that makes it much harder for non-wealthy families to obtain green cards. The rule, [now under review by the Biden administration](#), goes against our core American values of inclusion and equality of opportunity. In addition, the Trump-era Presidential Proclamation 10014 continues to ban entry by all family-based immigrants except for the spouses and minor children of U.S. citizens, which we estimate is [blocking 358,000 individuals per year](#). Such policies that work to keep families apart have no place here, a nation built on the contributions of immigrants.

President Biden has also proposed shortening [lengthy green card wait times](#) and increasing [per-country green card caps](#). In some family-based visa categories, relatives are currently slated to wait [more than 100 years to receive a green card](#), which means that many close family members

of U.S. citizens will die before they are reunited with their families. We need to remove these unnecessary barriers to ensure that families can live and prosper together.

II. The Naturalization Backlog Negatively Impacts the U.S. Economy

The United States must streamline and simplify the naturalization process. Naturalization [benefits the economy](#) — naturalized citizens earn 8-11% more annually than non-naturalized immigrants, and if half of all those eligible were to naturalize, the increased earnings could boost GDP by up to [\\$52 billion a year](#). Currently, nearly 9 million immigrants qualify for U.S. citizenship, but the backlog in processing applications has left [more than 700,000 green card holders in limbo](#). Although the [coronavirus pandemic](#) temporarily froze naturalization interviews and [oath ceremonies](#), processing times were increasing long beforehand. It now takes U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) around 10 months on average to approve a citizenship application, more than double the [processing time](#) between 2012 and 2016.

III. Protecting Undocumented Immigrants from Deportation Delivers Major Economic and Civic Benefits

Since it was first launched in 2012, the [DACA](#) (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) program has protected around 800,000 young people from deportation. The Trump administration repeatedly tried to eliminate the program, and barred first-time DACA applicants from applying. But late last year, the federal courts [reinstated the program](#), and now President Biden proposes to create a pathway to citizenship not only for DACA recipients, but for all 11 million undocumented immigrants currently living in the United States.

Such bold reforms would deliver major economic and civic benefits. In 2017, DACA-eligible individuals and [Temporary Protected Status](#) (TPS) holders [held \\$25.2 billion in spending power](#) and contributed more than \$5.5 billion in taxes. When people no longer fear deportation, they also tend to become more engaged and active in their communities, and feel a greater sense of belonging.

According to [a recent Boundless report](#), nearly half the DACA recipients surveyed said they became more politically active after their application was approved, and 52% reported becoming more involved in their community. Their economic prospects also greatly improved — prior to approval, only 45% of DACA recipients were employed compared to 88% who reported having a job after they were approved. In addition, their average annual earnings increased from \$22,595 to \$47,979 per year.