



**CWS Statement to the House Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on Immigration & Citizenship, pertaining to its [hearing](#) entitled "The U.S. Immigration System: The Need for Bold Reforms" on Thursday, February 11, 2020**

As a 75-year old humanitarian organization representing 37 Protestant, Anglican, and Orthodox communions and 24 refugee resettlement offices across 17 states, Church World Service (CWS) urges the Subcommittee to affirm the need and urgency to pass a permanent, legislative solution that includes a pathway to citizenship for all 11 million undocumented immigrants and Temporary Protected Status (TPS) and Deferred Enforced Departure (DED) holders; reunites families; and welcomes asylum seekers and refugees.

**CWS urges Congress to urgently pass legislation creating a pathway to citizenship for 11 million undocumented immigrants currently living in the United States, including undocumented youth and for those with temporary status including people with TPS and DED.** It is long past time for the U.S. to create a humane, just immigration system that honors the dignity and sacred humanity of all people and provides a path to citizenship for all people who call the U.S. home. We urge Congress to work with the Biden administration to repeal harmful, anti-immigrant policies from the previous administration, such as the public charge rules, and transform U.S. immigration laws that removes the white supremacy embedded in our immigration laws and welcomes people from all religions, races, and national origins. CWS honors the leadership, work, and experience of millions of undocumented, LGBTQ, Black, indigenous, labor, and immigrant leaders fearlessly paving the way towards a humane and functional immigration system. CWS strongly supports the *Dream and Promise Act*, which would provide a permanent solution for undocumented youth and TPS/DED holders. It is equally imperative that Congress hold the administration accountable to end immigrant detention and deportations, particularly for Black immigrants who may have been denied a full and fair opportunity to seek asylum in the United States and would experience extreme hardship if returned.

**CWS urges Congress to pass legislation that would restore and strengthen family reunification, clear the family visa backlogs, and expand the Diversity Immigrant Visa program.** Congress should provide a meaningful legislative solution that upholds the sanctity of family unity and promotes the humane and timely reunification of immigrant and refugee families. Today, the [vast majority of immigrants](#) coming to the United States arrive with family visas. However, years of bureaucratic processing delays and lack of legislative reforms have prevented the United States from keeping up with population growth and labor market needs. This has resulted in extreme backlogs, including years- or decades-long wait times for many. CWS strongly supports the *Reuniting Families Act*, which would restore and modernize the family immigration system and increase diversity visas. This bill would clear the family-based and employment-based backlogs, raise the country caps, reclassify lawful permanent residents as immediate relatives, provide relief for orphans, widows, and stepchildren, and protect the families of H-4 visa-holders from losing work authorization or status. It would also expand the number diversity visas, provide equality for same sex partners in our immigration laws, and provide enforcement relief in our immigration system through eliminating the 3- and 10- year bars and providing family unity waivers of inadmissibility and deportability grounds. CWS stands united with faith communities to firmly support the family-based immigration system and diversity immigrant visa program, which have created the rich, vibrant, and multicultural communities that make up our congregations and have strengthened America today.

**CWS urges Congress to support and pass the *Refugee Protection Act*, which would strengthen and modernize the refugee resettlement and asylum programs, support robust federal funding for refugee-related accounts, and hold the administration accountable to rebuild the resettlement program and to end all anti-asylum policies (such as Title 42 expulsions and Migrant Protection Protocols).** An unprecedented 79.5 million people worldwide have been forced from their homes, of which 29.6 million are classified as refugees, having fled their countries to seek safety from persecution. Yet, the gap between the protection needs of refugees and available pathways to safety, such as refugee resettlement, has only widened. After four consecutive years of drastic cuts, refugee resettlement in the United States has fallen to its lowest level since Congress created the modern system in 1980. The unprecedented decimation of the United States Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) during the worst refugee crisis on record has had devastating consequences on refugees left in harm's way, and on our faith communities who are ready to welcome. CWS also strongly supports the *GRACE Act* and the *Lady Liberty Act*, which would set a minimum floor refugee admissions goal of 125,000 refugees. We further urge Congress to consider [refugees' acute challenges](#) as part of any future COVID relief package.