



May 21, 2019

The Honorable Jerrold Nadler
Chair
House Committee on the Judiciary
2132 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Doug Collins
Ranking Member
House Committee on the Judiciary
1504 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Statement for the record of the Committee's markup on, H.R. 2820, the "Dream Act of 2019"; H.R. 2821, the "American Promise Act of 2019"; and H.R. 549, the "Venezuela TPS Act of 2019"

Dear Chairman Nadler and Ranking Member Collins:

As the Washington Director of Bend the Arc: Jewish Action, I write to express our strong support for the American Dream and Promise Act of 2019 (H.R. 6) and commend the Committee for holding this markup on these underlying bills. This crucial legislation will provide a roadmap to citizenship and other necessary protections for immigrant youth and people with Temporary Protected Status (TPS) and Deferred Enforced Departure (DED). Additionally, I urge the Committee to reject any amendments that would weaken the bill, further criminalize immigrants, increase the danger of racial profiling, or increase the funding available to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) or Customs and Border Protection (CPB), agencies which are terrorizing immigrant communities and separating families.

The Dream and Promise Act will protect our immigrant friends, neighbors, and community members--people who've built their lives in the country for decades--and provide necessary roadmaps to citizenship. It also keeps families and communities together, acknowledging the mixed-status nature of many American families today. This bill also offers a stark contrast to the Trump administration's cruel policies and efforts to scapegoat, intimidate, detain, and deport immigrants. The Dream and Promise Act by contrast represents an approach to the treatment of immigrants that enjoys the support of a vast majority of Americans, including Jewish Americans.

The fundamental injustice of country's treatment of immigrants today cuts against the core values of our nation, and is also especially personal for the American Jewish community. American Jews come from many backgrounds, but we share a central story of migration and liberation--throughout our history, Jewish families have been scapegoated, forced to flee their homes, detained, and enslaved. Many of our own families were able to enter America either as a result of the immigration policies of an earlier era or through other means. We are called to work for the justice and dignity of immigrants as an outgrowth of both our Jewish experience as well as our values.

We also know that the growing white nationalist movement that threatens American Jewish communities today--the movement whose supporters attacked synagogues in Pittsburgh and Poway--is the same white nationalist movement threatening immigrants. At its heart, their violence stems from the false belief that the growing population of immigrants, people of color, and Muslims in America will threaten a white majority, instead of strengthening our democracy and fulfilling our country's promise. But we also know that white supremacist violence does not just take the form of mass shootings and vigilante murders. It is also reflected in the violence committed against immigrant families today in the form of family separation, refugee bans, and the misuse of executive power. In this era of resurgent white nationalism that makes so many of us unsafe, it is more crucial than ever that Congress acts to ensure that our laws and policies protect all of our communities--which is exactly what the Dream and Promise Act for immigrants in America today.

Our community has marched, raised our voices, met with our elected officials, and risked arrest in support of immigrants and immigration reform. Just last year, Bend the Arc organized [a historic act of civil disobedience](#) in which 82 Jewish activists were arrested on the grounds of Russell Senate Office Building calling upon the Senate to pass a clean Dream Act. Since then, activists from Bend the Arc: Jewish Action have organized local actions and protests across the country inspired by this civil disobedience, including in California, New York, Illinois, and Massachusetts.

We are only safe in solidarity and the Jewish community will continue to organize, advocate, and show up with our immigrant friends, neighbors, and family members until we create a better America for all. Passing the Dream and Promise Act will be an historic step toward creating that better vision of America. Again, thank you for holding this markup, and for supporting this legislation while opposing any amendments that would weaken its crucial protections for immigrants in America.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jason Kimelman-Block". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a white background.

Rabbi Jason Kimelman-Block
Washington Director, Bend the Arc: Jewish Action