

Immigrant Workers' Rights – May Day Rally Held in Allentown

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[Make the Road Pennsylvania](#)'s Allentown chapter organized the May Day rally advocating immigrant workers' rights – emphasizing undocumented workers. Along with demanding minimum pay and labor rights for undocumented workers, advocates urged the Biden administration to grant citizenship to the 11 million undocumented immigrants in the U.S.

Armando Jimenez Carabin, the Allentown organizer of Make the Road Pennsylvania, came to the United States from Mexico with his family when he was a young boy. "Our own story was that of just making not enough money to live. It was an economical decision, but it's different for every immigrant," Jimenez said.

"A lot of essential workers are undocumented immigrants, and they deserve dignity and respect as they have run this country and at the same time, they haven't received any benefits from COVID-19 legislation and emergency rental relief," he said.

Immigrant Workers Often Exploited by Employers

With or without authorization to work in the U.S., many immigrant workers are often exploited by their employers. They are made to work overtime without additional remuneration. Often, immigrant workers are not paid their minimum hourly wage.

The group also says all workers deserve at least \$15 an hour. "A lot of our members in our community earn \$3 an hour if they're tip wagers. So, the minimum wage is \$7.25 I believe. That's inexcusable. People can't live off that," Jimenez said.

Biden Administration Immigrant Reform Bill

The White House announced the new Bill on January 20, 2021. It includes a range of changes to the existing immigration system:

- Creating a new pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants
- Boosting the number of visas available in the United States – diversity visas, employment-

based visas

- Supplementing existing border resources with technology and infrastructure
- Cracking down on criminal organizations
- Improving the immigration courts and protecting vulnerable individuals

While the new administration has rescinded many of the previous administration's policies and has either issued new policies or reverted to the original policies, Congress has yet to act on substantial portions of the immigration reform bill.

Jimenez is a Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipient. Though he is in a much better situation in the U.S., and he can legally work, it does not give him much comfort with the looming uncertainty of his future immigration status. To conclude, Jimenez says: "We're just fighting for \$15 and citizenship for all. And just to be treated with dignity and respect. We don't think we're asking for too much, but just to be treated like humans," he added.

Senate Minority leader Mitch McConnell has said he is sympathetic to DACA recipients but stated that Congress is unlikely to take up any immigration-related bill in the foreseeable future.

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