84 Mayors from Across the Nation Have Called on Congress and the President to Pass Immigration Reforms

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Scranton, Pennsylvania, Mayor Paige Cognetti, along with 83 other mayors from across the nation, sent a letter to President Joe Biden; Vice President Kamala Harris; U.S. Senate Leader Charles E. Schumer, D-NY; and U.S. House Speaker Nancy
Pelosi, D-CA. The letter urges Congress to make swift immigration reforms, considering the economic benefits of legalizing immigrants and the acute labor shortage.

Mayor Cognetti’s letter came days after U.S. District Judge Andrew S. Hanen entered an order blocking the federal government from granting temporary work permits and deferral from the removal to first-time DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) applicants.

“We will not give up,” Harris said, according to CNN. “I certainly will not give up in making sure that we stand with our dreamers and that we do everything we can to create a pathway towards citizenship.”

Acute Labor Shortages in the Nation

The Scranton mayor said, “In Scranton, we have an employment crisis.” “I’ve talked to business owners who cannot open their doors, or keep their doors open,” because they can't find workers. The U.S. Census data shows that 11.2% of Scranton’s population is Hispanic. It is also true that most undocumented immigrants are employed in essential industries. “To continue to threaten them with deportation after all they’ve done for our country is unconscionable,” Cognetti said.

“Today, there are an estimated 5 million undocumented immigrants working in construction, agriculture, food services, and production, transportation, healthcare, and other essential industries who have risked their lives and the lives of their families to keep our nation running during one of the most challenging periods in modern history,” the mayors wrote.

Legalizing Undocumented Immigrants

Oakland, California, Mayor Libby Schaaf and Tucson, Arizona, Mayor Regina Romero highlighted the economic benefits of providing a path to citizenship for people enrolled in the DACA program, Temporary Protected Status, and farmworkers. Legalizing them would bring $1.5 trillion into the economy.

“I do think it could be a matter of just a couple of months if all the necessary steps are taken,” U.S. Senator Alex Padilla, D-Calif. said, according to Roll Call. “And thus far, my understanding and expectation are that immigration is included in that reconciliation package. It seems optimistic and ambitious, and it is, but it’s also very realistic. We just need a few important things to fall in place.”

“It’s right for our economic future,” Cognetti said. “It’s time for Congress to finally act.”

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