

# *For Our Families* Student Advocacy Toolkit

FIGHTING FOR RELIEF AND PROTECTIONS FOR ALL UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS

## Students Are Essential in the Fight For Our Families

There are more than 5.3 million first- and second-generation immigrant students enrolled in United States colleges and universities. While this immigrant-origin student population is diverse in many ways, for most of them, their immigration story is a family story. The path forward and the movement towards a more just immigration system includes all of our families and loved ones.

Many of us owe our success to our families' sacrifices. Undocumented families are members of our communities, and they shouldn't have to live in the shadows. Everyone deserves safety, certainty, and protections. Our families belong safe and together.

**This toolkit contains suggestions for how you can play a role in helping to pass transformative legislation, both as an individual and as part of a group.**

## Contact Your Senators

Your senators represent you regardless of your citizenship status, and it is their responsibility to hear and respond to the concerns of their constituents. Calling is **the most effective way** to make your voice heard in Congress.

- Each state has two U.S. senators. You can find the phone numbers for their DC offices by [searching here](#).

We encourage students to contact the senators and members of Congress for both their home and school's state if they are different.

### CALL CONGRESS

You can call your senators every week or even every day to express your support for immigration relief and protections for all undocumented immigrants. Double your impact by getting a friend to make calls at the same time as you! Or, host a virtual phone bank during which many folks call their senators all in the span of a few hours and really make sure your voices are heard!

## WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN YOU CALL CONGRESS

When you call members of Congress' offices you will likely end up talking to an intern or staffer who is about your age. The goal in calling is to leave a message with whoever answers the phone. That message will be shared with the member of Congress at a later point.

It's possible that the person who answers the phone will ask a few questions of whoever is calling. Most likely they will ask the caller's name and zip code to ensure that they are a constituent. They may also ask for the caller's address so that they can mail a written response to you from the member's office. We encourage you to share your zip code if asked so that the Congressional office understands that you are a constituent. You do not have to provide any other identifying information about yourself if you don't feel comfortable doing so.

## WHAT TO SAY WHEN YOU CALL CONGRESS

- 1. Introduce yourself with your name.** If relevant you can share where you are a student or what city you live in.
- 2. Say that you are calling to urge your representative or senator to support immigration relief and protections for all 11 million undocumented folks in the U.S.** Talk about how undocumented folks are valued and long-standing members of our communities and that many are risking their health and safety every day as essential workers during the COVID-19 pandemic. Congress must act now, without delay, to protect our families.
- 3. If you'd like, share a personal anecdote** about why this issue is important to you.
- 4. Ask your representative or senators to publicly support and vote yes on legislation that contains immigration relief and protections!**

## HOSTING A VIRTUAL PHONE BANK

Consider organizing a virtual phone bank with a group you are a member of to get multiple people to call Congress at the same time. Below are some suggestions for a successful phone bank.

- 1.** Partner with other student groups to increase participation.
- 2.** Identify a date and time.
- 3.** Book a room or area of campus where students can stop by to get the information they need to call Congress. Entice them with snacks! If you are virtual, schedule a video or conference call where people can join to learn how to call Congress and what to say.
- 4.** Share the tips in this toolkit.
- 5.** Make lots of calls to Congress!

*Tip: If you are organizing an event with friends and peers at your school, you can make it easy for folks to make calls by providing the contact information of the senators for your college or university.*