

April 21, 2020

The Honorable Susan M. Collins  
413 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510-1904

The Honorable Chellie Pingree  
2162 Rayburn House Office Building  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Angus S. King, Jr.  
133 Hart Senate Office Building  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jared Golden  
1223 Longworth House Office Building  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Senator Collins, Senator King, Representative Pingree, and Representative Golden:

As Mainers grapple with a scary pandemic turning our lives upside down, it is critical to ensure that immigrant families are not abandoned in our federal response. Low- and middle-income immigrants are disproportionately impacted by the economic and health effects of this crisis,<sup>1</sup> and comprise an outsized percentage of our essential workforce.<sup>2</sup> COVID-19 does not discriminate, and neither should our public health and economic stimulus policies.

The Families First Coronavirus Response and CARES Acts left low- and middle-income immigrant families out of our nation's recovery plans. Families with at least one taxpayer with an individual tax identification number (ITIN) are completely cut out of the recovery rebates. This means that hard-working people without documentation as well as mixed-status families (many with US citizen children or spouses) are going without the vital cash infusion that their neighbors are receiving from the government. Moreover, the legislation failed to expand Medicaid to immigrants who currently cannot access it, including DACA recipients, Temporary Protected Status holders, green card holders who have had

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<sup>1</sup> Samantha Artiga, Rachel Garfield, and Kendal Orgera, Communities of Color At Higher Risk for Health and Economic Challenges Due to COVID-19, Apr. 7 2020, accessed at <https://www.kff.org/disparities-policy/issue-brief/communities-of-color-at-higher-risk-for-health-and-economic-challenges-due-to-covid-19/>.

<sup>2</sup> Laura Santhanam, New Study Shows 1 In 6 US Healthcare Workers Are Immigrants, Dec. 5 2018, accessed at <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/health/new-study-shows-1-in-6-u-s-health-care-workers-are-immigrants>.

permanent residence less than five years, people without documentation, and countless other Mainers.

Policy is also needed to combat the chilling effect of the administration's destructive anti-immigrant agenda. We are hearing that people from Maine's immigrant community fear going to hospitals or healthcare centers because of the new punitive public charge rule and increased ICE and CBP enforcement. It is imperative always, but especially during a public health crisis, that everyone feel safe when seeking medical care.

The undersigned Maine organizations call on Maine's congressional delegation to support the inclusion of the following provisions in the next COVID-19 relief package:

- Stop implementation of the Department of Homeland Security and Department of State's public charge rule.
- Suspend immigration enforcement actions against survivors of domestic violence, trafficking, and other serious crimes.
- Release children and vulnerable adults from immigration detention.
- Bar immigration enforcement actions in sensitive locations like healthcare facilities, religious institutions, and schools.
- Provide Medicaid coverage for COVID-19-related services to everyone, regardless of immigration status.
- Allocate funding to provide language access and public outreach on coronavirus preparedness, response, and recovery.
- Include immigrant taxpayers with an individual tax identification number (ITIN) in all cash relief benefits.
- Automatically extend work permits during the national emergency period and for a period of sixty days after the emergency ends.

Mainers must confront this crisis together, which is impossible when some of our community members are completely left behind by the government. We ask you to commit to demanding the inclusion of these measures in the next COVID-19 relief package.

For further information, please contact Julia Brown at the Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project, [jbrown@ilapmaine.org](mailto:jbrown@ilapmaine.org).

Sincerely,

Bangor Area - Carasque, El Salvador Sister Cities Project

Capital Area New Mainers Project

Cultivating Community

Frannie Peabody Center

Gateway Community Services Maine

Greater Portland Family Promise

Hispanic Ministry, Portland Diocese

Hope Acts

House of Languages Inc.

Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project

Iraqi Community Association of Maine

Isuken Coop

L'Africana Market LLC

Lewiston United for Peace & Hope

Maine Access Immigrants Network

Maine Business Immigration Coalition

Maine Episcopal Network for Justice

Maine Equal Justice

Maine Immigrants' Rights Coalition

Maine Mobile Health Program, Inc

Maine People's Alliance

Maine Unitarian Universalist State Advocacy Network

Mano En Mano

Martin Luther King Jr. Fellows

MidCoast New Mainers Support Group  
Mindbridge  
New Mainers Resource Center, Portland Adult Education  
New Roots Cooperative Farm  
Portland Adult Education  
Power in Community Alliances (PICA)  
Preble Street  
Presente! Maine  
ProsperityME  
Restorative Justice Institute of Maine  
Rwandese Community Association of Maine  
Somali Community Center of Maine  
Southern Maine Workers' Center  
Sustainable Livelihoods Relief Organization  
United Youth Empowerment Services  
Welcoming the Stranger  
WIC Program