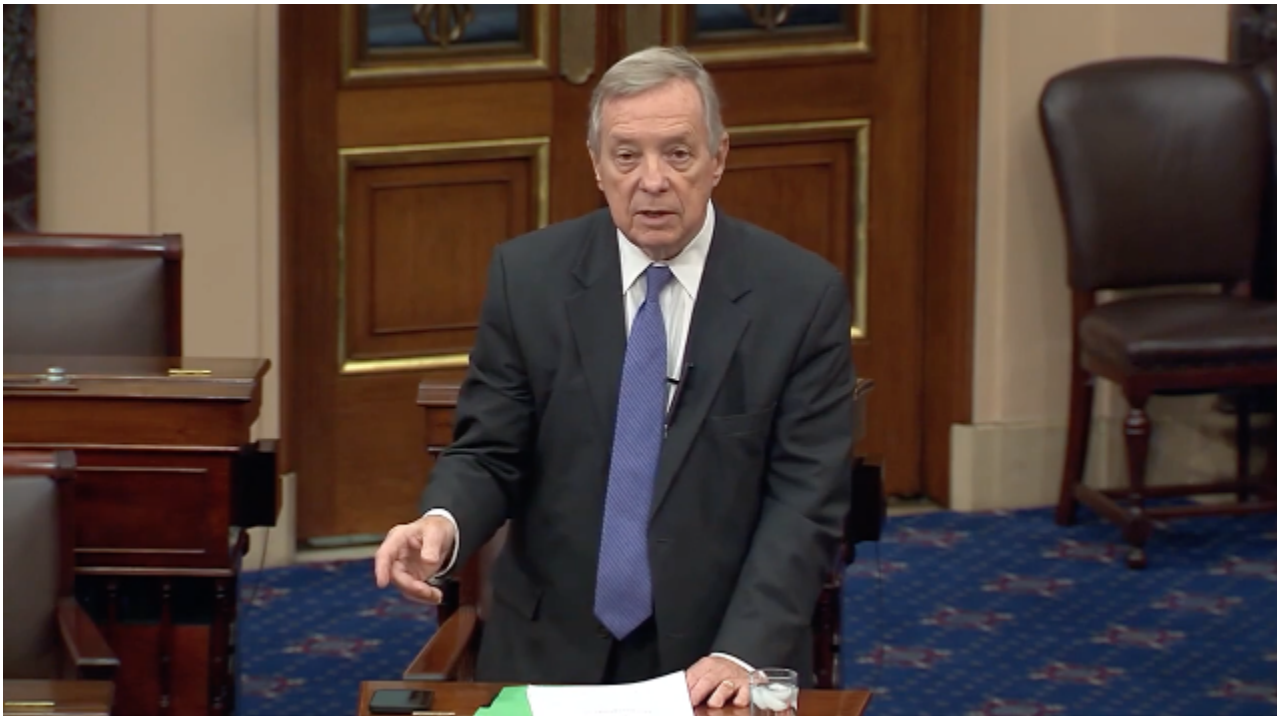


# **Durbin, Senate Democrats Urge President Biden To Take Executive Action To Provide Relief For Undocumented Immigrants**

by Submitted by Sen. Durbin's Office  
March 27 2024 8:44 AM



CHICAGO – U.S. Senate Majority Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL), Chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee, led a group of 19 Senate Democrats in a letter requesting administrative relief for undocumented immigrants.

As the Biden Administration [considers](#) executive actions on the border after Senate Republicans balked at a bipartisan border deal in February at the whim of former

President Trump, this letter outlines recommendations for executive actions to streamline immigration relief for the undocumented population and DACA holders in the United States.

In addition to Durbin, the letter is signed by U.S. Senators Alex Padilla (D-CA), Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV), Ben Ray Lujan (D-NM), Robert Menendez (D-NJ), Michael Bennet (D-CO), Cory Booker (D-NJ), Laphonza Butler (D-CA), Ben Cardin (D-MD), Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), John Fetterman (D-PA), Mazie Hirono (D-HI), Ed Markey (D-MA), Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Jacky Rosen (D-NV), Bernie Sanders (I-VT), Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), Raphael Warnock (D-GA), and Ron Wyden (D-OR).

The Senators begin by underscoring the contributions by undocumented immigrants to our country, writing: “We urge your Administration to take all available actions to streamline pathways to lawful status for undocumented immigrants, providing certainty to the American businesses, communities, and families who rely on them. In 2019 alone, undocumented immigrants contributed an estimated \$9.7 billion in federal and state taxes and over \$11 billion in social security contributions. Over 1.1 million U.S. citizens are married to an undocumented immigrant, and roughly 4.9 million U.S. citizen children have at least one undocumented parent. Deporting all such individuals—as former President Donald Trump has threatened to do if reelected —would devastate the American economy and destroy American families.”

Then, the Senators outline four recommendations for the Biden Administration to take. First, the group recommends that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) create a process to protect and unify American families, saying “The more than 1.1 million undocumented spouses married to a U.S. citizen have lived in the U.S. on average 16 years, and many have been married to their U.S. citizen spouses for at least a decade. Yet, these families live in fear that they may be separated from their loved one due to deportation ... We urge your Administration to return some of this discretion to immigration officials, and create a process to allow undocumented immigrants married to U.S. citizens to seek parole, on a case-by-case basis, if doing so would be warranted for urgent humanitarian reasons or to advance a significant public benefit.”

Then, the Senators recommend executive action to permit spouses of Americans to work while their green card cases are pending, writing: “Today, some spouses of U.S. citizens applying for a green card must be processed at a U.S. consulate abroad. However, they face significant processing delays, due in large part to backlogs in the provisional waiver program ... We urge your Administration to take all available steps to reduce processing times for these applications. Please also consider all available options to assist these families and give applicants stability and a chance to work while they wait for an approval, similar to applicants seeking adjustment from within the United States.”

The Senators continue by encouraging action to streamline the process for DACA holders to change to a nonimmigrant status, saying: “The Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program has offered many young undocumented immigrants an opportunity to pursue higher education and meaningful careers ... However, many applicants face processing hurdles when they seek to change status ... We urge you to take steps to streamline the process by which DACA holders may obtain another status, such as increasing coordination between the Department of State and USCIS to ensure timely scheduling of appointments for DACA holders seeking to change status.”

Finally, the Senators recommend that the Administration modernize cancellation of removal rules to keep family caregivers together and issue a regulation that a group of Senators [encouraged](#) last year, writing, “Last year, we requested that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Department of Justice (DOJ) issue a regulation to specify that certain nonpermanent residents may be eligible to apply for cancellation of removal without first being placed in removal proceedings under section 240 of the Immigration and Nationality Act. We were pleased to see this proposal on the Unified Regulatory Agenda, and urge DHS and DOJ to issue this regulation.”

Full text of the letter is available [here](#).