

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 29, 2021

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Essential Ohio: Path to Citizenship in Congress is “Key to Unlocking Brighter Future” for Ohio Families

Washington, DC – Congress can lift thousands of Ohio children out of poverty by creating a path to citizenship for their parents. Essential Ohio calls on each and every member of the Ohio congressional delegation to ensure this policy becomes law in 2021.

Around [50,000 people in Ohio](#) would directly benefit from one of the citizenship proposals on the table in Congress, including many essential workers. Citizenship for parents would lift thousands of Ohio children out of poverty, according to the [Children Thrive Action Network](#), without any action required from the state government. **Children’s mental and physical health would also improve—something that cannot be measured in dollars and cents.**

The Essential Ohio Campaign has been interviewing essential workers throughout the pandemic about their experiences. Many of the people working on Ohio farms and factories have stories that track the experiences of this mom; we’ll call her “Nancy”:

I am an essential worker working in agriculture, specifically in an egg farm. I pack the eggs. I work from Monday to Saturday from 6:30 am to 4:30 pm. I also work some Sundays from 6:30 am to Noon. I’ve been working here for three years. I am a single mother with three teenage children. My husband was deported some years ago. I am the only breadwinner at home. My oldest girl has now entered the [U.S.] military.

Nancy showed interviewers with La Conexión a photo of her daughter, and went on to say that her oldest son wants to leave school so he can work and help support the family. She’s insisting he stay in school.

Lynn Tramonte, Director of the Ohio Immigrant Alliance, said: “These are the types of extra challenges families face, because Congress has not opened up a path to citizenship. If Congress acts, Nancy could continue to support her family without having to work sixty-five hours/week and miss out on milestones. Her children could focus on being kids and young adults, preparing for their own futures, rather than working to sustain the household. Maybe one day, the whole family could be reunited in Ohio. Deportation should not be a life sentence. Full citizenship is the key to unlocking a brighter future for this Ohio family and so many others.”

Added **Emily Brown, Staff Attorney with Advocates for Basic Legal Equality**: “A path to citizenship would be the official recognition so many need in order to operate fully in U.S. society: to drive a car, open a bank account, access credit, and continue to build strong families. They are already Ohioans, it’s up to Congress to make them Americans.”

#EssentialOH is powered by ABLE, Justice for Migrant Women, the Ohio Immigrant Alliance, Cleveland Jobs with Justice, La Conexión, Policy Matters, Cincinnati Interfaith Workers Center, and Central Ohio Worker Center.

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