Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 24, 2014

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President,

The undersigned Members of Congress respectfully request that you suspend any further deportations and expand the successful deferred action program to all those who would be potential citizens under immigration reform.

We stand by the 543 faith-based, labor, neighborhood, legal, and civil rights organizations, including the AFL-CIO, MALDEF, United We Dream, and NDLON that support this proposal, and agree that this is the best way to advance the path to citizenship for undocumented individuals across the country.

We appreciate your commitment to reforming our nation's broken immigration policies for the benefit of all. In the context of the intransigence of a small number of legislators that are willing to hold the legislation hostage unless we pass a series of incredibly extreme proposals, a cessation of the deportation of the 1,100 potential citizens expelled daily would do a great deal to set the parameters of the conversation.

Let us not take these policies lightly. Every deportation of a father, a sister, or a neighbor tears at our social consciousness; every unnecessary raid and detention seriously threatens the fabric of civil liberties we swore to uphold. We are talking about American families and American communities. Criminalizing American families or giving local law enforcement the responsibility to choose who stays and who goes, is not the right option.

Our efforts in Congress will only be helped by the sensible and moral step of stopping deportations.

As we have seen with deferred action for childhood arrivals, such relief brings with it the benefit of active participation in the debate by undocumented people themselves. When their stories are known and voices are heard, we have witnessed how the debate shifts. The fear and xenophobia that block progress only shrink in the display of their courage. But left unchecked, the threat of deportations will prevent so many from coming forward and contributing to the national conversation. Instead, the specter of deportation removes the human and grounding element in any political discussion—those individuals who are most directly impacted.

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The senseless opposition that neither reflects the public will, nor the moral responsibility we hold, should not allow us to prolong the needless suffering of those who could so soon have their place in our society fully recognized. In fact, taking a strong step toward granting relief would move us in the direction of where the immigration debate rightfully should start, with the legalization of eleven million men and women who call the United States their home.

As the debate proceeds, it is necessary to expand the protections of our future citizens that were established by the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program and grant it to the family and neighbors and all of those who have made their lives here but are yet to be fully recognized.

We cannot continue to witness potential citizens in our districts go through the anguish of deportation when legalization could be just around the corner for them. We look to you to firmly contribute to advancing inclusion for immigrants by suspending deportations and expanding DACA.

Sincerely,

The undersigned

Raul M. Grijalva
Member of Congress

Yvette Clarke
Member of Congress

Madeleine Bordallo
Member of Congress

Tony Cárdenas
Member of Congress

John Delaney
Member of Congress

Lloyd Doggett
Member of Congress

Eni Faleomavaega
Member of Congress

Sam Farr
Member of Congress

Alan Grayson
Member of Congress

Luis Gutiérrez
Member of Congress

Eleanor Holmes-Norton
Member of Congress

Rush Holt
Member of Congress

Michael Honda
Member of Congress

Sheila Jackson-Lee
Member of Congress

Barbara Lee
Member of Congress

John Lewis
Member of Congress

Alan Lowenthal
Member of Congress

Gwen Moore
Member of Congress

Grace Napolitano
Member of Congress

Beto O'Rourke
Member of Congress

Mark Pocan
Member of Congress

Charles Rangel
Member of Congress

Bobby L. Rush
Member of Congress

Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress

Mark Takano
Member of Congress

Dina Titus
Member of Congress

Marc Veasey
Member of Congress

Filemon Vela
Member of Congress

Judy Chu
Member of Congress

Keith Ellison
Member of Congress

Janice Hahn
Member of Congress

Steven Horsford
Member of Congress

Charles B. Rangel
Member of Congress

Juan Vargas
Member of Congress