

STANFORD
UNIVERSITY



MARC TESSIER-LAVIGNE
President

March 11, 2021

The Honorable Alex Padilla
U.S. Senate
Chair, Subcommittee on Immigration,
Citizenship, and Border Safety
B03 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Zoe Lofgren
U.S. House of Representatives
Chair, Subcommittee on Immigration and
Citizenship
1401 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Cornyn
U.S. Senate
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on
Immigration, Citizenship, and Border
Safety
517 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom McClintock
U.S. House of Representatives
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on
Immigration and Citizenship
2312 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Padilla, Ranking Member Cornyn, Chair Lofgren, and Ranking Member McClintock:

As the 117th Congress embarks on efforts to reform our nation's immigration laws, I urge you to take action to protect our nation's DACA recipients and undocumented youth and ensure that the United States remains a destination for the best and brightest from all over the world.

With the upcoming consideration in the House of Representatives of H.R. 6, the American Dream and Promise Act of 2021, Congress is poised to take an important step forward in the enactment of a legislative solution for our nation's DACA recipients, undocumented youth, and for others throughout the country that have long called America home. It is essential that the Senate also act quickly and approve legislation that provides the stability and safety that DACA recipients and undocumented youth need. In keeping with our deeply held American values, they deserve the opportunity to gain legal resident status, a pathway to citizenship, and to flourish in our society.

It is also imperative that Congress act to provide permanent legislative solutions for all those that seek to study, work, and live in the United States. America's research universities are the engine of economic progress in our country. International students, scholars, and staff bring unique perspectives to our classrooms and our research teams, enriching the learning environment and helping us find more creative and effective solutions to the world's problems. As an immigrant and a scientist myself, I know firsthand the value of research teams whose members bring diverse expertise from all over the world.

Office of the President

Building 10, Main Quadrangle Stanford, CA 94305-2060 T (650) 723-2481 F (650) 725-6847

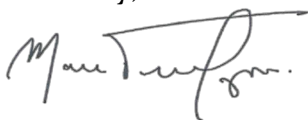
To maintain our academic, scientific, and economic leadership, comprehensive policy changes to our immigration laws are needed. The introduction of the U.S. Citizenship Act of 2021 is a major step forward to reaching the fair and just reforms needed to our nation's immigration system. Importantly, it proposes to remove a major barrier in the student visa process that has long hindered many international students' ability to study in the United States. By removing the requirement that international postsecondary students prove they do not intend to remain in the United States after completing their degree, the U.S. Citizenship Act of 2021 would not only streamline the visa process, but also would encourage the world's best and brightest to remain in the United States and contribute to our country's future.

The proposed reforms in the U.S. Citizenship Act of 2021 to the employment-based immigrant visa programs would also encourage the best minds to remain in the United States. Clearing the backlog of applications, raising the overall cap, eliminating the per-country caps, and providing a cap exemption for STEM PhD graduates in certain fields are all important steps to ensure the United States retains the talent needed to fuel our nation's economic progress. As these provisions move forward in the legislative process, I encourage you also to expand the fields eligible for cap exempted visas to ensure that at least the full breadth of scientific fields are included, such as the biological and biomedical sciences. COVID-19 has highlighted what we have long known to be true, that knowledge from scientists in all fields from all over the world is crucial to understanding and responding to global challenges.

Despite these encouraging proposals for comprehensive reform, I remain deeply concerned about the challenges that our students and scholars from certain countries, in particular those from China, face in their ability to learn, collaborate, and make contributions to our fundamental research enterprise. Stanford has long supported immigration reform efforts that balance national security concerns with policies that embody the American values of opportunity and fairness. As you work to reform our nation's immigration laws, I respectfully urge you to be attentive to the challenges these individuals face and ensure that reforms do not have the effect or appearance of excluding people based on their country of origin.

The United States is strong and prosperous because we are a nation of immigrants. If we are to truly drive the discovery and transmission of knowledge to accelerate solutions for humanity and educate students for a life of purpose, then comprehensive immigration reform is needed now more than ever. We look forward to working with you and your colleagues in Congress to move these policy changes forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Marc Tessier-Lavigne". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Marc Tessier-Lavigne