

July 2024

2024 Immigrant Justice Platform

Our Work



Purpose

The Center for Popular Democracy's Immigration Team prepared this document as a companion to [2024 CPD Immigration Platform: Our Vision](#)¹. Together, these two documents outline the overarching values and strategies that guide the CPD Network's immigration campaigns, reflect our affiliates and their members' vision and priorities, and provide consistent language for narrative and political education immigration work. Intended audiences for these documents include CPD staff, affiliates, our members, policymakers, journalists, and funders.

Who We Are

[The Center for Popular Democracy \(CPD\)](#) builds the power of communities to ensure the country embodies our vision of an inclusive, equitable society – where people of color, immigrants, working families, women, and LGBTQ+ communities thrive together, supported by a resilient economy and political institutions that reflect our priorities. To this end, CPD has designated campaign teams focused on specific issues affecting the communities we serve, including an Immigration campaign. Fifty-three affiliate

organizations across 34 states, Puerto Rico, and Washington, D.C., comprise the CPD Network.

CPD Immigration Network

At CPD, we deeply value collaboration. **We work hand in hand with our affiliates and partners to help immigrant communities directly impacted by anti-immigration policies at the state and national levels.** We provide members and leaders with context, frameworks, and information to assist them in responding to the fast-changing political landscape and in understanding different threats and opportunities in immigration policy. As part of this work, we train member leaders on organizing skills and offer practical tools that support base-building. This collaborative effort creates a common language, expands our analytical reach, and increases our ability to build solidarity and act with a common purpose.



CPD coordinates and mobilizes to ensure members and leaders maintain an active presence in local and state legislatures and Washington, D.C. We organize rapid-response actions responding to federal immigration threats from proposed legislation, the federal appropriations process, and Supreme Court cases. At the local and state levels, we support and uplift our affiliates' campaigns on various issues impacting immigrant communities, including housing access, access to healthcare, education, labor rights, and economic justice. CPD also facilitates a vital role in coordinating rapid response amongst affiliates and partners on many policy issues, including those discussed below.

Doñas Academy

In September 2022, CPD launched the [Las Doñas Academy](#) in response to the needs expressed by our Immigrant Justice cohort (which includes multiple affiliates such as [Make the Road New York](#), [Make the Road Connecticut](#), [Make the Road New Jersey](#), [Make the Road Nevada](#), [COPAL](#) (Communities Organizing Latine Power and Action), and [PCUN](#) (Pineros Y Campesinos Unidos del Noroeste). **This initiative, developed in collaboration with CPD's Base-building team, is designed to strengthen the organizing capacity of the CPD Network's affiliate members and leaders.** The program, specifically for monolingual Spanish-speaking women, is making significant contributions by mobilizing more than 350 *Doñas* throughout the country, including states like Arizona, Connecticut, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, , and Texas. Since its inception, the program has grown CPD and our affiliates' base and inspired hope for a more inclusive and equitable society by giving people the tools and information they need to represent themselves in any room.

The *Doñas Academy* focuses on the skills used to build a base, deepen our organizing work, and take collective action. We encourage participants to participate actively in the virtual training and utilize diverse, interactive digital tools and facilitated discussions to ensure a healthy and accessible learning environment. During each session, we share immigration language to provide consistent comprehension of



different terms and phrases and assign follow-up actions for the subsequent training to practice the skills and framework covered. Through these base-building activities, we empower our members as leaders and cultivate their capacity to build organizational power, increase access and accessibility of organizing resources and materials, and facilitate alignment among immigrant justice organizations — advancing toward our vision of building a world where we all can thrive, despite citizenship status. The *Doñas* represent an empowered collective that mobilizes and takes action around the issues that affect immigrants, working at the forefront of dozens of lobby visits, rallies, and town halls to uplift healthcare, housing, worker justice, and, of course, immigrant justice.

Our Advocacy And Organizing

Immigrant communities themselves must lead in determining what policies can best ensure their safety and well-being. That is why CPD works closely with our affiliates to amplify immigrants' stories and policy demands.

Immigration Detention: Putting People Over Profits

While failing to address the need for immigration reform, there is one area where the U.S. government has spent substantial money and attention in recent decades: the increased criminalization of immigrants and the militarization of our immigration system. **The U.S. spends billions of dollars every year to maintain the world's most extensive immigration detention system**, with almost 200 detention centers filled with people deprived of their liberties, denied access to legal representation, separated from their families, and subjected to severe medical neglect.² Corporations profit handsomely by contracting with the government to run these centers – and by coercing detained immigrants into working for as little as one dollar per day.³ In the broader economy, corporations also pad their profits by exploiting the labor of a racialized, precarious segment of the working class under constant threat of deportation.



Although the contributions of immigrants to their communities go well beyond economics, it is worth noting that immigrants added \$2 trillion to the U.S. GDP in 2016⁴ and nearly \$580 billion in taxes in 2022;⁵ indeed, immigrants are “powering the U.S. economy.”⁶ Instead of continuing to fund an ineffective, punitive system, alternative measures that government spending should focus on include investing in community-based resettlement services, rehabilitation-and-reentry support, funding for just economic transitions, ensuring access to counsel, removing barriers to navigating the immigration system, and investments in border communities, rather than continuing to increase ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) and CBP (Customs and Border Protection) funding. CPD has worked consistently with partner organizations that highlight the pervasive impacts of this enforcement funding and advocates on these issues as part of our work on the federal appropriations process.

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)

The Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, created in 2012, allowed over 800,000 individuals to remain in the U.S., attend school, work, and live without fear of deportation. There are currently over 500,000 people actively enrolled in DACA (and nearly 100,000 pending applications as of the end of 2023, stalled by anti-immigrant litigation).⁷

DACA did not happen overnight. A sustained movement that began in the early 2000s and led by young undocumented immigrants, or "Dreamers," achieved it.⁸

After early efforts to pass the *DREAM Act* (which would have provided a path to permanent residency for many of these youths) repeatedly failed in Congress,⁹ undocumented and other immigrant youth grew increasingly frustrated by inaction on the federal level, the limits of large but distant national immigrant advocacy organizations, and the severity of Obama-era deportation and immigrant detention policies.¹⁰ In 2010, young people held direct actions and civil disobedience and marched and rallied to force officials to take action.¹¹ In June 2012, President Obama finally relented to their pressure with the announcement of DACA.



DACA was a resounding victory for the immigrant youth movement. It allowed hundreds of thousands of people to achieve their full potential in the only home they've ever known. However, from the beginning, DACA was a temporary measure that did not offer a path to citizenship. The future of DACA is in limbo, as is the future of those who have benefitted from the program and their families. In 2017, the Trump administration announced it would be ending DACA, a decision subsequently enjoined by courts that

left protections in place for those who already had DACA but halted new applications.¹² DACA will likely get struck down by the Supreme Court of the United States sometime in the next two years.¹³

CPD, along with affiliate and partner groups, is part of the [Home is Here coalition](#), which seeks to raise awareness of the DACA program's importance and offer resources to help DACA recipients navigate the program's current uncertainty.

TPS (Temporary Protected Status)

Temporary Protected Status (TPS) helps people find stability by granting individuals from specifically-designated countries temporary status, work authorization, and protection from deportation. Overall, TPS-eligible individuals contribute nearly \$31 billion annually to the U.S. economy.¹⁴ Congress created TPS in 1990; TPS was granted to nationals of El Salvador that same year.¹⁵ TPS is granted based on the conditions of the origin country, such as natural disasters, political instability, or armed conflict.¹⁶

TPS designations often follow destabilizing or destructive interventions by the U.S. and other major powers abroad, as in the case of Central America.¹⁷ Throughout its almost 35-year history, both Democratic and Republican administrations have granted TPS to multiple countries in regions including Latin America, Asia, Africa, Eastern Europe, and the Middle East.

As an administrative tool, Presidents have the discretion to award TPS based on country conditions, allowing the government to respond in real time to crises. But this makes TPS protections temporary, unstable, and subject to shifting political whims. TPS has suffered multiple



threats in recent years, and calls to designate or renew TPS protections have too often been ignored.¹⁸ Unfortunately, even individuals who have had TPS for decades must continuously renew their status.¹⁹

The countries with a current TPS designation include Afghanistan, Burma (Myanmar), Cameroon, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Haiti, Honduras, Nepal, Nicaragua, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Ukraine, Venezuela, and Yemen.²⁰ There are ongoing campaigns to ensure the TPS redesignation of these countries once their statuses expire and, in some cases, expand the country designation so that more people can be protected. There are also campaigns calling for the designation of TPS protections for additional countries, including Ecuador,²¹ the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guatemala, Mali, and Mauritania.²²

CPD and its affiliates and partners have been particularly involved in efforts to protect and extend TPS designations for Central American countries, including Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala. Similarly, CPD affiliates, and individual *Doñas*, have been involved in advocacy efforts to designate TPS for Ecuador, including actions in Washington, D.C., and popular education at the local level.

The Registry Act

No temporary measures will fulfill the need for a permanent solution to providing citizenship for all. Our family members, neighbors, colleagues, and friends deserve the opportunity to come out of the shadows. This is long overdue and will significantly impact not only undocumented individuals but also the broader communities that they belong to and help to sustain daily.

One proposal for providing this crucial protection is the Renewing Immigration Provisions of the Immigration Act of 1929, often referred to as the “Registry” Act. If the Registry Act passes, it would



update the registry date, which **could provide approximately 8 million immigrants with permanent legal status**. This is based on the discretion granted to the Department of Homeland Security Secretary by the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) to grant lawful admission for permanent residence (a “green card”) to certain immigrants based on a specific “registry” date. This registry date has been updated several times – the most recent was during the passage of the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA), which moved the cut-off date (by which immigrants hoping to apply for permanent residence must have entered the country) to January 1, 1972. **The registry date will remain obsolete without a new update** (as proposed in the Registry Act). **With an updated registry date, millions of individuals who have lived and worked in their communities for years and even decades could finally be eligible for a green card.**²³

Rather than creating a patchwork of provisions and adding further complexity to existing immigration law, **a single registry date update would offer universal relief to Dreamers, TPS holders, and other long-time community members**. CPD will continue to work to support this legislation and make it clear to members of Congress that a straightforward and comprehensive solution exists, provided the political will to implement it.

SUPPORT OUR WORK

If you would like to receive more information about our work or the specific policy objectives detailed above, please contact *National Immigration Organizer Tony Alarcon* at talarcon@populardemocracy.org or *Senior Policy Strategist Iris Figueroa* at ifigueroa@populardemocracy.org

Endnotes

1. See <link to report page on CPD site>
2. <https://www.detentionwatchnetwork.org/issues/detention-101>
3. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/29/opinion/forced-labor-immigrants.html>;
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4. <https://www.fwd.us/news/immigration-facts-the-positive-economic-impact-of-immigration/>
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6. <https://time.com/6963553/immigration-u-s-economy/>
7. <https://www.presidentsalliance.org/breakdown-of-dreamer-with-and-without-daca/>
8. <https://unitedwedream.org/who-we-are/our-story/>;
<https://newlaborforum.cuny.edu/2015/01/19/dreamers-unbound-immigrant-youth-mobilizing/>;
<https://sur.conectas.org/en/a-force-to-be-reckoned-with/>
9. <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/dream-act-overview>
10. <https://newlaborforum.cuny.edu/2015/01/19/dreamers-unbound-immigrant-youth-mobilizing/>;
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11. https://www.dissentmagazine.org/online_articles/the-dreamers-movement-comes-of-age/
12. <https://immigrationforum.org/article/fact-sheet-on-deferred-action-for-childhood-arrivals-daca>
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19. <https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/temporary-protected-status>
20. <https://www.boundless.com/immigration-resources/temporary-protected-status/>
21. <https://www.mprnews.org/story/2024/05/01/nonprofit-copal-calls-on-state-leaders-to-support-temporary-protected-status-for-ecuador>
22. <https://www.fwd.us/news/temporary-protected-status-tps-5-things-to-know/>
23. <https://www.chirla.org/registry/>;
<https://www.chirla.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/CHIRLA-Immigration-Registry-Pager.pdf>



The Center for Popular Democracy works to create equity, opportunity and a dynamic democracy in partnership with high-impact base-building organizations, organizing alliances, and progressive unions. CPD strengthens our collective capacity to envision and win an innovative pro-worker, pro-immigrant, racial and economic justice agenda.