



February 11, 2022

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Senate Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Leader Schumer:

We write on behalf of the UnidosUS Affiliate Council to urge you, as negotiations begin again on the “Build Back Better Act” (BBB Act), to ensure that the budget reconciliation package continues to fulfill your commitment to reduce racial disparities and advance an equitable recovery for the Hispanic community and other communities of color.

The UnidosUS Affiliate Council serves as a voice for, and represents the partnership between, [UnidosUS](#), the nation’s largest Hispanic civil rights and advocacy organization, and our most important constituency—our nearly 300 [Affiliates](#) that serve the Latino community and their families across the nation. We provide guidance to UnidosUS on its programs and public policy, and on strengthening regional networks and promoting the work of Affiliates.

We thank you for and applaud the enactment last year of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). Together these bills help Latinos, and all Americans, weather the health and economic challenges brought on by the global pandemic, rebuild our infrastructure, and create jobs to move our communities toward a better and stronger future.

While the federal investments of these bills are historic, without the enactment of the BBB Act, progress toward a lasting, equitable recovery in 2022 will stall. Indeed, Latino families we serve in our nationwide network have benefited from key ARPA gains, including significant reductions in poverty, child hunger, and the uninsured, which, without action, will backslide and disappear with severe health and economic consequences for our communities. From a Latino perspective, the following provisions of the House-passed BBB Act are critical to preventing these detrimental harms to families who have long faced discrimination and exclusion and meeting your and President Biden’s commitment to “build back better” for all communities:

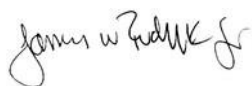
- **Expands access to affordable health coverage** by extending subsidies for ACA health care premiums, closing the Medicaid coverage gap, and increasing federal funding for Puerto Rico’s (and other territories’) Medicaid programs. Expanding health coverage is crucial to the well-being of Latinos given that they make up nearly 30% of the overall remaining uninsured.
- **Reduces poverty for all children** by extending ARPA’s Child Tax Credit (CTC) expansions, including permanent refundability. Critically, CTC eligibility is restored to immigrant children with Individual Tax Identification Numbers (ITINs), who were unfairly denied

access by the Trump tax cuts in 2017. Overall, the CTC policy is estimated to benefit more than 17.5 million Latino children.

- **Decreases hunger** by expanding access to the Summer EBT program nationwide and free school meals during the academic year and the summer when school is out. While Latino household food insecurity [decreased](#) (from nearly 33% in April 2020 to 25.7% in April 2021), this trend will stall and reverse without further lasting and durable child nutrition investments.
- **Keeps families in their homes** by investing \$100 billion combined in rental assistance, downpayment assistance for first-generation homeowners, and to bolster public housing. These housing investments will help Latinos, less than 40% of whom had high confidence that they could make next month's mortgage or rent payment, according to a recent Census Bureau [survey](#).
- **Safeguards our immigrant and frontline workforce and their families** by creating a work permit program for the undocumented, including the estimated five million essential workers who have helped our country through the pandemic. This would protect the undocumented—who have lived an average of 15 years in the United States and have [more than 16.7 million family members and roughly six million American children](#)—from deportation, keep families together, and ease pandemic workforce disruptions and shortages.
- **Expand access to college and earning a degree** by increasing the maximum Pell Grant and funding college completion grants which are critically needed to ensure that low-income students (including DACA recipients) successfully enroll and complete college and earn a degree. This would reduce discrimination, as [roughly 31%](#) of Latino adults have a college degree compared to 58% of white adults, although Latino students make up one in five students.

The promises of President Biden's "Build Back Better" agenda must be realized with these vital provisions included in budget reconciliation. Without them, Latino workers, families, children, and students will continue to face harmful barriers to reaching their full potential, and our nation's leaders will fail to deliver on their repeated pledge to reduce racial disparities and rebuild the nation for the benefit of everyone.

On Behalf of the UnidosUS Affiliate Council,



James Rudyk, Executive Director, Northwest Center
Chair of the UnidosUS Affiliate Council