

December 1, 2022

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

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

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

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader Schumer, and Minority Leaders McConnell and McCarthy:

On behalf of UnidosUS, I write to urge you to address the most pressing needs of our nation's 62 million Latinos before the end of the year. Time is running out to enact three critical policies for Hispanics and their families: (1) an expansion of the Child Tax Credit (CTC) to meaningfully reduce child poverty; (2) health coverage protections for those with Medicaid; and (3) a permanent solution to the unresolved status of Dreamers and other immigrants who face an uncertain future.

UnidosUS, previously known as the National Council of La Raza (NCLR), is the nation's largest Hispanic civil rights and advocacy organization which has built a stronger country by creating opportunities for Latinos for more than 50 years. Through its unique combination of expert research, advocacy, programs, and an Affiliate Network of nearly 300 community-based organizations across the U.S. and Puerto Rico, UnidosUS simultaneously challenges the social, economic, and political barriers at the national and local levels.

Expand the Child Tax Credit (CTC) to Lift More Low-income Families Out of Poverty.

Expanding the CTC has been shown to be the most effective way to reduce child poverty in the U.S. In 2021, the one-year CTC expansion included in the American Rescue Plan Act helped to lift 5.3 million people out of poverty, including **2.9 million children**. Latino and Black children experienced the greatest benefits from the expanded CTC, as it reduced the **poverty rate** to 8.4% and 8.3%, respectively. Expanding the CTC to reach more children, including immigrant children, promotes equity for communities that have long been marginalized and ensures that working families who are struggling the most have the resources they need to keep up with the rising costs of gas, medicine, and other day-to-day expenses. We urge you to provide meaningful tax relief to families thrown back into poverty when the 2021 CTC expansions expired.

Prevent Catastrophic Medicaid Cuts.

During the pandemic, Congress took consequential action to expand health coverage at a time when Americans needed it most. To protect this critical progress and the public health, we urge you to prevent what will likely be catastrophic cuts in Medicaid, including for those in Puerto Rico.

First, Congress must prevent Hispanic and other low-income families from experiencing the greatest Medicaid losses in American history when the public health emergency (PHE) ends. At that time states will redetermine Medicaid eligibility for nearly **90 million** people, and without congressional intervention many states will quickly reduce Medicaid rolls. Alarming, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE) has found that, if redeterminations proceed as they did before the pandemic, **15 million people will lose Medicaid**. An estimated 4.6 million Latinos are projected to lose coverage, even though two-thirds of them will remain eligible for Medicaid. Overall, this would be **more than seven times the largest previous one-year drop in Medicaid coverage**—overwhelmingly harming people of color. Congress must act before the end of the year to ensure that states proactively renew Medicaid for as many eligible families as possible and to set renewal standards for the states that are enforced by HHS.

Second, Congress should provide full funding parity for Puerto Rico's Medicaid program ahead of the December 16 expiration of the current strengthened level of federal medical assistance percentage (FMAP). As you know, to help Puerto Ricans during the COVID-19 health crisis, Congress temporarily increased Puerto Rico's FMAP from 55% to 76%. When the increase expires, Puerto Rico will lose nearly 30% of its federal Medicaid funding—a cut that will devastate the Puerto Rican health care system as the island struggles to recover from yet another devastating hurricane and faces increased COVID-19 cases and other illnesses during the winter months. Congress should eliminate this discriminatory policy that denies U.S. citizens in Puerto Rico equitable Medicaid benefits. At minimum, however, preserving current federal matching rates beyond the December 16 cliff must be a top congressional priority.

Enact a Permanent Solution to the Unresolved Status of Dreamers and Other Immigrants.

Since 2012, hundreds of thousands of Dreamers have contributed to our nation's prosperity through protections offered by the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, including more than **200,000 DACA recipients** who, alongside other immigrant essential workers, worked tirelessly on the frontlines throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Sadly, this critical program is threatened with elimination by the federal courts, which would harm Dreamers, their families, and **our economy** by throwing DACA holders out of work and making them deportable. For too long, Congress has failed to enact the immigration reforms that **Americans want** and deserve; such inaction is detrimental not only to Dreamers, other essential workers including farmworkers, and U.S. citizen children in families of mixed immigration status, but to our economy and nation as a whole. Congress must enact immigration reforms this year that will place DACA holders and other immigrants with deep ties to the U.S. out of harm's way and fully include them in the social and economic fabric of our nation.

We know you are deeply committed to the Hispanic community and to building a more equitable country. While the above-mentioned policy solutions represent a few steps on the path of reaching that goal, they are critical steps that, if not taken before the end of the year, would condemn many Latinos and their families to increased poverty, damaging health outcomes, worker displacement, and family separation. Inaction would extend irreparable harm to our communities, our economy, and the nation.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eric Rodriguez', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Eric Rodriguez
Senior Vice President
Policy and Advocacy
UnidosUS