

UnidosUS and Immigration: A Values-Based Vision

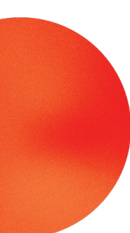
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UnidosUS and Immigration: A Values-Based Vision

We write this values statement in a time when families bury loved ones lost to a campaign of cruelty, as children wait by windows for parents who never come home and as the communities we serve refuse — even now — to surrender their faith in what this country can be. Our grief is real and our anger is righteous, but neither will define us: We are the keepers of an American promise older than any administration, and we intend to see it kept.

The mass deportation agenda pursued by the Trump administration has already demonstrated the profound personal and economic costs of its approach. Families have been separated, including households with U.S. citizen children left to navigate economic hardship and emotional trauma. Long-established members of our communities — workers, parents, caregivers, entrepreneurs and neighbors — have been swept into enforcement actions that extend far beyond targeting dangerous criminals. People with valid immigration status, including Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients, have been deported. Many people, including U.S. citizens and permanent legal residents, have been assumed to lack legal immigration status as a result of the color of their skin, the language they speak, or the neighborhood in which they live, and too many people have died at the hands of the federal government or while in immigration detention. The resulting climate of fear has discouraged victims and witnesses from reporting crimes, undermined trust between immigrant communities and law enforcement, disrupted schools and workplaces, and weakened local economies that depend on the contributions of immigrant workers. Businesses have struggled with labor shortages, while communities have borne the financial and social costs of aggressive enforcement and detention policies. This is our statement of values offered at a moment that demands courage, not silence.





About This Statement

Every day, UnidosUS Affiliates answer phone calls from frightened families. Their work provides an important connection to the experiences of the communities we serve and the real-world impact of immigration policies. They sit beside parents in waiting rooms, accompany neighbors to court hearings, counsel workers who fear losing their livelihoods, and help children navigate uncertainty no child should experience. They know the names, stories and aspirations of the people they serve because they are rooted in the communities they represent. The values in this document are grounded in their decades of experience serving Hispanic communities across the country.

For decades, leaders of both parties have acknowledged that America's immigration system is broken. The border has too often been disorderly, legal immigration has become burdened by decadeslong backlogs, employers have struggled to fill essential jobs, immigration courts have become overwhelmed, and millions of long-term undocumented immigrants have remained trapped in legal limbo with no realistic path forward. Congress has repeatedly failed to enact lasting reforms, leaving presidents of both parties to govern through temporary executive actions that leave families, employers and communities in constant uncertainty.

Into that vacuum stepped a well-organized anti-immigrant extremist movement that seized the issue and offered a false answer: mass deportation. That is why we have prepared this document: to move leaders who oppose the mass deportation agenda and the way it has been carried out off the sidelines and into a conversation about immigration in an affirmative, commonsense, and values-driven way.

Recognizing these long-standing problems does not require accepting false solutions. We reject the notion that the answer to a broken immigration system is a campaign of mass deportation. We believe that mass deportation is a failure, not only for what it does to immigrant and Latino communities, but for what it is doing to the country's economy and to our values. It is un-American.

Sweeping enforcement that treats millions of long-settled people as targets for removal diverts attention and resources from genuine public safety threats, separates families, destabilizes local economies, erodes trust in law enforcement, and leaves entire communities — including millions of U.S. citizens — living in fear.

America deserves better than a choice between an unworkable status quo and indiscriminate, destabilizing, and counterproductive mass deportation. What follows is a statement of principles rooted in our belief: America can build an immigration system that is orderly, effective, accountable and humane.



We Believe in a Pathway to Citizenship

America is strongest when people who have demonstrated their commitment to this country can become full participants in its civic life.

An earned pathway to citizenship recognizes responsibility, accountability and contribution. It should require background checks, tax compliance and other reasonable requirements while acknowledging the deep roots many immigrants have already established in American communities. It turns neighbors into citizens and makes official what has long been true: They already belong here.



We Believe in Community Safety

When enforcement occurs outside the border and inside our communities, it should be smart, accountable and focused on those who pose the greatest threat to public safety, not on neighbors who have lived here for years.

Most Latinos are not undocumented immigrants. The overwhelming majority are U.S. citizens or lawfully present residents who contribute every day to America's economy, civic life and national strength. Yet broad mass deportation strategies affect the entire Hispanic community regardless of immigration status. When fear becomes widespread, entire communities become less healthy, less safe and less connected to the institutions that serve them. We fully reject targeting by authorities that makes individuals suspects simply because of the color of their skin or the language they speak.

We Believe in Security and Compassion

America has both the right and the responsibility to maintain a border that is humane, fair and effective. We never forget that the people who arrive at it are human beings. Some come seeking economic opportunities. Others flee violence, persecution or humanitarian crises. A modern immigration system can distinguish between these circumstances while treating every individual with dignity and fairness.

Security and compassion are not opposites. A border system can enforce the law while being both.

We Keep the Best Interests of Our Community and Our Country at the Center

A successful immigration system cannot be measured solely by borders or budgets. It must also reflect our nation's commitment to fairness, due process and human dignity. When it does, it ultimately strengthens communities across the country. We begin with the people our immigration system touches — and with the neighbors, employers, congregations and communities whose lives are bound up with theirs. Our stance on the immigration issue has kept humanity at the core by being framed as pro-immigrant rather than pro-immigration precisely because these are human beings and families we are talking about, and the debate too often loses sight of that.

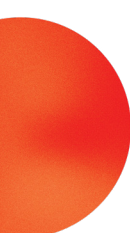
Immigration policy reaches far beyond those directly involved in the legal process. It shapes whether children feel safe going to school, whether workers report exploitation, whether victims cooperate with police, whether businesses can hire the employees they need, and whether communities trust public institutions built to serve them. These consequences are felt by millions of Americans regardless of their immigration status.



We Reject False Choices

For too long, our national immigration debate has been framed as a series of false choices: secure borders or welcoming immigrants, enforcement or civil rights, mass deportation or open borders.

America can do multiple things at the same time. We can secure our borders and treat people with dignity. We can enforce immigration laws while respecting constitutional rights for all. We can conduct immigration enforcement and preserve family unity and protect long-settled members of our communities. These are not trade-offs. They are choices we make together.



We Believe in an Immigration System That Strengthens the Economy for Everyone

America's legal immigration system should strengthen the economy and lift up local communities. If done right, our immigration system can give everyone a chance at economic prosperity.

It should honor the essential workers, students, entrepreneurs and caregivers who strengthen this country every day, while keeping families together. We need legal pathways for the people who feed us, teach our children, care for our families, build our homes and grow our economy. Our immigration system should respond to labor market needs, strengthen American competitiveness, promote entrepreneurship and preserve family unity.



What We Hold in Common

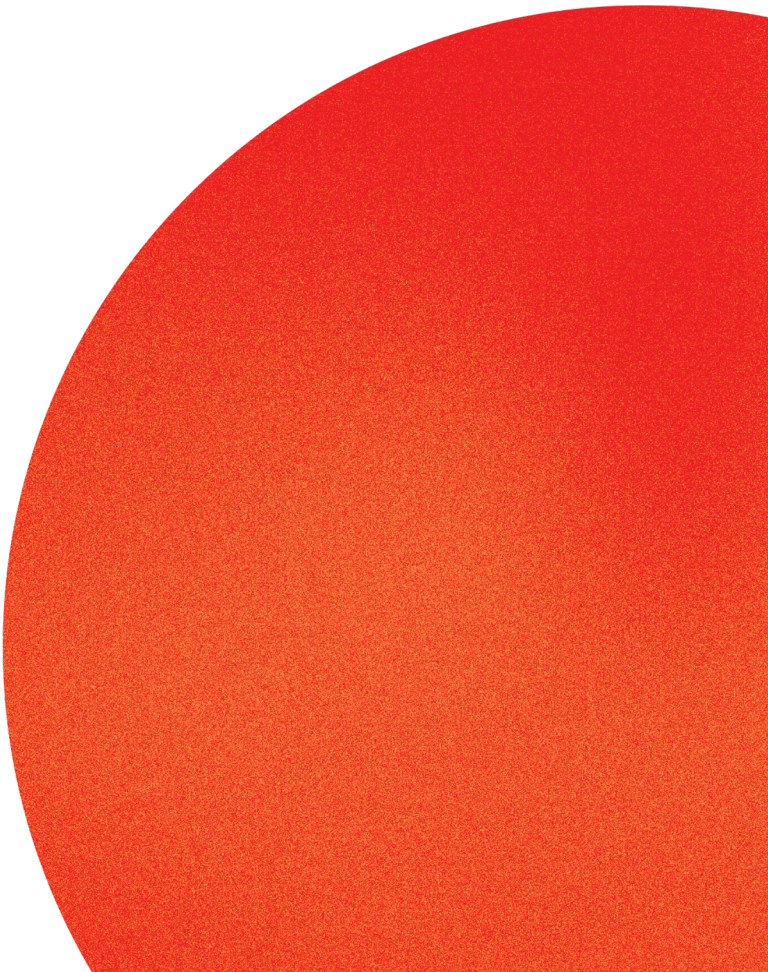
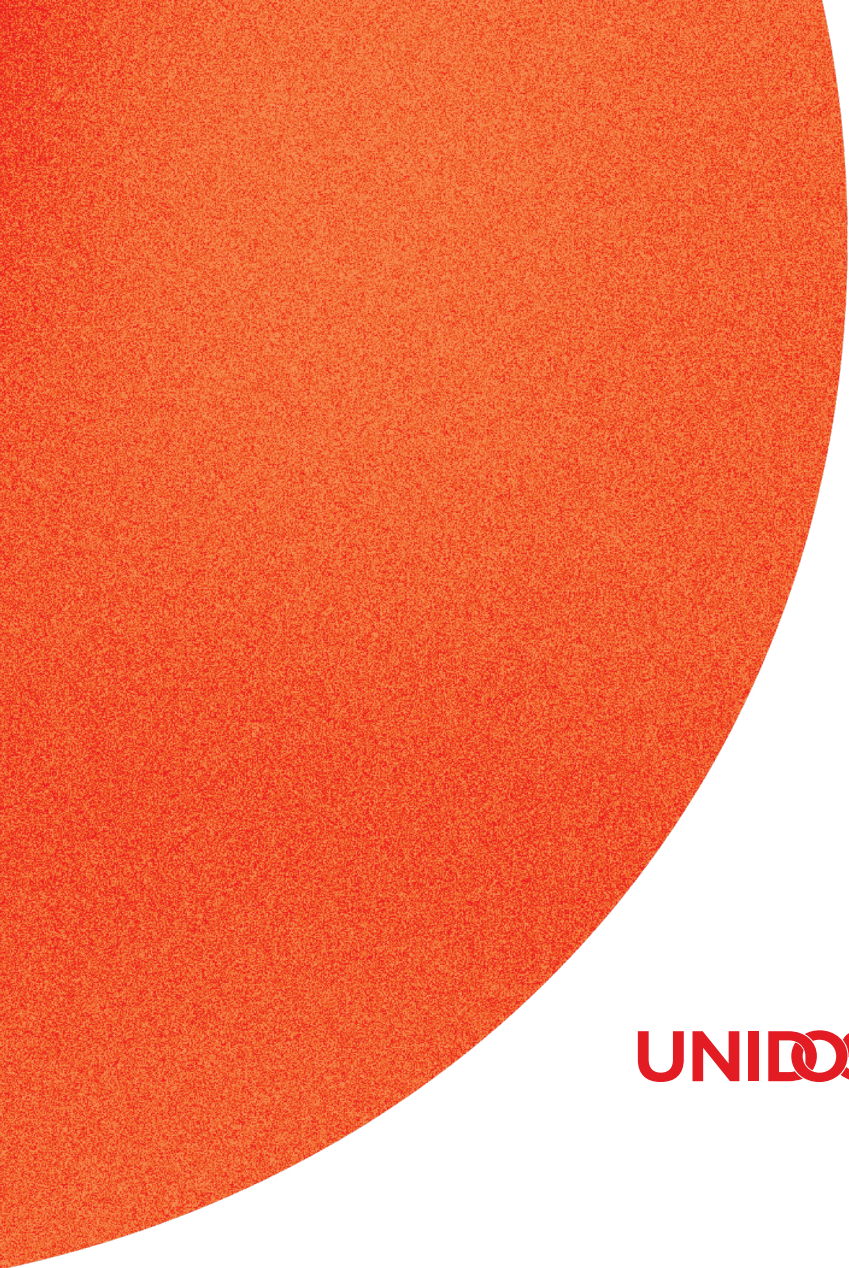
Prosperous communities. Fair laws. Effective enforcement. We do not sacrifice one for another, because they all come from the same place we started: the people.

The worker building a life.

The mother waiting for an answer.

The child who has only ever known this country as home.

Humanity belongs at the center of every law we write and every door we knock on, and we believe most of this country already agrees with us. That is the system we are building together — one state, one hearing room, one kitchen table at a time — until we can fulfill our nation's commitment to fairness, due process, human dignity and economic prosperity.



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