

JAKE AUCHINCLOSS

4TH DISTRICT, MASSACHUSETTS

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE**

SUBCOMMITTEE ON AVIATION
SUBCOMMITTEE ON COAST GUARD AND
MARITIME TRANSPORTATION
SUBCOMMITTEE ON HIGHWAYS AND TRANSIT

**HOUSE SELECT COMMITTEE ON
STRATEGIC COMPETITION BETWEEN
THE UNITED STATES AND THE
CHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY**



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October 6, 2023

The Honorable Marc Pacheco
Dean of the Senate
3rd Bristol and Plymouth District
State House, Room 312-B
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Senator Pacheco,

Thank you for your letter dated September 22, 2023. I share your deep frustration with our nation's broken immigration system and its impact on our constituents. I will continue to connect state and local officials and migrants arriving in Massachusetts' Fourth District with the federal resources that are currently available and encourage the Biden administration to send an assessment team to Boston to see first-hand the challenges we are facing. This crisis is yet another clarion call for Congress to finally pass immigration reform.

You may be pleased to know that I am a cosponsor of the bipartisan Dignity for Immigrants while Guarding our Nation to Ignite and Deliver the American Dream Act of 2023 or the "DIGNIDAD" (DIGNITY) Act. The legislation is a comprehensive proposal, incorporating border security, a fair and orderly pathway to citizenship, and root-cause solutions. By hiring new Border Patrol agents, Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officers, and CBP intelligence specialists, we will be able to implement new policies to stop cartels from human trafficking and drug trafficking. Additional improvements would streamline legal commerce and trade, increase capacity of inspection lanes, and invest in advanced screening technology.

This legislation would create two new pathways to citizenship, including immediate protected status and a streamlined path for Dreamers and Temporary Protected Status (TPS) recipients. For those seeking asylum, most claims would be adjudicated within 60 days. The bill would also reduce immigrant visa backlogs by granting immediate green cards to individuals who have been waiting for more than ten years. Foreign students who graduate with PhDs in STEM fields would be eligible for O visas—nonimmigrant visas designated for "individuals with extraordinary ability or achievement." The cumulative effect of these visa changes would be a more fair and predictable queuing system that would also grow the economy and create jobs.

Further, the DIGNITY Act's improvements are fiscally sound. Federal funding for border security, improved ports of entry, new humanitarian campuses, and additional personnel would be funded by a newly established "Immigration Infrastructure Levy."

This 1.5 percent levy would be deducted from the paychecks of individuals given work authorization under the bill and deposited into the Immigration Infrastructure Fund. The American Worker Fund, also established in the bill, would fund workforce development for underemployed Americans seeking economic opportunity.

This comprehensive legislation must be enacted alongside separate work authorization reforms. The work authorization backlog has exacerbated the migrant crisis and labor shortage that currently challenges the Commonwealth. That's why I am also a cosponsor of the Asylum Seeker Work Authorization Act, legislation that would reduce the current 180-day waiting period for work authorization eligibility to 30 days and allow an asylum seeker to apply for authorization as soon as their asylum claim is filed. However, should Congress fail to act on this bipartisan bill, Department of Homeland Security Secretary Mayorkas must use all rule-making abilities at his disposal to issue interim guidance to reduce the backlog and the burdens caused by it. I am committed to continued, directive communication with the Homeland Security Secretary to impel such interim guidance, understanding that while there are political and legal complexities to such action, those complexities pale in comparison to the crises on the ground.

As Congress continues to negotiate funding for Fiscal Year (FY) 2024, I will support robust funding for the Shelter and Services Program, which provides states with additional support for increased migrant arrivals. Unfortunately, House Republicans passed a partisan appropriations bill in September that would cut the Shelter and Services Program to \$800 million less than the FY23 enacted level. I will fight to prevent these cuts in a final year-end appropriations package.

Please continue to stay in contact with my office for federal guidance and support so that we are able to welcome, in an orderly, legal, and sustainable fashion, immigrants seeking a home and future in Massachusetts. I will continue to work to pass the bipartisan, comprehensive immigration reform that I have co-sponsored and encourage the Biden administration to send officials to the Commonwealth to assess the need for additional federal support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jake Auchincloss". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Jake Auchincloss
Member of Congress