



STAFF REPORT
3/10/2021

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council Members

FROM: William B. Pattison, Jr., City Manager
Best Best & Krieger LLP, City Attorney

SUBJECT: Resolution No. 2021-23, a Resolution Proclaiming Support for Proposed Immigration Changes in the United States Congress and Commitment to Immigrants that Live or Work in the City

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt Resolution No. 2021-23 a Resolution of the City Council of the City of Coachella, California, Proclaiming Support for Proposed Immigration Changes in the United States Congress and Commitment to Immigrants that Live or Work in the City

BACKGROUND:

Immigration has been the cornerstone of the City of Coachella (“City”), the state, and the nation’s development throughout our history. Immigrants are an essential part of the fabric of the City, the state, and the nation and contribute in countless ways to the City’s culture and values. The City has long embraced and welcomed individuals of diverse racial, ethnic, religious, and national backgrounds, including a large immigrant population. The City respects, upholds, and values equal treatment for all of its residents, regardless of immigration status.

Creating a fair immigration process that upholds the City’s values and honors the courage and tenacity of people who have moved to pursue a better life, upholds our foundational commitment to liberty and justice for all. The majority of California and Coachella residents support modernizing our nation’s immigration laws and keeping families together.

The United States is home to an estimated 10.5 million undocumented immigrants and stateless individuals, approximately 16 million people living in mixed-status families, and at least 5.1 million children with an undocumented parent. California is home to an estimated 2.5 million of these undocumented immigrants. An estimated 19.8 million people who have immigrated to the United States support American families by providing health care, food, and other essential services during the COVID-19 pandemic, yet many—including mixed-status families—are excluded from almost all federal pandemic relief, including access to testing, treatment, and food and financial assistance.

Immigrants—regardless of status—contribute billions every year in taxes, yet many have virtually no access to safety net programs that are vital to ensuring that all communities thrive. Creating a fair and humane immigration system will help level the playing field for all working people and ensure that employers cannot take advantage of an outdated system to undermine worker voice and protections. Coachella Valley is harmed when our outdated and biased immigration system does not respond to the needs of the United States.

Immigration can increase a woman's access to education, economic independence, and autonomy, yet migrant women's work remains unvalued and women are at a greater risk of exploitation, trafficking, and abuse. Black immigrants excel in all sectors of society, yet are disproportionately targeted by incarceration and deportation in which they experience abuse, longer periods of detention, and make up more than 20 percent of those facing deportation, despite making up approximately seven percent of the noncitizen population. Muslim immigrants contribute greatly to the Coachella Valley in forms of mutual aid and emergency relief for all communities, yet have been disparately subjected to bans, visa denials, and denaturalization efforts based on their religion and national origin, and the targets of racial and religious profiling, discrimination, bigotry, and hate crimes. Asian immigrants are the fastest growing immigrant population yet are harmed by lengthy backlogs that keep families apart and prevent them from becoming U.S. citizens, and Southeast Asian immigrants are the largest refugee community in the United States, yet are three times more likely to be deported based on an old criminal conviction. Indigenous immigrants have come to the United States fleeing persecution in great numbers in recent years yet have been subject to prolonged detention and forcibly returned to the countries they fled due to discrimination, language barriers, and a lack of adequate interpretation in native languages.

Purepecha indigenous immigrants in great numbers have made the City of Coachella and the Eastern Coachella Valley their home and yet are underrepresented and underserved due to discrimination, language, cultural barriers, and immigration barriers. Latinx immigrants represent the largest immigrant community in the United States yet are frequently scapegoated, criminalized, and racially profiled leading to discrimination, hate crimes, and targeting for detention and deportation due to collaboration between local law enforcement and federal immigration authorities. Politicization of the Immigration Court system has interfered with the efficient and fair operations of the Immigration Courts and resulted in due process violations.

DISCUSSION:

The proposed resolution sets forth the City's commitment to immigrants who live, work, and invest in the City of Coachella through the following actions:

- Proclaiming support for the creation of a new fair federal immigration system that focuses on: 1) providing a path to Citizenship for the 11 million undocumented immigrants that live in the United States, 2) ensuring family unity inclusive of recently arrived immigrants and the diverse families in our City, 3) decriminalizing immigrants, 4) dismantling the inhumane practice of immigration detention, 5) demilitarizing the US/Mexico Border, 6) removing arduous barriers, 7) granting resources from local, county, and state governments to partners and nonprofits who will support individuals in their immigration legal processes, including applications for status and representation in immigration courts.

- Sending a letter expressing the City's support of immigration reform, including the priorities set forth above, to U.S. Congressmembers and U.S. Senators that represent Coachella in Congress.
- Actively working with local organizations to identify other effective ways to support immigrant families that live and work in the City of Coachella and to address systemic inequities and other barriers that stand in the way. The City of Coachella moreover commits to consider the special needs of minority immigration populations in its communities, including but not limited to those of Muslim, Middle Eastern, Arabic, Purepecha, and Asian origins.
- Developing and implementing City policies which are designed with a racial equity lens.

ATTACHMENT:

1. Resolution No. 2021-23 A Resolution of the City Council of the City of Coachella, California, Proclaiming Support for Proposed Immigration Changes in the United States Congress and Commitment to Immigrants that Live or Work in the City