

Congress is firmly focused on President Biden's agenda, with his American Rescue Plan and nominees to fill agency positions on the docket. NCJW is engaged in both efforts to ensure critical provisions impacting women, children, and families are included in COVID relief and supporting nominees for agency positions that would directly affect our agenda. In particular, we are anticipating hearings in the Senate Judiciary Committee to fill critical Department of Justice (DOJ) positions. Follow us here and on social media each week to learn more about how we're moving NCJW's mission forward!

In effort to share our institutional priorities and advancements coming from the new administration, NCJW has been sending this newsletter to our entire list of advocates. Beginning on Thursday, March 11, this will go only to two groups: NCJW leadership (no action needed) and advocates like you. Don't want to miss continued updates?

Fill out this form and stay up-to-date.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE NOMINATIONS - SPECIAL ALERT

The administration has nominated two NCJW partners for important positions in the Justice Department. NCJW enthusiastically supports Vanita Gupta for Associate Attorney General and Kristen Clarke to head the Civil Rights Division.

Take Action:

1. [Read and share](#) Sheila Katz's OP-ED on NBC news about Kristen Clarke being falsely accused of anti-Semitism and why Jews must push back.
2. If you represent a faith based or community organization including NCJW sections, [sign on to NCJW and Muslim Advocate's Interfaith letter](#) supporting Kristen Clarke.
3. Call your Senators: And keep calling. You can use the Capitol Switchboard: 202-224-3121 and share this simple message:

"My name is X from and I am a National Council of Jewish Women advocate. I'm calling to ask that you confirm Kristen Clarke for the head of the Civil Rights Division at the Department of Justice. She will be ready on day one, she is the right person to reform the department, and she will fight for equal justice for all."

If the senators are supportive, then ask them to do more: speak to their colleagues, write an op-ed, tweet about their support, and hold town halls on her nomination.

IMMIGRATION BILL BASED IN HUMANITY

What is it?

On February 22, the Biden administration's sweeping immigration bill, the U.S. Citizenship Act of 2021, was formally introduced in Congress by Rep. Linda Sanchez (D-CA) and Sen. Bob Menendez (D-NJ). The plan's centerpiece is an eight-year path to citizenship for millions of immigrants living in the US as of January 1, 2021. DACA recipients and people with Temporary Protected Status* would be able to apply for citizenship more quickly. The bill also includes provisions to rescind and prevent blanket bans, like the Muslim Ban, from happening again in the future, and increases the number of visas available for victims of crimes — which is significant for women. Unfortunately, the bill does not provide access to health care for all legalized immigrants.

**TPS is a program allowing people from war or disaster-ravaged countries to live and work in the US*

How does it relate to our past work?

NCJW has long supported a path to citizenship for DACA recipients and TPS holders. Our work to support those seeking better lives in America goes back to Ellis Island, where NCJW established an agency to help immigrant women and families. Indeed NCJW's 2020-2023 [Resolutions](#) call for "Comprehensive, humane, and equitable immigration, refugee, and asylum laws, policies, and practices." During the last administration, we [lobbied for passage](#) of the American Dream and Promise Act, which passed the House of Representatives, but the Senate blocked the bill.

What can I do now?

While this bill makes its way through Congress, there are other ways to support a path to citizenship for the 11 million undocumented people in the US. Take action to tell Congress to [pass the Dream Act](#) without delay! On February 4, Sens. Dick Durbin (D-IL) and Lindsey Graham (R-SC) [introduced](#) the Dream Act, which would provide a path to citizenship for nearly 2 million Dreamers, young immigrants who came to the US as children.

ADDITIONAL ADVANCEMENTS

Title X Update:

Quick recap:

- Title X is the only federal grant program dedicated solely to providing comprehensive family planning and related preventive health services. [Due to the previous administration's domestic gag rule](#), clinics funded through Title X can no longer refer patients for abortion care.
- Additionally, the gag rule forces clinics to maintain "clear physical and financial separation" between services funded by the government and any organization that provides or refers patients for abortions. Providers are prohibited from discussing the full range of pregnancy options and are required to refer all pregnant patients for prenatal care.

On February 22, the Supreme Court announced that the Justices will hear a [trio of cases](#) challenging the Title X domestic gag rule next term. The previous administration's dismantling of Title X threatens the health of 4 million women, children, and families, particularly people with low incomes, people of color, young people, immigrants, and LGBTQ individuals who primarily rely on the program. While President Biden directed the Department of Health and Human Services to review eliminating the domestic gag rule, there is no timeline for when this decision will be made; particularly during a global health crisis, Title X patients cannot afford to wait for these cases to play out in the Court and need the Biden-Harris administration to take immediate action. NCJW supports the complete restoration of the Title X program.

American Rescue Plan:

The House Budget Committee voted on February 22 to approve* a \$1.9 trillion COVID relief bill that includes NCJW priorities like increased funding for child care, \$1400 stimulus checks, funding for vaccine distribution, and state and local aid. While a \$15 minimum wage increase is currently in the measure, the Senate Parliamentarian could rule it non germane under the rules of the reconciliation process — which is what the Democrats are using to move by which COVID relief. In order to use the reconciliation process, the legislation must change spending, revenues, and the federal debt limit. The House is expected to vote on the measure tomorrow, February 26. It will then be sent to the Senate for consideration before March 14, when expanded Unemployment Insurance benefits expire. **19-16 in favor*

HR 1, the For the People Act:

The For the People Act is coming to the House floor for a vote next week! NCJW supports this important democracy reform bill. Take Action! Call 202-519-1273 and key in your ZIP code to tell your representative to pass the bill.

Additional Nominations NCJW supports:

- **Merrick Garland**, Attorney General. The Senate Judiciary Committee held nomination hearings on Feb. 22 and 23. The committee will vote to advance Garland's nomination on March 1.
- **Neera Tanden**, Office of Management and Budget. Committee votes on the nomination were postponed. Should her nomination fail, the Biden administration will find another role for Tanden, presumably one that doesn't require Senate confirmation.
- **Xavier Becerra**, Secretary of the US Department of Health and Human Services. The Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee and the Finance Committee held hearings this week.
- **Dr. Rachel Levine**, Assistant Secretary of the US Department of Health and Human Services. The Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee held a hearing today.
- **Miguel Cardona**, Secretary of the US Department of Education. Today, the full Senate began considering this nomination.

See the full list of NCJW's First 100 Day Priorities [here](#).