

## ***The New Deal for New Americans Act (NDNA): Strengthening Federal Support for Immigrant Inclusion***

First introduced in the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress, the New Deal for New Americans Act (NDNA) (S. 3470; H.R. 4928) aims to transform the federal government's approach to immigrant integration and increase federal support for the proactive inclusion of immigrants and refugees into the social, economic and civic fabric of our country. NDNA's provisions would establish new programs in key integration areas like language training, workforce development and legal services, while removing common obstacles that impede access to naturalization, refugee status and other immigration benefits. The legislation would also streamline federal cross-agency coordination on policies that affect immigrants and refugees and facilitate alignment between federal, state and local approaches to immigrant inclusion.

**In the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress, the New Deal for New Americans represents an opportunity to promote immigrant inclusion at a critical time in our nation's history.** Greater inclusion of immigrants and refugees will strengthen America's recovery from COVID-19 and increase our collective preparedness for future public health crises. The legislation will also promote equitable access to naturalization and other immigration benefits and help to streamline implementation of potential legalization efforts in 2021 and beyond. NDNA represents the vision of an inclusive nation that embraces immigrants and refugees and thrives because of their contributions.

### **Key Provisions of the New Deal for New Americans**

- Establishes a **National Office of New Americans** in the Executive Office of the President to promote and support immigrant and refugee inclusion, and to coordinate efforts of federal, state, and local governments to support integration of immigrants and refugees;
- **Reduces barriers to naturalization** by establishing a flat application fee for citizenship, amending the English and civics exam requirements for older individuals and those with cognitive impairments, and exempting eligible U.S. high school graduates from taking naturalization exams;
- **Limits U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services' (USCIS) ability to raise fees** without Congressional approval, prohibits the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) from using application fees for immigration enforcement activities, and mandates quarterly reporting from DHS on USCIS backlogs, delays and processing times;
- **Creates a sense of Congress that the federal government should facilitate naturalizing two million new citizens by the end of 2022** and that failing to naturalize the millions of eligible immigrants is a loss to the country;

**About NPNA:** The National Partnership for New Americans (NPNA) is the national voice of the 41 largest statewide immigrant advocacy organizations in the U.S., and works to promote federal, state and local policies that facilitate civic, cultural and economic inclusion of immigrant and refugee communities.

## Key Provisions of the New Deal for New Americans (cont.)

- **Promotes civic engagement through voluntary, automatic voter registration** of newly naturalized individuals;
- Creates a **Legal Services and Immigration Assistance Grant Program** to support organizations that provide direct assistance to those in need of immigration screening; know-your-rights education; assistance in applying for citizenship, lawful permanent resident status, or other legal status (DACA, TPS, asylum, etc.); or seeking relief from a removal order;
- **Creates the sense of Congress that there should be the right to counsel in deportation proceedings, at government expense in the case of indigent persons**, consistent with basic values of fairness and justice and due process protections under the Fifth Amendment of the Constitution;
- Creates an **English as a Gateway to Integration Program** for organizations that teach English or help individuals earn a GED or prepare for naturalization;
- Creates a **Workforce Development Grant Program** to ensure that immigrant and refugee adults have equitable access to workforce programs that help equip them with occupational skills needed to secure or advance in employment;
- **Bolsters family reunification** by reducing (from 21 years old to 18 years old) the age at which citizens can petition for eligible family members to receive an immigrant visa;
- **Increases refugee admissions to at least 125,000 per fiscal year** and rebuilds the capacity and infrastructure of local communities to welcome refugees; and
- Amends the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) to **no longer allow for the deportation of an individual deemed a public charge**.

For more information on the New Deal for New Americans Act, please contact NPNA Policy and Campaigns Manager, Diego Iñiguez-López at [diego@partnershipfornewamericans.org](mailto:diego@partnershipfornewamericans.org).

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