



## Legal Services Center Policy Dispatch March 2021



*Door client I.N., receives her Green Card after 3 years stuck in the SIJS Green Card Backlog. She can now plan for her future. Elimination of the backlog will mean that Door clients like I.N., will often be able to get their Green Cards within 6 months instead of 3 years.*

### **A MESSAGE FROM OUR MANAGING ATTORNEY FOR POLICY**

It's the dawn of a new era - the Biden/Harris era. [A historic immigration bill](#) was unveiled last month, and a number of executive orders undoing some of Trump's most harmful immigration policies are already being enforced. It is difficult to overstate how much this change in Administration will impact the lives of the young people we serve, but we must remain vigilant in holding the government accountable for the protection of the human rights of our clients. We are hopeful realists at The

Door. President Biden just reopened a Trump-era child detention center. In the same breath I can say that for the first time in four years, we have the opportunity to do more than merely push courts to uphold existing law. We are now able to work to reimagine an immigration system that puts the dignity and lives of immigrants at the forefront. And we are wasting no time!

We are excited to share our new immigration policy advocacy agenda addressing systemic injustices impacting the young people we serve. We determined these priorities by tracking patterns of adverse policy impacts on our clients and conducting an internal assessment of which issues we are uniquely positioned to lead on. The Door is working to address these issues through strategic litigation, legislative and administrative advocacy, research, and story-based activism, always striving to elevate the voices of immigrant youth in their fight for human rights and dignity. Through our advocacy, we seek to:

- Abolish the Green Card backlog for Special Immigrant Juveniles.
- Protect the human rights of unaccompanied minors detained in Office of Refugee Resettlement facilities in New York State.
- Hold United States Citizenship and Immigration Services accountable for the adjudication of Special Immigrant Juvenile Status petitions within 180 days, as mandated by Congress.
- Educate lawmakers on the policy issues impacting immigrant youth.

We recently [published a report making key recommendations to the Biden-Harris Administration](#) on immigration policy issues directly impacting Door members. We also met with the Health and Human Services Transition Team to advocate for the human rights of detained minors and for better oversight of the facilities that are charged with their care.

Last month, we launched an ambitious national advocacy project to reform [the Special Immigrant Juvenile Status \("SIJS"\) backlog](#), a systemic injustice, detailed in our advocacy highlight below, that prevents our clients from obtaining Green Cards for years, despite being legally eligible. In The Door way, we are hiring SIJS Backlog Impacted young people to guide and partner with us in this work!

To house all of these exciting projects, we now have a new Policy and Advocacy page on the Legal Services Center Website. [You can follow us in real time there!](#)

Future editions of this Policy Dispatch will be sent to subscribers to our Legal mailing list - click the Subscribe button below to sign up and make sure you don't miss anything.

In Solidarity,



*Rachel L. Davidson, Esq.*

*P.S. – save the date for Joining in Justice, our annual gala, honoring Deborah N. Archer, Civil Rights Lawyer and Law Professor, and our pro bono partner Sullivan & Cromwell, taking place virtually on Wednesday May 19<sup>th</sup> at 6 pm.*