

LETTERS

Mass. needs to act to aid taxpaying immigrant workers

Updated June 8, 2020, 7:15 a.m.



A sign in the window at Sip Caf looked out on a near deserted Post Office Square in Boston on May 13. CRAIG F. WALKER/GLOBE STAFF

These families deserve coronavirus cash relief too

I applaud the Globe for its May 30 editorial [“The taxpaying workers in Massachusetts who still need coronavirus cash relief.”](#)

In my law practice, I represent immigrant families on their journeys to obtain lawful status in the United States. Due to the complexities of immigration law and the significant backlogs in the immigration system, these families regularly wait many years for their cases to be resolved. While the years pass, they are living in the community, working to support their families, and paying state and federal taxes using Individual Tax Identification Numbers, or ITINs.

These families pay the same share of income taxes as those with Social Security numbers. They deserve the same assistance as other taxpayers.

The editorial board correctly notes that a bill pending in the Legislature that would provide that assistance would benefit Massachusetts as a whole. Immigrants who pay taxes with an ITIN are often essential workers. They are our grocery clerks, delivery drivers, and hospital workers. It is in everyone's interest that these essential workers have enough money to pay their rent, buy food, and make safe decisions about whether to work.

It is in nobody's interest to have people continue going to work even if they are sick because they don't have enough money to feed their families. This increases the risk of illness for everyone in the Commonwealth.

Eliana C. Nader

Chair

New England chapter

American Immigration Lawyers Association

Boston

Already vulnerable, many placed in precarious position

There are greater harms than merely financial ones when some taxpayers are denied unemployment and others are not. Despite paying into the unemployment system, immigrants are having to battle even more hurdles to receive the benefits they equally deserve.

COVID-19 has affected everyone in this nation. However, those already in a vulnerable situation are being put in a more precarious position. Those who have been granted a legal status, have Individual Tax Identification Numbers, and have been paying taxes are now without jobs and without financial support.

Many of us are able to ask the government and others for assistance in our time of need, but ITIN employees, for fear of having their status questioned and not being able to receive benefits down the road, have been avoiding programs that may provide support. As time goes on and businesses remain closed, their struggle is becoming increasingly more difficult and their resources more limited.

Being an immigration attorney and a bartender, I continue to see this happen. Legislation must be enacted to support this hard-working community. These families are not asking to unfairly benefit from the system; they are in need of assistance to make ends meet during these uncertain times.

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The writer is a legal volunteer with the nonprofit De Novo (formerly the Community Legal Services and Counseling Center).