

# AFL-CIO

## — STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD —

### **House Homeland Security Subcommittee Hearing** *Case-by-Case: Returning Parole to its Proper Purpose* Tuesday, April 8, 2025

The AFL-CIO is a federation of 65 affiliated unions representing more than 15 million workers across all sectors of our economy. Our members work in every state in the nation and they come from every region of the world. Like the workforce as a whole, our membership consists of people with all types of immigration status. Together, we strive to ensure that every person who works in this country receives decent pay, good benefits, safe working conditions, and fair treatment on the job.

The mass deportation agenda currently being pursued by the Administration and Congress is a direct threat to workers, jobs and unions that will have a devastating economic impact for our nation. One in five workers in our country wasn't born here. Needlessly stripping millions of people of work authorization through the termination of Temporary Protected Status and various forms of humanitarian parole will cause severe workforce disruption that risks crippling key industries that rely heavily on immigrant labor, such as construction, hospitality, manufacturing, and food processing. Rather than benefitting the remaining workforce, mass deportations amidst an already tight labor market will shutter businesses, disrupt supply chains, drive up costs for consumers, and put jobs at risk.

Immigrants are vital members of our workforce and our unions, yet last week alone more than 500,000 work authorized people with CHNV parole received notice that their status was being revoked and they needed to leave the country by April 24. Let's call this what is – a massive layoff forced onto the private sector by the federal government. Moreover, it is a betrayal of commitments made to working people from Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua and Venezuela who were invited to our country, with sponsors, and are now needlessly and cruelly having the rug pulled out from under them and being ordered to return to life-threatening situations.

For a small window into the harmful impact parole terminations will have on local unions and the economy, we share this quote from Dino Driskell, President of IUE-CWA Local 83761 in Louisville, Kentucky:

“We were outraged to learn that nearly 200 of our union members at GE/Haier Appliance Park are being targeted for deportation by the Trump Administration. These workers came to this country legally and are hard-working, tax-paying members of our community, raising their families and living their lives peacefully. They come to work every day at GE/Haier to build appliances for the American people. They deserve to be treated with dignity and respect, not ripped from their families to be shipped away. We have over 20 languages spoken at Appliance Park, and we believe diversity is a strength, not a weakness. We call on the administration to restore their status immediately.”

And if revoking commitments made to more than 500,000 working people with CHNV parole was not bad enough, DHS also sent alarming notices to an additional 200,000+ people invited to the U.S. under the Uniting for Ukraine (U4U) program. These shocking messages, which opened with the statement, “It is time for you to leave the United States,” advised recipients that their parole would terminate in a mere 7 days and asserted that they would be subject to criminal prosecution if they did not depart the country *immediately*. Nowhere did the notice thank them for their varied contributions to the United States or acknowledge that Ukraine is an active war zone. Although the U4U messages were recalled the next day, the insult, confusion, and fear remains.

Humanitarian parole is an important tool to respond to urgent situations, such as Putin’s invasion of Ukraine, and to provide significant public benefit. Indeed, the arrival of newcomers through various parole pathways over the past several years has protected more than a million working families and provided vital stimulus that helped to stave off a recession. In addition to expanding the workforce, immigrants promote economic growth through their consumer spending, support our social safety net, and pay taxes on which federal, state and local budgets rely.

Needlessly stripping people of parole will harm workers, unions, jobs and our economy, and we urge Members of Congress to insist that their rights and work permits be restored. The real threat workers face is corporate greed, not immigrants. President Trump wants working people to focus on the border and immigration so we’ll be too distracted to notice as they roll out massive corporate tax cuts, slash our benefits, starve our public schools, and trample on our labor and voting rights. It is a classic political maneuver meant to keep us divided and poor, and we see right through it.

For these reasons and many more, the mass deportation agenda is not just bad for immigrants, but for every worker in this country. We call on lawmakers to reject this destructive approach, and instead return focus to comprehensive reform of our unjust immigration system in ways that center a pathway to citizenship and ensure all workers are able to live and work safely and with dignity.