

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 28, 2022

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas
Secretary of Homeland Security
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
301 7th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20528

The Honorable Ur Jaddou
Director
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
111 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Secretary Mayorkas and Director Ur Mendoza Jaddou:

We write to urge you to make improvements to the USCIS Contact Center, specifically the scheduling process for local field office appointments, to ensure it reflects USCIS's customer-oriented mission. To do so, the agency must ensure that the USCIS Contact Center is made more accessible to customers and that it implements and promotes additional avenues to self-schedule appointments efficiently. The shift from InfoPass to InfoMod for scheduling in person appointments has imposed a barrier, limiting customers' ability to obtain critical information or action on their cases. Customers have faced difficulty navigating the three-tiered process through the USCIS Contact Center as they experience extensive wait times, unreasonable callback windows, and are required to restart the process if their call is dropped, or they are not able to answer return calls from USCIS.

In addition, as you continue to assess existing USCIS policies, it is important to reconsider and rescind agency policies that are creating barriers to customer service and efficient adjudication of cases. For example, the agency policy preventing law firm staff from submitting service requests or scheduling appointments pose a huge inconvenience when attorneys of record are unavailable to field a call. Even when these individuals are available, it requires several hours spent either on hold, or waiting for a call back from the agency, which can come at any moment over days or even weeks. Additionally, the criteria for issues warranting in-person appointments through InfoMod is not publicly available, leading customers to be unsure of whether they will be granted an appointment before beginning the call process. [An August 2021 GAO report](#) found that from fiscal years 2015 to 2020, USCIS' pending caseload grew approximately 85%. Expanding access to effective sources of information providers and self-scheduling mechanisms would reduce burden on agency staff and customers and would streamline processes to effectively decrease caseload and ensure proper adjudication of cases.

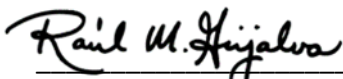
Therefore, we believe that USCIS should reinstate an online self-scheduling system that would allow for scheduling and rescheduling appointments without having to call the USCIS Contact Center to speak to an official. This would allow customers the ability to schedule timely appointments and obtain accurate resolution on cases without adding to the workload of USCIS officials. While we understand that USCIS had concerns about the prior system using unnecessary resources, we urge USCIS to think creatively about how online self-scheduling can meet the needs of both the agency and stakeholders.

Until such recommendation is implemented, we believe the following steps would help make the customer service system and InfoMod scheduling process more effective:

- **Provide accurate and accommodating callback windows for customers submitting requests through InfoMod.** The current callback time stands at 24-72 hours from the initial call, which is unnecessarily vague and often inaccurate. If the call is missed, customers must restart the process with InfoMod, thereby ensuring that they will not obtain necessary information or a resolution promptly. USCIS officials must work with customers to provide shorter, scheduled callback windows with accommodating time frames during business hours.
- **Change internal policy to allow law firm staff other than the attorney on record to make requests through the USCIS Contact Center.** Law firm staff often have greater availability than the attorney of record and can answer case-specific questions. Allowing law firm staff to step in when follow up is needed and the attorney of record is unavailable, prevents delays in the case, reduces agency inefficiencies and decreases costs for applicants.
- **Make criteria used to grant appointments through InfoMod public.** Providing this information will educate customers on what issues they are able to schedule appointments for and reduce the number of appointment requests made.
- **Offer walk-in availability for urgent requests at local USCIS offices.** Walk-in availability is crucial for emergencies and time-sensitive issues such as demonstrating immigration status, travel, fee-in motions, urgent follow ups, and more. Sole reliance on InfoMod does not guarantee that emergencies will be resolved promptly as there may be miscommunication between customers and representatives and the three-tiered system is excessively time consuming.

Thank you for your consideration of the above recommendations. We look forward to working with you to create an efficient and effective Contact Center to ensure that delays in information requests are prevented and cases are adjudicated in a timely manner. Our nation has a commitment to welcoming immigrants and these recommendations are a critical step toward achieving that goal.

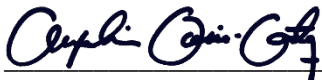
Sincerely,



Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress



Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
Member of Congress



Rashida Tlaib
Member of Congress



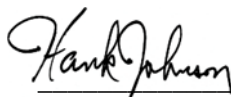
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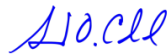
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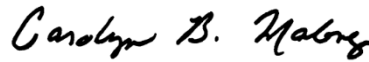
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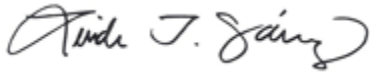
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