



For Immediate Release

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Biden Administration Announces Critical Protections for Immigrant Youth with Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS)

End SIJS Backlog Coalition Applauds Changes and Urges Congress to End Visa Backlog

Washington, DC – Today, the Biden administration announced a long-awaited [final rule](#) on Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS). The rule is a critical step toward providing security and stability for abused, abandoned, and neglected immigrant youth, many of whom have already been granted SIJS.

In tandem with the final SIJS rule, United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) also released a [new policy](#) providing for consideration of deferred action on a case-by-case basis to youth impacted by the SIJS visa backlog that has emerged due to annual employment-based visa limits applied to this humanitarian category. This backlog undermines the permanency and stability Congress intended when it created SIJS, causing many youth granted SIJS protection to spend years in limbo, unable to become lawful permanent residents. The [End SIJS Backlog Coalition](#) and its youth leaders have [documented](#) and advocated about the negative consequences that this backlog has on so many impacted youths' lives, including the inability for youth in foster care to become independent adults.

The new policy furthers Congress's intent in creating SIJS by providing young people with stability and freedom from the fear of deportation, so they can continue pursuing their dreams, gaining independence and contributing to their communities.

"This news is a huge relief for me and for so many other immigrant youth. Today when I heard about the deferred action, it felt like a dream. It was the happiest day of my life. As youth, we are in the developing stages of our lives and this protection against deportation and access to work permits is so needed. Now, I will be able to attend college, get a job and be self-sufficient. This will be a huge turning point in my life. I feel free and I am beyond excited for my future and the futures of so many other youth," said **Ariel, a coalition youth leader currently in the SIJS backlog.**

"While vital, the changes announced today do not solve the visa backlog for special immigrant juveniles, who are not closer to obtaining their green cards and the legal permanency that status provides. We are glad the Biden administration has heard the calls from impacted youth and advocates and has stepped in to mitigate some of the worst harms of the backlog by providing work permits and protection from deportation through this policy. However, Congress now holds the responsibility of moving swiftly to pass legislation that will end the backlog entirely, and we look forward to working alongside them to make that a reality," said **Rachel Davidson, End SIJS Backlog Coalition Steering Committee Member, in response to the new regulations and policy.**

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The [End SIJS Backlog Coalition](#) is a national group of directly impacted youth and over 70 allied advocate organizations across the country, working to educate Congress, relevant administrative agencies, and the public about the harmful impacts of visa caps on vulnerable immigrant children, and to advocate for an end to the backlog. The coalition aims to center the voices and experiences of SIJS backlog impacted youth, whose stories are the heartbeat of our work and best illustrate how ending the backlog can restore the purpose of the statute — realizing permanent legal protection in the United States for immigrant children who have survived abuse, abandonment, and neglect. Learn more at www.sijsbacklog.com and follow us on [Twitter](#).