U.S. Citizenship Act of 2021
Key Points

- Eliminates the use of the word “alien” and replaces it with “noncitizen”

- Creates an earned roadmap to citizenship for all 11 million undocumented
  - 3-year path to citizenship - Dreamers, TPS holders, and some farmworkers.
  - 8-year path to citizenship - All other undocumented immigrants who pass background checks and pay taxes without fear of deportation.
  - Clarifies “inspected and admitted” in § 244 of the INA to include a noncitizen granted TPS.

- Reforms the family-based immigration system to keep families together
  - Recaptures unused visas from previous years to clear backlogs and includes spouses and children of green card holders as immediate family members.
  - Increases per-country caps for family-based immigration.
  - Provides protections for orphans, widows, and children, and allows immigrants with approved family-sponsorship petitions to join family in the U.S. on a temporary basis while they wait for green cards to become available.
  - Repeals the three- and ten-year bars.
  - Provides humanitarian and family-unity waivers for certain grounds of inadmissibility and deportability.

- Strengthens Immigrant Integration and Citizenship Initiatives for Immigrant Communities
  - Creates and authorizes start-up funds for the U.S. Citizenship and Integration Foundation to coordinate and fund integration pilots across the country.
  - Authorizes $25 million for existing citizenship education grants.
  - Authorizes English language and workforce development grant programs carried out by the Department of Education, and authorizes $200 million in funding.
  - Authorizes USCIS to grant legal service NGOs funding to provide legal services to attain LPR status, and authorizes $50 million from Immigration Exam fees.
  - Waives naturalization English language, civics requirements for U.S. high school graduates.
  - Waives naturalization English language, civic requirements for elderly, foreign born LPRs.

- Addresses Root Causes
  - Implements a four-year strategy, known as the “United States Strategy for Engagement in Central America” to:
    - Advance reforms in Central America and address key factors contributing to the flight of families and other individuals in Central America to the U.S.
- Coordinate with other U.S. entities as well as national and local civil society organizations in Central America, the U.S., and the governments of Central America.
- Reintroduce legal asylum and refugee pathways to vulnerable populations such as the Central American Minor program.
  - Also appropriates $1,000,000,000 for each of the Fiscal Years 2022–2025.

**Supports Asylum Seekers and Other Vulnerable Populations**
- Eliminates the one-year deadline for filing asylum claims.
- Reduces asylum application backlogs.
- Increases protections against detention and removal for U visa, T visa, and VAWA applicants, and raises the cap on U visas from 10,000 to 30,000.
- Provides better access to work authorization for those seeking or granted asylum, withholding, CAT, and other protected statuses.
- Provides in-state tuition for public higher education to asylees, refugees, SIVs.
- Improves access to SIV status for Afghan and Iraqi widows and orphans.
- Establishes a Syrian SIV program, authorizing 5,000 slots per year for five years.

**Addresses Border Security**
- Directs the Secretary to develop and implement a strategy to manage and secure the southern border by deploying smart technology to counter transnational criminal networks. Requires such strategy to include:
  - A comprehensive assessment of physical barriers, levees, technologies, tools, and other devices currently in use along the southern border.
  - Specific steps that may be taken in each Border Sector over 5 years to identify technology systems and tools to provide situational awareness at the southern border.
  - A cost justification for each time a more expensive technology, tool, or device is recommended over a less expensive option in a given Border Sector.
  - A performance measure to evaluate the effectiveness of each technology deployed in Border Patrol operations in each Border Sector.

**Grows Our Economy**
- Eliminates per-country caps, making it easier for STEM advanced degree holders from U.S. universities to stay.
- Gives families of H-1B holders work authorization.
- Creates a pilot program to stimulate regional economic development and incentivizes higher wages for non-immigrant, high-skilled visas to prevent unfair competition with American workers.
- Requires that all those granted Lawful Prospective Immigrant status be issued a Social Security Number and work authorization with supporting documentation.
- Expands protections and prohibitions against exploitation of, and unjust discrimination against, immigrant laborers, while also establishing a Commission to improve employment authorization, including the E-Verify system.

**Miscellaneous**
- Increases annual number of U.S. diversity visas from 55,000 to 80,000.