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Failing at Pandemic, Trump Attacks Immigrants

April 21, 2020—With more than 40,000 dead and millions infected with COVID-19, Trump tweeted last night that he will be signing an Executive Order to temporarily suspend immigration into the United States. Whether or not such an order would even be legal, it would do absolutely nothing to protect the health or economy of the country.

"This latest attack on immigrants is as predictable as it is xenophobic," said Veena Iyer, executive director of the Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota. "This too-predictable pandering to prejudice divides the nation rather than uniting us in the struggle against COVID-19. The president's posturing insults the immigrant health care workers who are on the front lines of this battle."

Immigrants are [28.7 percent of physicians in the United States](#), [15.7 percent of registered nurses](#), [13.6 percent of respiratory therapists](#), and even higher proportions of nursing assistants, home health aides, and personal care assistants. Immigrants harvest our fruits and vegetables, feed and milk dairy cattle, and work in meat packing plants. Immigrants hold [18 percent of jobs classified as essential retail](#) and [26 percent of the workers who manufacture food, medicine, and soap/cleaning supplies](#) are immigrants.

The unemployment tsunami caused by the pandemic has hit immigrant workers, as well as other U.S. workers. Immigrants are hard-hit as the virus races through packing plants where people work in close proximity, threatens farmworkers in temporary living quarters, and infects detainees in unsanitary and crowded immigration detention centers.

In the face of the pandemic threat, we need unity, not division. Racism and xenophobia have no place in this battle for the health and lives of our community.