

From: [Jesus Ayala-Candia](#)
To: [FGG, Public Comment](#)
Subject: [External] Supporting Documents for Agenda Item 15
Date: Monday, April 7, 2025 4:50:32 PM
Attachments: [JAC_Support_15.pdf](#)

Dear San Diego County Board of Supervisors,

Please find attached supporting documentation for Agenda Item 15: expanding the Immigrant Legal Defense Program (ILDP). Should you have any questions please do not hesitate to reach out.

Respectfully,

Jesús Ayala-Candia, M.A.
Dept. of Sociology
University of California San Diego.



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To: The Honorable Members of San Diego County Board of Supervisors
Supervisor Joel Anderson, District 2
Supervisor Terra Lawson-Remer, District 3
Supervisor Monica Montgomery Steppe, District 4
Supervisor Jim Desmond, District 5

From: Jesús Ayala-Candia, M.A.
Ph.D. Student, Department of Sociology | Resident of San Diego County, District 4
University of California San Diego

Re: Supporting Documents for Agenda Item 15

Dear San Diego County Board of Supervisors,

My name is Jesús Ayala-Candia. I am a doctoral student at UC San Diego in the Department of Sociology and a graduate student affiliate of the Center for Comparative Immigration Studies. My research focuses on immigration law and border enforcement.

I am writing to submit additional documentation in strong support of Agenda Item #15, which seeks to update and expand the Immigrant Legal Defense Program (ILDP) to include non-detained individuals within our communities and to provide access to legal services at little to no cost. This proposal is a critical step toward ensuring that all immigrants in San Diego County—regardless of detention status—have access to the essential legal support needed to navigate our complex immigration system.

The success of the ILDP to date is undeniable. Nearly two-thirds of participants whose cases reached a decision were granted relief by a judge—compared to just 5% of those without legal representation. This stark contrast highlights the indispensable role of legal aid in ensuring fairness and justice for immigrant individuals and families.

Drawing from both my academic research and broader scholarship, one consistent theme emerges: access to legal counsel and social services is essential for immigrants. Expanding access to legal representation has been shown to significantly improve immigrants' ability to engage with the legal system. Rather than avoid institutions out of fear, immigrants with legal support are empowered to confront legal and social challenges head-on. This transition not only improves individual case outcomes but also contributes to long-term community stability and integration (Asad, 2024).

Research also confirms that legal representation leads to better outcomes in immigration proceedings—helping individuals avoid detention, remain in the U.S., and successfully navigate status adjustments (Chishti et al., 2023). Beyond the courtroom, legal representation fosters a deeper understanding of federal immigration law, strengthens access to vital state-level social services, and cultivates community-level resilience (Shah, 2020; Asad, 2024).

Moreover, immigrants and refugees are integral to the social and economic fabric of San Diego County, contributing \$54.3 billion to the local GDP. Expanding the ILDP honors both the civic and moral responsibility of San Diego as a border region, and aligns with due process rights enshrined by the U.S. Supreme Court under the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments (see: *Shaughnessy v. United States ex rel. Mezei*, 345 U.S. 206 (1953); *Mathews v. Diaz*, 426 U.S. 67 (1976); *Plyler v. Doe*, 457 U.S. 202 (1982)).

In short, expanding the ILDP ensures fairness in a legal system that disproportionately harms those without representation. I urge the Board of Supervisors to approve this measure and continue investing in the immigrant communities that help make San Diego County a more just, thriving, and inclusive region.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'J. Ayala-Candia', with a horizontal line drawn through the middle of the signature.

Jesús Ayala-Candia, M.A.

Resident of San Diego County, District 4

Department of Sociology, University of California, San Diego