



FACTSHEET

An Immigration Framework That Would Ensure Order at the Border, Keep Americans Safe, Increase Economic Growth, and Make Us Stronger

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America's immigration system is broken. Congress has kicked the can down the road for decades, undermining our national security and hurting Americans and immigrants alike. Their inaction makes all of us less safe. The Center for American Progress' plan to fix the broken immigration system:

- Secures and controls the border to stop illegal immigration
- Fixes the asylum system and ends its misuse
- Expands legal immigration to reduce unauthorized migration and strengthen America's economy
- Creates a secure, earned path to citizenship for people who have lived here for more than a decade and are contributing to their communities and the country

These reforms offer an orderly and effective approach that protects American communities and upholds American values while meeting the nation's economic needs. And they demonstrate that we can secure the border without the Trump administration's extrajudicial terror tactics. We don't need to choose between an immigration system that prioritizes border security and fosters economic growth and an immigration system that upholds due process and the rule of law.

The CAP plan demonstrates we can secure our borders and protect our national security without the terror tactics of the Trump administration, which is rounding up people who have been here for decades, people lawfully in the United States, and people who are absolutely no threat to anyone. The administration is acting lawlessly by violating court orders; rounding up immigrants here legally for exercising free speech rights; and unlawfully disappearing people to a notorious foreign prison without any due process. Congress should conduct robust oversight over these actions—and should ensure that immigration resources are provided with guardrails.

The Trump administration's chaos and cruelty is not an actual solution to fix the broken immigration system. This plan is an actual solution, and it demonstrates that we do not need to arrest grandmothers or workers who have been here for decades in order to have a secure border.

To keep America safe, strong, and prosperous, Congress should create an immigration system that:

Secures and controls the border to stop illegal immigration

Securing the U.S. border requires a combination of new physical barriers; advanced technology; and increased personnel to prevent unlawful crossings and ensure safe, lawful, and orderly entry. Congress must fully fund efforts to modernize ports of entry, strengthen Border Patrol operations, and deploy surveillance systems tailored to operational needs. The United States should also lead regional cooperation with countries in the region to dismantle transnational criminal networks and bolster enforcement.

Fixes the asylum system and ends its misuse

The U.S. asylum system must be reformed to prevent misuse and ensure order at the border. It should require all border asylum cases to be adjudicated proximate to the border, with expeditious approvals for true victims of persecution and immediate repatriation for unsuccessful applicants.

To do this, the government would sort border cases to presumptively rule out non-qualifying applications from democracies that do not persecute their citizens, while raising the legal standard for all asylum claims at the border. This system would streamline case adjudications to deliver decisions within 30 days; require asylum seekers to apply at ports of entry; and require that asylum seekers at the border remain in humane custodial processing facilities with access to counsel to ensure due process, efficient, and fair outcomes. Under this system, applicants would no longer travel to the interior while their claims are pending.

The United States should also surge resources to eliminate the existing asylum backlog and strengthen the refugee resettlement program, which would be the primary pathway for those fleeing persecution.

Expands legal immigration to reduce unauthorized migration and strengthen America's economy

The U.S. legal immigration system must be modernized to support economic growth. Reforms should expand opportunities for workers, entrepreneurs, and family members while clearing immigrant visa backlogs and reforming country-specific limits. A new, targeted points-based system aligned with specific labor market needs would supplement the existing system. Visa programs would be reformed to ensure robust protections for U.S. and immigrant workers and to help meet critical workforce demands.

A new, safe, orderly legal pathway for victims of domestic violence, gang violence, and other crimes would allow the United States to accept the most vulnerable migrants.

Congress must also provide relevant agencies with sufficient resources and staffing capacity to ensure fairness, efficiency, and long-term national prosperity.

Creates a secure, earned path to citizenship for people who have lived here for more than a decade and are contributing to their communities and the country

Creating a secure and earned pathway to citizenship for longtime undocumented immigrants who have lived in the U.S. for more than 10 years—more than five years for Dreamers—would boost the U.S. economy and generate greater revenue to support the social safety net.

A fair process to legalize longtime undocumented immigrants should include background checks; a requirement that those benefiting are economically self-sufficient; and payment of any taxes owed, as well as a fine. It should also bar individuals who pose a threat to public safety.