

What Features of Immigration Policy Need To Be Reformed?

Possibilities for reform:

- *Legal status for nearly 2 million “Dreamers”*

Should dreamers be given a path to citizenship? Does this constitute amnesty? What conditions should be applied to those potentially eligible? What to do about their families?

- *Reforms to border security*

What is the best approach to securing our borders? Electronic surveillance, more manpower, a wall?

- *Restrictions on chain migration*

Should immigrants be allowed to sponsor relatives? If so, how close should the relationship be?

- *Merit-based Immigration and an end to the Diversity Immigrant Visa Program (the Lottery).*

Should the US adopt the Canadian/Australian points-based system for allowing immigration. How should points be awarded? Technical skills, language skills?

- *Harsher penalties for employers of the undocumented*

- *Guest workers (H2-A & B visas) and H1-B visas*

Immigration Facts:

Approximately 46.6 million foreign-born people live in the United States. Broken down by immigration status, the foreign-born population includes 20.7 million naturalized U.S. citizens and 25.9 million noncitizens. Of the noncitizens, approximately 13.1 million are lawful permanent residents, 11.1 million are unauthorized migrants, and 1.7 million hold temporary visas. Still, today’s share of the immigrant population as a percentage of the total U.S. population remains below its peak in 1890, when 14.8 percent of the U.S. population had immigrated to the country.

The number of undocumented immigrants has fallen each year since 2008, driven primarily by a steady decline in illegal migrants from Mexico. In fact, more Mexican immigrants are returning home than arriving in the United States. The chief source of undocumented immigrants is now Central America. As of 2014, 21 percent of the nation’s unauthorized population lived in California; 15 percent in Texas; 8 percent in Florida; 7 percent in New York; 5 percent in New Jersey; and 4 percent in Illinois. Only Texas and Virginia, of the six states with the highest undocumented populations, gained undocumented residents from 2010 to 2014. Experts have attributed the decline to a combination of tighter U.S. border security measures since 2008 and economic and demographic changes in Mexico. Demographic data show that the typical undocumented immigrant is someone 35 or older and has lived in the US for a decade or more.

The countries of origin of today’s immigrants are more diverse than they were 50 years ago. In 1960, a full 75 percent of the foreign-born population residing in the United States was from Europe, while in 2015, only 11.1 percent of the immigrant population was born in Europe. In 2015, 11.6 million foreign-born residents—26.9 percent of the foreign-born population—were from Mexico; 2.7 million immigrants were from China; 2.4 million were from India; 2 million were from the Philippines.

Today, women outnumber men in the foreign-born population.

More than half of the foreign-born population are homeowners and immigrants are becoming homeowners at a faster rate than the U.S.-born population.

Working-class, immigrant-headed households with incomes less than 200% of the federal poverty line rely less on public benefits and social services than comparable U.S.-born households.

Compared with all Americans, U.S.-born children of immigrants are more likely to go to college, less likely to live in poverty, and equally likely to be homeowners.

The 20 million adult U.S.-born children of immigrants have higher incomes than their parents. The median annual household income of second-generation Americans in 2012 was \$58,100, just \$100 below the national average.

Immigrants start new businesses at twice the rate of nonimmigrants.

Immigrants are less likely to commit crimes or be incarcerated than the U.S.-born population. Roughly 1.6 percent of immigrant males between 18 and 39 wind up incarcerated compared with 3.3 percent of the native-born.

Unauthorized immigrants are increasingly entering the United States legally and overstaying visas rather than crossing the border. According to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, or DHS, the three largest source countries of visa overstayers are Canada, Mexico, and Brazil.

The majority of unauthorized immigrants are long-term residents of the United States. In 2014, the median length of residence for unauthorized immigrants in the United States was 13.6 years. In 2014, 66 percent of unauthorized immigrants had been living in the US for 10 years or longer.

Unauthorized immigrants are often part of the same family as authorized immigrants and native-born Americans.

As of September 2016, more than 752,000 young people have received work permits and a reprieve from deportation through the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA, initiative launched in 2012. They make up less than half of the estimated 1.7 million young people eligible to apply as of 2016.

The Deferred Action for Parents of Americans and Lawful Permanent Residents, or DAPA, initiative would have shielded 3.5 million unauthorized immigrants with U.S.-born children, and a proposed expansion to DACA would have permitted an additional 330,000 young adults to apply. More than 6.1 million U.S. citizens live with unauthorized family members who would be eligible for reprieve under DAPA.

Sources for Factoids:

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