
Immigration

- ✓ *Does the United States do an adequate job integrating immigrants and refugees?*
- ✓ *Does the U.S. benefit from having immigration policy set only at the level of the federal government?*
- ✓ *Would accepting more political refugees significantly improve the U.S.' global image?*

Facts

Important Dates.

1876: The Supreme Court decides the *Chy Lung v. Freeman* case.

1892: Ellis Island opens as the largest gateway for immigrants entering the U.S.

1900–1920: Nearly 14.5 million immigrants from Europe arrive in the U.S., representing the largest influx in U.S. history.

2002: The Department of Homeland Security is established and takes over the responsibility of implementing immigration and refugee policy.

Immigrant Population.

The immigrant population in the United States stood at 42.4 million people according to census data in 2014. The majority originated from India and China. Between 2013 and 2014, nearly 1 million immigrants entered the country. Legalized citizens comprised 47% of the immigrant population in 2014.

Negative Migrations.

In 2014, 28% of the immigrant population came from Mexico. However, since 2009, the net number of immigrants returning to Mexico surpassed the number arriving in the U.S. Between 2009 and 2014, the net loss from return migration totaled nearly 140,000 people.

Unaccompanied Minors.

The number of unaccompanied minors attempting to enter the U.S. from Mexico and Central America surged to nearly 70,000 in 2014. Many of these children came from areas suffering extreme violence, such as Honduras and El Salvador.

Current U.S. Policies

Immigration.

Chy Lung v. Freeman.

The Supreme Court decision of *Chy Lung v. Freeman* (1876) set the precedent that the power to establish immigration policy lies on the federal level. The decision has been referenced in subsequent cases, most recently in *Arizona v. United States* in 2012.

Homeland Security Act.

The 2002 act established the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, which assumed authority over all actions previously handled by the Immigration and Nationalization Service (INS). The responsibilities assumed were divided across three new departments: Customs and Border Protection (CBP) secures U.S. borders against drugs, weapons and human trafficking; Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) enforces customs and trade law at the border; and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) governs the naturalization process for immigrants to the U.S.

Children Migrants.

Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act.

The first iteration of this act, passed in 2000, establishes protections for undocumented immigrants in the U.S. who are victims of human trafficking. A 2008 reauthorization further stipulates that in instances of unaccompanied children migrants, each case be immediately examined to determine whether the child may be a victim of human trafficking. The act amends the “one year rule” for unaccompanied minors filing for asylum in the U.S. It has been attached to the Violence Against Women Act since 2013.

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals.

This act was passed by an Obama administration executive order in 2012. It states that any person between the ages of 15 and 30, having entered the U.S. illegally as a child before June 2012 and resided in the country for at least five years, can apply for deportation relief and a two-year work permit.

Refugees.

Refugee Act.

This 1980 act created a U.S. refugee acceptance policy predicated on the United Nations’ definition of refugee status. The act separates refugees from the normal immigration system. It sets a cap on the number of refugees accepted in a single

fiscal year at 50,000, but grants power to the U.S. attorney general to raise the cap in “emergency situations.” The act also created government positions tasked with developing strategies for refugee naturalization and resettlement, and capable of responding to refugee crises.

Syrian/Iraqi Refugees.

In late August, the Obama administration announced that it had reached its goal of accepting 10,000 Syrian refugees before the end of the 2016 fiscal year. The goal was originally set amid rising international pressure, especially from Europe.

Candidate Positions



Hillary Clinton promises to pass comprehensive immigration reform with a path to “full and equal citizenship” within her first 100 days in office. She strongly supports President Obama’s executive actions on immigration, which she says she will defend and expand. She frames immigration partially as a family issue, and calls for the closure of family and private detention centers. She proposes the creation of a Federal Office of Immigrant Affairs to coordinate policies and facilitate integration into communities. Mrs. Clinton calls for a substantial increase in the number of Syrian refugees resettled to the U.S., although she also emphasizes the importance of strict screening.

As secretary of state during the height of the Central American migrant crisis in 2014, Mrs. Clinton favored the deportation of child migrants. As a senator, she co-sponsored the DREAM Act three times. The Act sought to establish a path to citizenship for young people who immigrated as children. Mrs. Clinton supported the Secure Fence Act of 2006, which set out to build a 700-mile fence along the southern border.



Donald Trump has made immigration reform the focus of his campaign. His three-pronged plan is formulated around decreasing crime, and protecting wages and employment for American citizens. It proposes building a 1,000-mile wall along the southern border, to be financed by Mexico under threat of penalties like visa fees and the seizure of remittances. It calls for tripling the number of ICE officers patrolling the U.S.-Mexico border, implementing nationwide e-verify, defunding sanctuary cities, mandatory detention for apprehended immigrants and the end of birthright citizenship. It would require companies to hire from the domestic pool of workers before looking abroad. Mr. Trump would repeal Obama administration executive actions on immigration, and end the practice of catch and release for undocumented immigrants. He had previously maintained that he would create a “deportation force” to remove the 11 million illegal immigrants living in the U.S., as well as Syrian refugees. In an August speech on immigration, he revised this position, vowing instead to focus on the deportation of illegal immigrants who have committed crimes.

Mr. Trump accuses the Mexican government of using illegal immigration to “export crime and poverty” to the U.S. In his campaign announcement, he said undocumented Mexican immigrants were “bringing drugs, they’re bringing crime, they’re rapists.” He says he would temporarily suspend immigration from “volatile nations” — a position that refines his earlier call for a ban on all Muslims migrants. He would also institute a Cold War-style ideological screening test for immigrants.

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