



NATIONAL IMMIGRATION FORUM ACTION FUND VOTER GUIDE TO KEY IMMIGRATION ISSUES

This guide aims to provide voters with factual insights into the immigration policies and records of Vice President Kamala Harris and former President Donald Trump. Using the candidates' statements and governing policies, it examines each of their records on key immigration issues such as border security, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), and refugee resettlement. It should serve as a resource for voters to decide the extent to which each candidate is committed to practical and humane immigration solutions.

This guide was created by the National Immigration Forum Action Fund, which seeks to increase the profile of immigration policy concerns and influence federal legislation to benefit immigrants. As a 501(c)4 organization, the Action Fund's primary focus is not on partisan political activity, but rather on working with key constituencies and elected and appointed policymakers from across the political spectrum to forge practical, commonsense solutions to fix our broken immigration system. This work guides the Action Fund's focus on legislative issues and leaves space for advocacy through public education and communications.

The key topics in this guide are informed by [the National Immigration Forum's 2024 immigration principles](#). During an election year, immigration is often elevated, distorted, and used for partisan purposes. This guide seeks to disentangle facts from sometimes misleading narratives and bolster the principles that should guide American immigration policy.

THIS GUIDE INCLUDES:

BORDER SECURITY.....	1
MASS DEPORTATION & BALANCED ENFORCEMENT.....	2
BIRTHRIGHT CITIZENSHIP.....	3
DACA AND DREAMERS.....	4
ASYLUM.....	5
REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT.....	6
OTHER HUMANITARIAN PROGRAMS.....	7
LEGAL IMMIGRATION.....	8
APPENDIX.....	9

Border security has become a top issue for both campaigns and is a key concern for many Americans. What actions are necessary to ensure the security of America's borders?



TRUMP



HARRIS

- Trump **promised** during a rally on June 22, 2024, that on his first day in office, he “will seal the border, stop the invasion.”
- Trump’s own platform, **Agenda 47**, explains that he “will use Title 42” to “secure our borders and ... restore our sovereignty” through proposals including the "**Death Penalty for Human Traffickers**" and a proposed executive order "**Ending Citizenship for Children of Illegals and Birth Tourism.**"
- As president, Trump took **472 executive actions** targeting immigration policy, many of which focused on border security. Notably, his administration implemented the **Migrant Protection Protocols**, often known as “Remain in Mexico”; implemented a “zero tolerance” policy that led thousands of **children to be separated from their families**; and took numerous actions **restricting access to asylum.**
- In office and as a candidate, Trump in effect has killed multiple pieces of bipartisan legislation focused on border security. His opposition to a **bill** that paired protections for DACA recipients with border wall funding prompted a **government shutdown** in 2018. In 2024, he **pressured** Senate Republicans into opposing a bipartisan bill on border security that would have provided critical funding and was **supported** by the Border Patrol union.
- The Biden-Harris administration has **struggled** to respond to the record number of encounters along the U.S-Mexico border. In June 2024, Biden announced significant **restrictions on asylum**, which have **reduced** encounters to their lowest level since January 2021, when Trump was still in office.
- Harris **led** the Biden administration’s diplomatic efforts to address regional migration, including increasing cooperation with El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. She was **not** tasked with leading administration border security as vice president.
- Speaking as vice president on Feb. 4, 2024, Harris **argued** that we “can make the border more secure while preserving legal immigration, consistent with our values as a nation.”
- In her speech at the Democratic National Convention on Aug. 23, 2024, Harris **vowed** that as president, she would “bring back the bipartisan border security bill that [Trump] killed, and ... sign it into law.”

MASS DEPORTATION & BALANCED ENFORCEMENT

Balanced immigration enforcement focused on public safety and community trust is critical for maintaining the rule of law and ensuring the integrity of the immigration system. Proposals to arrest, detain, and deport the entire undocumented population or a large share of it would be a radical departure from previous administrations, Democratic and Republican, and would have harmful effects on families, communities, and the national economy. What are each candidate's priorities for selecting priorities for deportation? How would each candidate consider factors such as family and community ties?



TRUMP

- During his speech at the Republican National Convention on July 19, 2024, Trump **underscored** his promise “to launch the largest deportation operation in the history of our country,” much greater than the previous **expansion** of interior immigration enforcement he enacted during his first term.
- In his "**Plan to End Crime and Restore Law and Order**" as part of **Agenda 47**, Trump says he “will require local law enforcement agencies receiving DOJ grants to return to proven policing measures such as ... cooperating with ICE to arrest and deport criminal aliens.”



HARRIS

- The Biden-Harris administration does not support mass deportation and has instead **focused** enforcement efforts on the border, as opposed to the interior.
- As a senator, Harris supported legislation that **pushed back** against Trump administration policies that designated the vast majority of undocumented individuals as enforcement priorities and sought to punish jurisdictions that placed limits on local law enforcement's role in carrying out traditionally federal immigration enforcement actions.
- Harris was also a leading voice in trying to ensure humane conditions in immigration detention facilities, introducing legislation that would have **enhanced** oversight of immigration detention facilities, and co-sponsoring bills that would have **reduced** the use of solitary confinement and improved protections for **children** in immigration custody.

For more than a century, following the adoption of the 14th Amendment and subsequent Supreme Court decisions, persons born in the United States are citizens, regardless of the immigration status of their parents. In recent years, some political actors have sought to reinterpret the 14th amendment to bring an end to birthright citizenship. Should this constitutional principle be upheld?



TRUMP

- During his previous term in office, Trump repeatedly **floated** taking executive action to end birthright citizenship.
- In **Agenda 47**, Trump **promises** to sign a new executive order “ ... on Day One of my new term in office ... making clear to federal agencies that under the correct interpretation of the law, going forward, the future children of illegal aliens will not receive automatic U.S. citizenship. ... It will direct federal agencies to require that at least one parent be a U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident for their future children to become automatic U.S. citizens.”



HARRIS

- Speaking in 2010 as a candidate for attorney general of California, Harris **said**, “The 14th amendment was added to the Constitution to make sure that no one was denied equal protection under the law. ... We have to fight to preserve the 14th Amendment, we have to fight to defend everything that is about equality.”
- In recent years, Harris does not appear to have directly addressed proposals to change the meaning of birthright citizenship, but there is no indication she has shifted her position supporting the longstanding interpretation of the 14th amendment.

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) provides temporary protection from deportation, and work authorization, to eligible undocumented individuals who were brought to the United States as children (“Dreamers”). It is currently the subject of ongoing litigation and is under threat in the courts, leaving recipients and other Dreamers with an uncertain future. Should Dreamers be permitted to legally live and work in the United States and be afforded the chance to earn permanent legal status?



TRUMP

- In 2017, the Trump administration **attempted** to end DACA, although the Supreme Court ultimately allowed DACA to survive, **holding** that the administration failed to follow proper administrative procedures. His administration **continued** to be critical of DACA.
- In February 2017, Trump **praised** some Dreamers as “absolutely incredible kids” and at times expressed openness to legislation that would allow them to remain in the United States. However, he **rejected** various proposals that would have protected Dreamers, including a February 2018 bipartisan proposal that had the potential to receive supermajority support in the Senate.
- Trump does not appear to have spoken recently about DACA or Dreamers, seemingly de-emphasizing the issue in his 2024 campaign.



HARRIS

- As a senator, Harris **displayed** a large sign stating “Dreamers welcome here” outside her office and voted for numerous bills providing protections, work opportunities, and permanent status for Dreamers.
- In a speech as vice president on June 24, 2022, Harris **highlighted** her record defending the program, saying, “When I was attorney general of California ... we, together, fought in the courts and spoke out when they ruled against DACA. ... When I was in the United States Senate, we worked together on legislation that would create a pathway to citizenship.”
- On the 12th anniversary of the announcement of the program, June 15, 2024, Harris **wrote** in an official statement as vice president that “the story of Dreamers is a story of America. Dreamers across our Nation serve in our military, teach in our classrooms, and lead our small businesses as entrepreneurs. They are our neighbors, classmates, and loved ones. Their ambition and aspiration power our communities, economy, and country — and they deserve our protection.”

The American asylum system, which provides crucial protection for individuals fleeing persecution based on race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or social group membership, has become increasingly overloaded, prompting the Biden administration to implement significant limits on asylum in June 2024. What actions should be taken to address the asylum system?



TRUMP

- As president, Trump took numerous executive actions to limit access to asylum. For example, in 2018 and 2019, Trump issued three proclamations attempting to bar migrants who crossed between ports of entry from being able to apply for asylum, although this action was blocked in court.
- At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, in March 2020, the Trump administration relied on Title 42, a public health order, to halt asylum processing at the U.S.-Mexico border.
- In his speech at the Republican National Convention on July 19, 2024, Trump claimed to have “shut down asylum fraud.” Prior to his presidency, terminations of asylum status due to fraud were already extremely uncommon.



HARRIS

- The Biden administration lifted several Trump-era restrictions limiting asylum access in 2021 but kept Title 42 limits in place until 2023.
- In response to the significant number of asylum seekers arriving from Central America and in anticipation of the end of Title 42, in May 2023 the Biden administration implemented a rule restricting access to asylum. Pressures at the border continued to increase, prompting the administration to introduce more significant limits in June 2024. Harris’s campaign has indicated she will continue these limits.
- As a senator, Harris supported legislation that would have enhanced due process protections for asylum seekers.

REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT

The U.S. has a long history of welcoming refugees, reflecting its commitment to human rights and global responsibility.

What should the future of U.S. refugee resettlement look like?



TRUMP

- As president, Trump reduced refugee admission caps each year, and Trump administration officials **considered** reducing the number of refugee admissions to near zero. He issued an **executive order** requiring that “states and local governments provide written consent authorizing the initial resettlement of refugees into their respective communities.”
- In September 2018, President Trump reportedly **referred** to some refugees as “people from ‘s---hole countries.’”
- During a White House briefing on Sept. 26, 2019, Trump **said**, “The United States spends billions of dollars resettling refugees that could be invested in our citizens here at home.” In addition to discounting the moral, national security, and humanitarian benefits of refugee resettlement, the statement **overlooks** the enormous economic contributions of refugees and their families.



HARRIS

- Speaking as a senator on Feb. 16, 2017, Harris **spoke** against Trump’s actions, saying they “created deep uncertainty and pain for our refugee and immigrant communities.”
- As a senator, Harris supported legislation that would have **guaranteed** the admission of at least 95,000 refugees annually.
- The Biden-Harris administration **expanded** access to the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program for vulnerable individuals facing persecution as it rebuilt from Trump-era cuts, providing needed resources to resettlement agencies and increasing the admissions ceiling to 125,000 per year.
- In 2023, the Biden administration began a program of private sponsorship for refugees, known as **Welcome Corps**.

Temporary Protected Status (TPS) and humanitarian parole are among the humanitarian programs offering temporary relief to individuals from countries experiencing conflict, natural disasters, or other extraordinary conditions. As circumstances evolve, should these programs continue and be expanded upon, or should they be reduced or eliminated?



TRUMP

- Trump issued an **executive order** in September 2017 to end the “abuse of parole” by requiring it to be “exercised only on a case-by-case basis.” This ended existing uses of parole that kept military families together and increased the use of expedited deportation procedures.
- In 2017 and 2018, Trump attempted to end TPS for El Salvador, Haiti, Nicaragua, Sudan, Nepal, and Honduras, but these efforts were ultimately **blocked** in court.



HARRIS

- The Biden administration has granted and redesignated **15 countries** for TPS, including Afghanistan, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Myanmar, Ukraine, and Venezuela. It also expanded the use of parole through the Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua, and Venezuela (**CHNV**) process and the **Uniting for Ukraine** program.
- Harris **said** undocumented spouses of U.S. citizens “deserve our protection,” speaking as vice president on June 18, 2024.
- Speaking as vice president on July 24, 2023, Harris **said** that “Congress must create a pathway to citizenship for ... individuals with Temporary Protected Status.”
- As a senator, Harris supported legislation extending TPS protections for the **Bahamas** and **Venezuela**, and legislation that would have **created** a pathway to permanent residency for TPS recipients.

Legal immigration is a cornerstone of America's growth and diversity, allowing individuals to contribute to the nation's economic and social fabric. How can the legal immigration system be modernized and respond to the needs of businesses, workers, and all Americans?



TRUMP

- As president, Trump **supported** legislation that would have **reduced** legal immigration pathways significantly and issued executive orders **suspending** certain visa categories. His administration shifted funding and resources away from legal migration channels, creating new backlogs and adding to existing ones.
- Speaking on a podcast on June 19, 2024, Trump **said** that graduating international students “should get automatically as part of your diploma a green card to be able to stay in this country,” although his campaign has since attempted to walk back this statement.
- On September 5, 2024, Trump **made** the demonstrably false claim that “100% of jobs created under [the Biden-Harris] administration has gone to illegal migrants.”



HARRIS

- In a speech as vice president on February 4, 2024, Harris **said**, “Immigrants have always helped strengthen our country, grow our economy, and drive innovation.”
- As a senator, Harris supported legislation that would have **reduced** the backlog of skilled workers from larger countries and **increased** the number of visas available to highly educated STEM workers. She also supported legislation that would have **created** pathways to temporary and permanent status for agricultural workers.

APPENDIX

BORDER SECURITY

- [Redefining Border Security](#)
- [Explainer: Title 42 and What Comes Next at the Border](#)
- [Q&A: The Biden Border Proclamation](#)
- [Fact Sheet: Changes in Migrant Demographics at the Southwest Border](#)

MASS DEPORTATION AND ENFORCEMENT

- [Texas v. the Biden Administration: How Recent Lawsuits Have Redefined the Federal Immigration Agenda](#)
- [The Great Replacement Theory, Explained](#)
- [Deportation Plan Would Affect U.S. Jobs and Home Prices](#)

BIRTHRIGHT CITIZENSHIP

- [Q&A: Birthright Citizenship](#)

DACA AND DREAMERS

- [Fact Sheet: Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals](#)
- [Adjustment of Status Through Work Visas for DACA Recipients: Explainer](#)

ASYLUM

- [Fact Sheet: Asylum Fraud and Immigration Court Absentia Rates](#)
- [CBP One: Fact Sheet and Resources Directory](#)
- [Adjudication by USCIS Asylum Officers: Explainer](#)
- [Explainer: Asylum Backlogs](#)
- [Explainer: Title 42 and What Comes Next at the Border](#)

REFUGEES

- [Infographic: What's Standing in the Way of Refugee Resettlement?](#)
- [Fact Sheet: US Refugee Resettlement](#)
- [Explainer: Private Sponsorship Programs for Refugees](#)

OTHER HUMANITARIAN PROGRAMS

- [Fact Sheet: Temporary Protected Status](#)
- [Fact Sheet: Family-Based Parole Programs](#)
- [Explainer: Humanitarian Parole and the Afghan Evacuation](#)
- [Explainer: Humanitarian Parole](#)

APPENDIX

LEGAL IMMIGRATION

- [Legal Immigration to the United States: National Quotas & America's Immigration System](#)
- [Room to Grow: Setting Immigration Levels in a Changing America](#)

REGIONAL COOPERATION

- [The Reasons Behind the Increased Migration from Venezuela, Cuba, and Nicaragua](#)
- [Explainer: What Are Safe Mobility Offices?](#)
- [Summit of the Americas: An Opportunity to Address Hemispheric Migration](#)
- [Alternative Pathways for Arrivals at the Border: A Holistic Response to Increasing Migration in the Western Hemisphere](#)