



PRINCIPLES FOR COMPREHENSIVE IMMIGRATION REFORM

by  HOPE BORDER INSTITUTE

Our broken immigration system is a wound on our country and scandal at the border. Our border community bears disproportionately the burdens of a broken system. No one can deny the terrible human impacts of a system that forces over 11 million persons without documents to live in the shadows, divides families, permits some to detain human beings for profit, and compromises our nation's historic commitment to the refugee and asylum seeker.

Comprehensive immigration reform should include the following:

JUST PATHS

Nations that enjoy the peace, prosperity and security that we do must ensure that there are sufficient legal avenues for migrants workers and their families, who fill important roles in our economy, to migrate in a safe and orderly way. Asylum seekers fleeing violence, persecution and extreme poverty deserve special protections. The 11 million undocumented persons in our country should be provided with a just path towards legalization and eventual citizenship.

FUTURE FLOWS

A reformed system should be flexible in order to respond to future migration flows, including the need for foreign-born workers, and should ensure workplace protections, living wage levels, safeguard against the displacement of US workers and the priority of family unity.

FAMILIES FIRST

Reforming our immigration system means putting families first. We should end deportation and enforcement practices that separate families and adopt a system that prioritizes family unity. It can currently take decades for families to be reunited through today's burdensome and expensive system.

ROOT CAUSES

As a country, we are involved in the drivers of migration, through things like unfair trade policies, our addiction to drugs and even climate change. Lawmakers should address the root causes of migration and promote sustainable economic development abroad, which will allow our brothers and sisters to remain in their home countries and support themselves and their families in safety.

END MILITARIZATION

Enforcement-first and blockade strategies which militarize border communities should be ended. The massive growth in immigration enforcement agencies must be matched by a corresponding commitment to accountability, transparency and human rights. Comprehensive immigration reform should provide security while still allowing for the orderly entry of people into our country, especially those fleeing for their lives. Immigration enforcement measures must be targeted, proportional and humane. The detention migrants (adults, families and children) whose pose no threat to the community should be ended.