



Statement of Principles on Immigration

Our Common Goal is Reducing Illegal Immigration

Illegal immigration is harmful to our society. It results in the death of untold numbers of migrants and painful family separations; enables unscrupulous employers to exploit undocumented workers, depressing wages while increasing cultural and racial tensions, and aids violent criminal networks of human trafficking and drug smuggling. The solution is not criminalizing undocumented immigrants; it is comprehensive reform that would better regulate the streams of migration to and from the U.S. while providing recent immigrants with greater opportunities for civic and cultural integration and developing strategies to improve economic conditions in the regions supplying the large numbers of economic migrants.

Enhance Our Nation's Security

First and foremost, the United States should take all reasonable measures to ensure that our borders are secure. Additionally, a sensible enforcement strategy will keep the United States safe while upholding the Constitution. Such a strategy should prioritize actions to target genuine threats, including the prosecution and removal of violent individuals, the elimination of human trafficking and drug smuggling operations, and the prosecution of unscrupulous employers who exploit undocumented workers to the detriment of immigrants, respectable employers, and the American free market system.

Immigration Reform Must be Comprehensive

Comprehensive reform would recommit the United States to being a lawful nation of immigrants. The necessary components of immigration reform include:

- 1) Legalizing the status of undocumented immigrants working and living in the U.S., while creating a workable path to U.S. citizenship.
- 2) Reforming visa programs to keep families together, protecting workers rights and ensuring that future immigration is regulated and controlled, rather than illegal and chaotic.
- 3) Implementing smart, effective measures that target the worst violators of immigration and labor laws.
- 4) Improving the economic situation of all workers.
- 5) Prioritizing immigrant integration in our communities and country.
- 6) Respecting the due process of law.



A Reform Package Should Include the Following:

A Rational and Humane Approach to the Undocumented Population

We must address the more than twelve million undocumented immigrants living in this country, including almost 500,000 residing in Georgia, by creating a rigorous registration process that leads to a lawful status, while creating a workable path to U.S. citizenship. Earned legal status should include paying fines for having entered illegally, submitting to background checks, filing income taxes, and meeting English and civics proficiency requirements. Despite their lack of immigration status, the majority of undocumented immigrants are law-abiding people who value family, work, and believe in the promise of the United States of America as the land of opportunity. Providing them with opportunities to earn a legal status ultimately will be beneficial for all Americans.

Allocate Sufficient Visas to Close Illegal Migration Channels

Under our current employment-based immigration system, Congress arbitrarily sets levels of legal immigration, with little regard for the needs of the free market. The allocation of employment visas should be depoliticized and should be awarded based on an assessment of labor shortages and a determination of the number and characteristic of foreign workers that can be admitted.

Promote Economic Opportunity

We must renew our commitment to ensure all Americans have the opportunity to pursue the American Dream. In order to realize this goal, we must strive to ensure that immigration does not depress wages and working conditions or create incentives for unscrupulous employers to violate labor laws.

Keep American Families Together

Our current system of family immigration keeps close family members separated for decades. We must seek to preserve families, not divide them. People admitted on work visas should be allowed to keep their legitimate nuclear families intact and family members stuck in bureaucratic backlogs should have their admission expedited. Children should not be separated from their parents. Younger generations, born and raised in the U.S., act as a bridge for older relatives struggling with the difficulties of adapting to a new language and culture. Immigration policies based on shared family values greatly aid the process of integrating recent immigrants into American society.



Promote Integration into American Society

Federal, state, and local governments have a responsibility to help immigrants learn our language and laws, ensure equal opportunities to participate in programs and services, and facilitate, rather than obstruct, the integration of these new Americans. The continued decline in funding for Civics and English as a Second Language classes undermines the important goal of immigrant integration.

Access to Education

Our state colleges and universities benefit from the presence of many bright and talented students who, due to extraneous circumstances, are unable to attain legal residency or citizenship. These students should not be punished for pursuing a higher education and desiring to improve their quality of life to attain the American dream.