

Policy Analysis Brief

Policy for Immigrants

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POLICY CHANGE FOR IMMIGRANTS

UNITED STATES CURRENT IMMIGRATION POLICY

As stated in (The American Immigration Council, 2021), the body of law presiding over current policy is called the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA). The Immigration and Nationality Act allows the United States to grant up to 675,000 permanent immigrant visas each year across different visa categories. On top of those 675,000 visas, the Immigration and Nationality Act place no limit on the number of annual admissions of for U.S. citizens applying for visas for their spouses, parents, and children under the age of 21. Additionally, each year the president is required to review with Congress and request an annual number of refugees to be admitted to the United States through the U.S. Refugee Resettlement Process.

Currently, the United States is home to the largest immigrant population in the World. Based on research (Pew Research Center, 2021) more than 40 million people living in the United States were born in another country, accounting for about one-fifth of the World's migrants. The population of immigrants is extremely diverse, meaning that every country in the World is represented among U.S. immigrants. Most immigrants (77%) are living legally in this country, meanwhile almost a quarter are unauthorized well known as illegal immigrants. However, there is a huge difference in regards to policy, power, laws, social oppression, resources, benefits and

entitlements provided for those who have legal status versus those that are illegally in this country. Legal immigrants are eligible for state benefits such as SNAP, cash assistance, welfare, healthcare, housing, education and government assistance. Legal immigrants can also vote, work, and pay taxes. Unfortunately, illegal immigrants are not eligible to receive entitlements, connect to resources, apply for healthcare, apply for housing, vote, or work. Having access to resources such as healthcare and housing is a necessity for all. Nonetheless, these barriers presented have been an ongoing issue for many undocumented immigrants across the whole United States who's unable to provide for their families and have a better quality of life due to the current policies and their immigration status. According to the (1996 Welfare Reform Act) current policy set to date, it leaves undocumented immigrants out and they are unable to receive government assistance such as SNAP benefits food stamps, cash assistance, rental assistance, and housing assistance. Because this policy is in place, there is millions of undocumented immigrants living in the United States homeless, hungry, sick and unemployed afraid of being deported back to their home country.

Entering the United States without approval is illegal. This means staying unlawfully in the United States without permission after your visa has expired. Even violating the terms if a legal entry can make a non-citizen stay illegal. USCIS also known as the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, is the federal agency that oversees lawful immigration to the United States. According to (USCIS, 2021) in 2020 the USCIS increased its fees including an 83% increase for a U.S. citizenship through naturalization application from \$640 to \$1,170. It is expected to charge \$50 to asylum seekers for their application. With the increase in fee's in

hopes of becoming a legal citizenship it is almost impossible to afford. As many undocumented immigrants risk their lives to come to the United States also known as the land of opportunities, the land of the freedom of speech, protection and human rights. However, Illegal immigrants are living in the United States working off the books due to their immigration status and unable to pay for attorney's fees to obtain legal residency to become a legal immigrant. As policies continue to change and become challenging for many undocumented and green card holders to maintain and obtain long-term employment, housing, medical insurance. Their human rights are also violated at the same time. Effective 2020, the (USCIS, 2021) United States Citizenship and Immigration Service is implementing new policies and rules that will affect green card holders or lawful permanent residents. Policy states that men between the age of 18 to 25 years with a green card must enroll in the selective services. Failure to abide can lead to deportation. Failure to identify yourself as an LPR on your taxes or accurately report income may now lead to deportation (USCIS, 2021). According to the (UDHR, 2021) United Declaration of Human Rights; basic human rights such as the right to life, liberty, and security of a person; freedom from slavery or torture; the right to equal protection of the law and freedom from discrimination; freedom from arbitrary arrest and detention for everyone citizen or migrant, documented or undocumented.

As policies continue to change for the better or worst many migrants' human rights are and will continue to be violated. The right to life and liberty and freedom from discrimination is a far cry out for help to those whose undocumented, unemployed, and or legal citizen; however unable to afford or connect to resources such as SNAP, cash, affordable healthcare, housing due to their

immigration status. Those who's currently a green card holder in fear of deportation due to the new policies set in place requiring more tax information or subjected to be deported back to their native country. As policies become more difficult to upheld many migrants fear for the once dream of the land of the free to deportation.

President Joe Biden, 46th President of the United States of America has sent a bill to Congress to restore humanity and American values to our immigration system on January 20th, 2021. The U.S. Citizenship Act 2021 is aim to establish a new system to responsibly manage and secure our border, keep our families and communities safe, and better manage migration across the hemisphere (whitehouse.gov, 2021). Biden new found policy will help bridge the gaps, fill the void, speak for the voiceless, enrich and encourage many migrants looking for a safe, comfortable, stable place to work, live, educate, and learn while living in the United States without fear to be deported, lack of resources and connection to necessities such as shelter, food and medical care. Joe Biden aim to create after five years if they pass criminal and national security background checks and pay their taxes. Dreamers, TPS holders, and immigrant farmworkers who meet specific requirements are eligible immediately under the legislation. The bill includes the NO BAN act that prohibits discrimination based on religion and limits presidential authority to issue future bans. The bill also increases Diversity Visas to 80, 000 from 55,000. Joe Biden's presidency has and will re-shape, re-gain freedom for all by setting in place policies that seek to help change the lives of immigrants for the better. Before Biden's presidency, Trump policy prohibited immigrants of family members to stay together by

implementing policies that would potentially force undocumented migrants to be deported to their native country due to their immigration status.

Oppression, power, privilege and discrimination is a great source of the target factors of policy changes whether it's past versus current policies in place. However, as power plays a major role in who, what when and how policies are enforce is vital. America human rights states "freedom of discrimination". In many cases discrimination is one of the most violated human rights within the immigration community.

Social Workers are aim to speak for the voiceless and advocate for those whose unable to voice their opinions, concerns and struggles. Implementing policies to help undocumented immigrants connect to benefits, such as employment, shelter, food and assisting completing applications to become permanent citizens is a huge step in closing the gaps and addressing the barriers faced firsthand by many illegal citizens looking for a better life in the United States.

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