

Where He Stands:

Immigration & the Law



America is largely a nation of immigrants. We celebrate our diverse traditions and heritages today in countless ways. At the same time, we are – and should always remain – a nation that upholds the rule of law. No one is above the law, including those coming to our country for the first time. Period.

If you come to this country, you should do so legally. That means entering at an official border crossing, airport or port location. That means applying in advance for a visa and not overstaying that visa when it expires (students included). That means obtaining an official work permit instead of getting paid “under the table” and avoiding paying your fair share of taxes. That means hiring only those employees who are citizens or those with valid work permits. Other countries enforce these type of laws and we should, too! (Immigration is governed by federal law, but it also affects our states and localities in many ways.)

I support legal immigration for a variety of reasons. It adds to the rich tapestry of knowledge, skills, outlooks and cultures that make America strong. I know from experience, that many immigrants are hard-working and law-abiding people who yearn to be part of the American Dream. In fact, my own grandparents immigrated to this country from Poland – but they did it legally and followed the law.

On the other hand, America is not an “open borders” zone where anyone from anywhere can enter without following the rules. According to a report in *USA Today*, there was a massive increase in illegal immigration between 1990 and 2006. Since then, the number of “undocumented immigrants” (illegal aliens living in America) has remained relatively steady at about 12 million. That’s 12 million people living outside the law.

So, does our immigration system need reform? *Obviously!* But reform doesn’t mean granting “amnesty” for those breaking our laws. If changes to immigration law are needed over time, those changes should be made through the mechanisms put forth in our Constitution – the federal legislative process – not unilateral action by the Executive branch or distant bureaucrats. At the very least, such reforms should achieve these important goals:



- Secure our borders.
- Remove dangerous, criminal illegal aliens from our territory and prevent them from re-entering.
- Create a much better understanding of who is here today, including those who have overstayed their visas (students, “tourists,” visiting family members, etc.).
- Provide a more robust legal pathway to citizenship that is not any form of blanket amnesty.
- Make employers know that breaking the law with illegal hires is a serious crime and will be enforced.
- Work with agriculture to address seasonal labor needs in a legal way.
- Keep terrorists and anti-American radicals from living in our country, no matter where they are from.
- Stop the Mexican and Columbian drug cartels from corrupting our communities.
- Enhance our law enforcement and court system to deal with this issue more effectively, rapidly and fairly.

In the case of DACA (“undocumented” children who arrive in the U.S. at an early age), we must balance the law with compassion, but not by abandoning our principles. Instead, I believe it’s time for comprehensive immigration reform that is not “amnesty” but true modernization.

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