

IMMIGRATION

In recent years, immigration from Latin America has generally been on a decreasing trend, with the exception of Central Americans who have been seeking a safe haven from violence. Although immigration rates have declined, anti-Latino and anti-immigrant fervor has increased in the media, and from elected and appointed officials in the Executive Branch and Congress. In addition, the disproportionate effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and economic recession on communities of color, low-income communities, and immigrant communities highlight the persistent vulnerabilities that immigrants face in the United States. NHLA calls on the current Administration, and any future administration, to reverse the cruel treatment of Central Americans seeking safe haven, to end family detention practices, and to treat those seeking refuge in a manner consistent with human rights principles. NHLA also calls on Congress to pass substantive immigration reform.

PRINCIPAL POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

SUBSTANTIVE IMMIGRATION REFORM

- Pass substantive immigration reform legislation that includes: an earned path to citizenship, family reunification, the Dream Act, a path to Lawful Permanent Resident status for long-time recipients of Temporary Protected Status (TPS) and similar programs, greater discretion to immigration authorities to prevent deportation in certain types of cases, and stronger protections against exploitation for immigrant workers, including undocumented farmworkers.
- Eliminate the regulatory red tape created by the Trump Administration that is crippling our legal immigration system, including but not limited to: the public charge wealth test, exorbitantly higher naturalization fees, and other immigration fees.
- Reform temporary foreign worker programs to reduce labor exploitation and provide paths to immigration status and citizenship.
- Terminate the Migrant Protection Protocols and ensure immigrants are provided full access to asylum and refugee protections consistent with federal law and international obligations.

ADMINISTRATIVE RELIEF

- Reverse efforts to end Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). Enact policies to extend deferred action to parents of DACA holders and LGBTQ immigrants without children, in the absence of federal legislation.
- Reverse orders by the Attorney General and new proposed regulations that make establishing gender-based violence or gang violence-related asylum claims more difficult.



STATE AND LOCAL ENFORCEMENT OF FEDERAL IMMIGRATION LAWS

- Stop states and localities from enforcing federal immigration laws.
- Eliminate 287(g) programs that deputize local law enforcement to enforce federal immigration laws and oppose any measures that mandate local authorities to comply with immigrant detainers or requests for notification.

NATURALIZATION AND INTEGRATION

- Lower naturalization fees and reduce processing times for applications.
- Expand adult English language and civics education.
- Provide funding for the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services' Office of Citizenship's integration programs, as well as allow it to accept private funds.
- Grant the right of naturalization, including retroactively, to all farmworkers and other essential workers working in the United States during the COVID-19 crisis and provide employers immunity from adverse action for employing those essential workers, if they were undocumented.

DEMILITARIZATION OF THE SOUTHWEST BORDER

- Reverse exorbitant spending on border enforcement.
- Replace National Guard troops with properly trained civilians.
- End racial profiling.
- Limit the geographic range of U.S. Customs and Border Protection activity.
- Halt the construction of walls along the border.

IMMIGRATION DETENTION REFORMS

NHLA calls for sweeping reforms related to detention facilities, including the prevention of detainee abuse, greater access to counsel, ending the mandated bed quota and contracts with for-profit detention service providers, and replacing detention facilities for women, children, and other vulnerable populations with alternatives to detention.

The COVID-19 pandemic makes these reforms all the more urgent.

- Release detainees from facilities where they are highly likely to contract deadly illnesses, such as COVID-19
- Ensure that children in detention centers are released in compliance with the *Flores* agreement and provided an opportunity to remain with their parents or other relatives through alternative to detention programs.

- Ensure better health and sanitation measures within all detention facilities in compliance with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines.

