

# What Immigration Changes Can We Expect from Trump?



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Excerpts

I've been up all night and am as surprised as most people at the results. Whatever you think of Donald Trump or his positions on other issues, it has to be said that the American people have elected someone who has made repeated promises to revolutionize immigration policies so they first serve the interests of American workers and the quality-of-life desires of regular American citizens of all ethnicities.

That is pretty extraordinary.

NumbersUSA never endorses, so we didn't endorse Trump or anybody else. But we did keep track of everybody's promises on immigration.

I started NumbersUSA in 1996 largely to educate on the need for the recommendations of the bi-partisan U.S. Commission on Immigration, chaired by civil rights icon Barbara Jordan. Remarkably, 20 years later, Donald Trump became the first nominee to finally embrace most of that commission's ideas about immigration policies that would be fair to the average American worker, particularly those with the least resources.

## HERE ARE THE PROMISES THAT WE SHOULD EXPECT TRUMP TO KEEP

### TWO OVERALL POLICY GOALS

1. Fewer foreign workers / less immigration
2. More enforcement.

For decades, every poll has failed to find much more than 10-15% of voters who wanted annual legal immigration to increase. Yet, Congress continually raised the level from 250,000 a year in the 1950s and 1960s to a million a year and more since 1990.

A CIS poll of likely voters over the weekend found the majority want legal immigration reduced by at least half to 500,000 or less.

But reducing legal immigration will primarily depend on Republican congressional leaders carrying the ball, and on anywhere from a handful to a dozen Democratic Senators refusing to kill the cuts through filibuster.

We will do all we can to mobilize the 6 million-plus members of our NumbersUSA Action Network to press the Trump Administration and Congress to eliminate immigration categories that fail to serve any national interests: chain migration, the visa lottery, permanent low-skill and non-extraordinary-skilled workers.

Trump has shown interest in reducing or eliminating all of those categories.

### REFUGEES

Trump would continue refugee resettlement at more traditional lower numbers than the Obama Administration has sought and would emphasize a higher priority on helping more refugees in their home regions.

During Trump's Phoenix, AZ speech in August 2016 he advocated for creating safe zones for refugees instead of permanently resettling them in the U.S.: "For the price of resettling one refugee in the United States, 12 could be resettled in a safe zone in their home region. Which I agree with 100 percent. We have to build safe zones."

Trump has also said he will end the practice of forcing refugee resettlement on local communities against their wishes.

## HIGHER SKILL IMMIGRANTS

Trump has been inconsistent in his statements on this category of permanent immigration and temporary visas. He has promised to tackle abuses in the H-1B visas but he has also talked about having a lot more merit-based immigration.

We will keep a close eye on whether he veers toward the interests of employers over the aspirations of American workers and students with the same education and skills as the proposed "merit" immigrants.

## VISA OVERSTAYERS

Trump has spoken especially harshly against tourists and others who have the financial means to vacation and study in the United States and then violate the promises of their visa, refusing to return home and illegally taking U.S. jobs.

During Trump's Phoenix, AZ speech in August 2016 he said, "we will finally complete the biometric entry-exit visa tracking system which we need desperately. For years Congress has required biometric entry-exit visa tracking systems, but it has never been completed."

## CRIMINAL ALIENS

This was a signature issue of Trump's. This is the one place we can expect some kind of mass deportation -- of foreign citizens who have been convicted of crimes in this country.

Trump has promised to use the threat of cutting funds to sanctuary cities to persuade them to stop releasing criminal aliens onto the nation's streets.

He's also indicated he will use the power of cutting off visas to 23-plus countries that refuse to take back their citizens that the U.S. wants to deport because of their criminal activity.

## NO MORE U.S. JOBS FOR ILLEGAL FOREIGN WORKERS -- MANDATORY E-VERIFY

Trump and his team recognize that the ability to illegally obtain jobs is the primary magnet for illegal immigration. They have repeatedly endorsed the E-Verify system as the way to turn off that magnet by requiring all employers to use the system to ensure that only legal workers can have U.S. jobs.

But a President can't make that happen on his own.

Presidents Bill Clinton, George W. Bush and Barack Obama have all refused to encourage Congress to pass mandatory E-Verify, except as an afterthought with a giant amnesty. Successive Republican leaders of Congress have refused to pass a stand-alone E-Verify bill, saying there was no purpose since the President would veto it. **Trump needs to demand an E-Verify bill on his desk in the first 100 days.**

## THE TRUMP PLAN FOR "THE 11 MILLION"

Perhaps the most inaccurately reported part of Trump's immigration plans has to do with whether he plans to begin mass roundups and deportations of the estimated 11 million foreign citizens who have settled in this country illegally.

Many major news organizations this last week had voter guides that stated Trump's position as advocating deportations of all of "the 11 million."

Although Trump made a number of different statements about deportations back in 2015, some of which sounded like mass deportation, he pulled back from that this year and firmly rejected it in his Phoenix immigration speech. Here were the points that drew from that speech:

1. Trump does *not* support mass roundups and deportation of non-criminal illegal aliens.
2. Trump *does* promise mass deportation of criminal aliens.
- 3.. All the rest -- the non-criminal illegal aliens -- will be subject to the immigration laws passed by Congress and on the books, which means that if they encounter federal law enforcement they are subject to removal

proceedings. **The difference here is that Trump promises to enforce those laws which the previous four Administrations have not.**

4. The reality is that most of the existing foreign citizens living illegally in the U.S. will likely be able to remain in the U.S. for some time, albeit without legal status, because few will run into a situation that puts them into removal proceedings.

5. BUT . . . under Trump, those illegal aliens who remain will be less likely to be able to illegally hold U.S. jobs, since Trump's plan calls for working with Congress to pass mandatory E-Verify for every employer so that payroll jobs are filled only by American workers and legal immigrants.

6. Once all of Trump's 10-Step enforcement plan is implemented, he is open to considering ideas for the remaining illegal aliens who have special claims for leniency.

7. Illegal aliens who want to speed up the process for themselves can return to their home country and apply for legal entry through the normal process. Spouses of U.S. citizens, for example, could apply through a category that already exists without a numerical cap for spouses of U.S. citizens.

**This position regarding "the 11 million" is in keeping with what Trump said should be the main question: What to do FOR struggling American workers. The key aspect of this plan in the short term is NOT about punishing non-criminal illegal aliens but about removing the primary harm they pose for Americans, that being the economic harm to struggling Americans by being allowed to take jobs.**

I continue to be asked by reporters who do see the shift from mass deportation if this isn't just Mitt Romney's "self-deportation." I tell them it isn't, because the prime purpose of this policy is not to force non-criminal illegal aliens to leave but to keep them from economically harming American workers -- and to take away the incentive for millions more illegal foreign workers to overstay their visas and illegally cross the border to steal jobs and wages from struggling Americans.

## **MAJOR CHANGES BUT NOT MAJOR DISRUPTIONS**

A lot of commentators the last several days have whipped up near hysteria in some quarters with warnings of big changes that will create big disruptions in the lives of various communities if Trump were to be allowed to pursue his immigration goals.

As much as I hope a Pres. Trump moves quickly for changes in policy, I also know that many of those changes will take time, especially the ones requiring congressional action.

I prefer to see steady change over abrupt potentially disruptive change that happens too quickly.

We at NumbersUSA promise our assistance to President-Elect Trump, as we did to Presidents Obama and Bush, both of whom largely spurned our offer. We will exercise some degree of patience with the practicalities of moving forward with all of Mr. Trump's promises, but **we will also constantly be sure to remind him and his Administration to steadily work toward fulfilling those promises.**

Next month, NumbersUSA celebrates the 20th anniversary of its founding and the 20th year after Barbara Jordan's death and the failure of Congress to act on her Commission's recommendations. **The American worker has waited long enough for the economically fair immigration system that Jordan and her Commission envisioned for America. As dawn threatens to break through this long night, I'm excited about the prospects.**

**THANK YOU IN ADVANCE FOR ALL WE WILL DO TOGETHER**

**ROY BECK is President & Founder of NumbersUSA**

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  - [Immigration Numbers](#)
  -

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  - [Accuracy Guarantee](#)
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  -
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  - 
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