

Immigration REPORT

White House Outlines Blueprint for True Immigration Reform and Demands Congressional Action

In May, the Trump administration delivered its long awaited blueprint for overhauling our nation’s legal immigration system and ending mass illegal immigration and asylum abuse. In a Rose Garden address, President Trump outlined the key points of the sort of immigration reforms he would like to see enacted and called upon Congress to provide a legislative vehicle for his immigration proposals.

The president’s plan is not perfect – no legislation ever is. But it does represent a refreshing vision of an immigration policy that will serve identifiable national interests, offers meaningful deterrents to mass illegal immigration, and an effective plan to curb rampant abuse of our asylum system. The 14-point plan unveiled by the White House includes many of the recommendations offered by the so-called Jordan Commission, which delivered its conclusions to President Clinton more than 20 years ago. They also mirror many of the policy changes that FAIR has recommended for even longer than that.

Among the key reforms called for by the Trump administration:

LEGAL IMMIGRATION

Scrapping the unfair, ineffective family chain migration system and replacing it with a merit-based one similar to those employed by countries like Canada and Australia. The White House outline calls for the creation of a “Build America Visa,” that would assess prospective immigrants based on objective criteria, such as job skills, education, and English language proficiency. Applicants would be awarded points for each of these criteria, with the highest scoring ones given priority for green cards.

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New FAIR Study Reveals an Enormous, Hidden Cost of Mass Immigration: Remittances

Our failed immigration policies are very expensive. Illegal immigration costs American taxpayers about \$116 billion a year, according to a landmark study put out by FAIR in 2017. Our family chain migration policy results in nearly two-thirds of immigrant-headed households relying on at least one form of public assistance, according to a 2018 report by the Center for Immigration Studies. And these analyses do not even include the impact of lost wages and job opportunities on American families.

\$150 Billion

The amount remitted from the U.S. to other countries each year.

A new report by FAIR's Research Department puts a dollar figure on another significant but often overlooked cost of mass immigration, both legal and illegal – and it's a rather large one. According to the study, "The United States Loses \$150 Billion Annually in Remittances", our economy is hemorrhaging much-needed cash each year as a result of money sent to other countries, primarily by foreign born workers in the United States.

The \$150 billion a year sent out of the country each year is money that does not circulate through

our own economy, support local businesses, create new jobs, or generate revenues for local, state, and federal governments. Moreover, neither the vast majority of states nor the federal government impose a tax on overseas money transfers. The loss of tax revenue – that could be used to pay for a large number of public services consumed by aliens in the United States – is staggering.

While the money does have a beneficial effect on people in the receiving nations – in some cases providing for basic necessities like food and shelter – it does come with some downsides. At the macro level, large-scale dependence on remittances from workers abroad impedes needed economic development in those countries, and allows dysfunctional political, social, and economic systems to persist. Rather than remaining at home and invigorating local economies, these citizens put their expertise and labor to use in other countries, like the United States.

Remittances have also created something of an addiction on the part of the societies that are on the receiving end. In some countries, like Haiti, foreign remittances amount to as much as 30 percent of their Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Among the three Central American "Northern Triangle" countries that are responsible for the current surge of migration across our southern border, remittances account for between 11 percent and 20 percent of their GDPs. The more these countries become hooked on remittances, the more these dysfunctional governments tacitly en-

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Blueprint

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The plan would eliminate immigration entitlements for extended family members – categories that expand with the arrival of each new immigrant. Ending family chain migration would allow for the expedited admission of nuclear family members, i.e. spouses and minor children, thereby making it more “family-friendly” than our current system.



President Trump unveils his immigration plan to supporters in the White House Rose Garden, including members of FAIR’s staff. Image: The White House

CONTROLLING ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION

The plan calls for at least 400 miles of the border wall to be completed by the end of 2020, while enabling public donations to be used to fund the wall. It would also require up-to-date technology to ensure that 100 percent of people and goods at ports of entry are inspected. These measures would curb the flow of drugs, contraband, and counterfeit goods into the country. The plan would be revenue neutral, paid for by fees collected from those using Customs and Border Patrol services.

The initial White House outline omits a critical element of controlling illegal immigration: mandatory use of E-Verify by all U.S. employers. However, in a follow-up statement, the White House assured that its plan “ensures all workers are legally eligible to work in the U.S.” FAIR has always contended that increased

border security alone is not sufficient and that without mandatory E-Verify illegal aliens will continue to be lured by the prospect of jobs.

The plan also addresses the growing problem of illegal immigration of people who overstay visas by implementing a fully-functional biometric entry/exit system and authorizing agencies to stop issuing visas to recalcitrant countries.

ENDING ABUSE OF POLITICAL ASYLUM AND OTHER HUMANITARIAN POLICIES

The plan calls for raising the bar for making a “credible fear” claim – the first step in seeking asylum in the United States. It also seeks to eliminate the rampant abuse of asylum laws by strengthening current asylum laws and expediting the review process for immigrants seeking asylum.

One of the driving forces behind the surge of fraudulent asylum claims is a judicial ruling that severely limits detention for families with children. The plan addresses this loophole by overruling the Flores Settlement Agreement and increasing the amount of time family units may be detained together. Currently, they may only be detained for 20 days; the proposal will likely permit detention up to 100 days.

A second impetus for the border surge is a well-intended 2008 law that was meant to curb human trafficking, but instead encourages the smuggling of unaccompanied minors. The White House proposal would rapidly reunite unaccompanied minors who are clearly not trafficking victims with their families back home, regardless of their country of origin.

Glaringly absent from the White House immigration overhaul plan are much-needed reductions in overall immigration from current levels of about 1 million per year. While a merit-based system would be a vast improvement over family chain migration, the nation derives little benefit from excessive immigration. FAIR will continue to press for substantial reductions in overall admissions.

As of late May, no legislative language has been issued and no bill has been introduced in Congress. FAIR will defer final judgement until there is an actual bill. However, the administration’s plan does outline a real effort to implement an immigration policy that truly serves the national interest, albeit an imperfect plan. ■

As the Border Crisis Rages, House Democrats Pass a Massive Amnesty Bill

While the White House was laying out a plan for immigration reform that can be described as good, the new Democratic House majority was focused on fulfilling their promises to illegal aliens and people who accepted our offer of temporary protection in the aftermath of some natural or political upheaval in their countries. Continuing a party-wide drift toward amnes-

“This is a first step, not a last... We must pass ‘comprehensive immigration reform’ that provides a roadmap to citizenship” [for all illegal aliens].

Rep. Pramila Jayapal, D-Washington
H.R. 6 Co-Sponsor

ty-only “immigration reform,” House Democrats passed the American Dream and Promise Act of 2019, H.R.6.

The bill would grant amnesty to illegal aliens who entered the United States as minors. The Democratic majority rejected an effort by House Republicans to exclude gang members from the sweeping amnesty

proposal. As a result, under the bill approved by the House on June 4, gang members, illegal aliens who committed serious crimes as juveniles, and those with multiple DUI convictions or misdemeanor firearm convictions would still be eligible for amnesty and eventual citizenship.

H.R. 6 also grants amnesty to people who received Temporary Protected Status (TPS), allowing them to remain in the United States temporarily as a result of disasters in their homelands. That provision of the bill essentially affirms what was already evident – that temporary immigration benefits are nothing more than a backdoor to permanent presence in the United States.

This large-scale amnesty package was approved in the midst of ongoing illegal immigration crisis, which saw more than 144,000 people apprehended entering the country illegally in May. The House’s focus on amnesty for illegal aliens, while ignoring the border crisis is a clear indication of where the Democratic leadership’s priorities lie.

The bill will face a much tougher challenge in the Republican-controlled Senate and would face a likely veto from President Trump. ■

Remittances

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courage their citizens to head north.

Moderating levels of immigration to the United States, and effectively deterring illegal aliens from remaining and working in the United States would obviously be the best way to stop the outflow of cash. (Illegal aliens are estimated to send about \$29 billion a year in remittances, much of it earned off the books and untaxed.) And while people have an unquestionable right to use money they have earned to assist relatives abroad, there is no legal or ethical reason why the federal or local governments should not recoup some of that lost money with fees or taxes on remittances. India, one of the largest recipients of remit-

tances, siphons off more than 12 percent of the money received. Right now, Oklahoma is the only state taxing remittances. That 1 percent tax generates about \$13 million in revenue for the state.

FAIR’s study on the impact of remittances adds to the growing body of evidence that our bloated and failed immigration policies represent an enormous and growing drain on our fiscal resources. The release of “The United States Loses \$150 Billion Annually in Remittances” report is especially timely, as it coincided with a new White House proposal to overhaul our legal immigration system and combat illegal immigration and asylum abuse. ■

FAIR Media Response Team Returns to the Border



The dry bed of the Rio Grand River in Hudspeth County, Texas. With the border crisis necessitating resource reallocation, criminal gangs can take full advantage of the easy crossing conditions.

If you receive most of your news from the mainstream media, it's likely that you are not getting the full picture of the ongoing immigration crisis at the border. The fact is that illegal alien apprehensions exceeded the 100,000 mark for two consecutive months, and is projected to continue at these high levels. Fiscal Year 2019 will be the first time since 2006 since our nation hit that unfortunate milestone of three months in a row with more than 100,000 apprehensions.

Instead of relying on coverage through the lens of the mainstream media, FAIR has dispatched its media response team directly to the border on a number of occasions. There, they accompany Border Patrol agents or local law enforcement on a border tour, assessing the situation on the ground, and then report back, usually through extensive live talk radio interviews, directly to the American people. FAIR dispatched several teams last year during the height of the Central American caravan trips.

A media response team comprised of two top FAIR spokespersons spent several days at El Paso border sector in May to survey, first-hand, the level of illegal immigration, to assess the effectiveness of the border wall in El Paso, and to discuss changes needed to bring apprehensions down.

The media team visited neighboring Hudspeth

County, just east of El Paso, examining some of the troubling secondary effects of the border crisis. With the Border Patrol overwhelmed with the flood of mostly fraudulent asylum seekers, criminal organizations are capitalizing on the chaos. Border Patrol agents that normally patrol miles of unfenced border along the Rio Grande, which runs dry in the summer months, and man checkpoints along Interstate 10, have been reassigned to process asylum seekers at the El Paso port of entry.

It is a situation that criminal cartels are taking full advantage of, according to the Hudspeth Sheriff's Department, the only law enforcement department in the sprawling, resource-limited 4,500 square mile county. Drug runners know that the border is even more lightly patrolled than usual, and that secondary checkpoints are closed, and they are using the situation to their advantage. Virtually all of the violent crime in Hudspeth County is now perpetrated by "non-residents," according to the county's law enforcement department.

After conducting an extensive border tour, the team started its 36 scheduled live radio interviews at 4 a.m., catching the beginning of morning drive time in the East, and concluding with evening drive time broadcasts.

By the end of the day, FAIR spokespersons, through live radio interviews, spoke to concerned Americans from coast to coast, in cities including: San Diego, Des Moines, Hartford, Salt Lake City, Boston, Los Angeles, Richmond, St. Louis, Little Rock, New Orleans, Miami, Detroit, Cleveland, Pittsburgh, Raleigh/Durham and Charlottesville, just to name a few.

This allows FAIR to cut straight through the mainstream media bias – either in the way a story is covered or the outright refusal to cover a story in the first place – and report directly to the American public. The media response team is already planning another possible trip to the border in Texas as the illegal alien push northward continues throughout the summer.

Immigration Crisis Imperils the Federal Judiciary

Most Americans are well aware of the damage our broken immigration system is inflicting on the country. Needless crime victims, job and wage loss for American workers, identity theft, overburdened educational and health care institutions, enormous cost burdens for federal, state, and local governments, to name just a few.

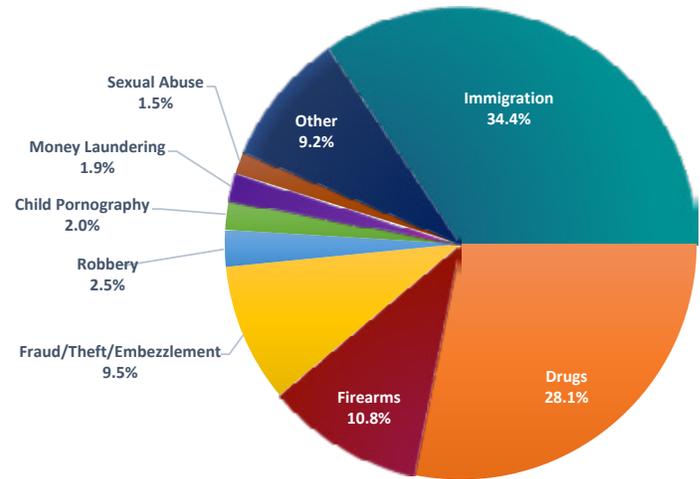
Less obvious is the toll immigration chaos is taking on the federal judicial system itself. Rampant asylum fraud and large-scale illegal immigration are overwhelming our nation's judicial system. In addition, immigration-related crimes now account for one-third of all sentences handed down by our federal courts, exceeding even drug offenses.

As of May, there were more than 850,000 asylum cases pending before the U.S. immigration court system, with only 450 judges to hear these cases nationwide. Moreover, the number of new cases continues to grow. In April, more than 109,000 people were apprehended at the border, a significant percentage of whom entered claims for political asylum.

In the absence of congressional action to curb asylum fraud, increase detention space, and allow for longer detention of families with children, President Trump ordered the Justice and Homeland Security Departments to draft new regulations to speed up the adjudication process and limit the ability of newly arrived asylum seekers to obtain work permits. Those changes, however, would not go into effect until the fall, even in the unlikely event the illegal alien advocacy network does not find an activist judge who will block implementation.

The vast majority of new asylum seekers are, in reality, economic migrants and the ability to obtain work permits is a key factor driving the surge of bogus claims. The number of work permits issued to asylum seekers grew from 55,000 in 2012 to 278,000 in just the first half of 2017. As the Washington Post noted, "For migrants living in the United States whose asylum claims are weak, the backlog can be a blessing, affording them more time to work legally before facing the possibility of deportation." That "possibility" is remote, at best.

FEDERAL CRIME CONVICTIONS BY CATEGORY



This figure includes the 69,425 cases reported to the Commission. The Drugs category includes trafficking and simple possessions. Source: U.S. Sentencing Commission FY 18.

Meanwhile, the Federal Sentencing Commission reports that immigration offenses represented the largest share of sentences handed down in FY 2018. Last year, federal courts sentenced 23,883 people for immigration crimes, representing 34.4 percent of all sentencing. Drug traffickers accounted for the second largest category of offenders sentenced in federal court at 18,747 (and a significant, though unspecified, number of those criminals also violated immigration laws).

The founders of our nation made the Judiciary the third and equal branch of government because they recognized that the rule of law was essential to functioning in a democratic society. What we are now facing is a threat to that vital institution as asylum abusers and illegal aliens are using our laws and system of due process against us. By creating huge backlogs, they are managing to create paralysis that, as the Washington Post observed, works to their advantage.

The very integrity of our nation's legal system is imperiled when lawbreakers are able to use the judicial process to succeed in breaking laws, and when faced with this reality, Congress refuses to act.

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is made up of FAIR supporters who ensure our work continues long into the future. For 40 years we have been fighting for immigration policies that better serve the American people. We wouldn't be able to continue our work without the kind individuals who include FAIR in their planned giving arrangements.

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