



# By the Numbers:

How the Biden/Harris Immigration Platform Will Fuel a Staggering Increase of Immigrants and Population Growth

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## How the Biden/Harris Immigration Platform Will Fuel a Staggering Increase of Immigrants and Population Growth

By Spencer Raley, Madison McQueen, Jason Pena | September 14, 2020

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Former Vice President and current presidential candidate Joe Biden has a lengthy list of immigration initiatives he hopes to implement should he be elected president.<sup>1</sup> These proposals not only reverse reforms undertaken by the current presidential administration but also make unprecedented and sweeping changes to America's immigration system. The official platform gives little indication that the Biden campaign has calculated the potential impact of these reforms, so FAIR decided to do this for them. The result would be an eye-popping, unsustainable number of new arrivals in a short period of time.

In this factsheet, we detail some of the Biden/Harris' campaign's most significant plans.

### Impact of These Policies on the United States:

**52,080,000: Potential number of new immigrants added to America's population due to these policies.**

- **20,000,000+:** Number of illegal aliens (including any who receive amnesty) residing in the United States. Includes:
  - 50,000+: likely number of new illegal aliens entering the United States if TPS is offered for Venezuela residents (Based on other TPS programs).
- **43,300,000:** Potential number of new chain-migrants if 12.6 million adult illegal aliens are offered amnesty.
- **640,000+:** New migrants resulting from the "diversity visa lottery."
- **2,440,000+:** Additional lawful migrants (not counting the annual flow of more than 1 million migrants) stemming from new visas and green card handouts. Includes:
  - 2,000,000+: From a new "city-requested" immigration visas.
  - 200,000+: New employment-based visas/green cards.
  - 100,000+: Visas/green cards offered to graduate and PhD students.
  - 80,000+: New "U" visas.
  - 40,000+: New approved "VAWA self-petitions."

- 20,000+: New “T” visas.

**\$204 billion+: Total cost of illegal immigration by 2024 due to these policies.**

- **200 billion+:** Annual net cost of illegal immigration on U.S. taxpayers by 2024.
- **\$3.7 billion+:** Cost of offering DACA recipients free community college and access to financial aid programs.

Below is a more detailed explanation of these campaign promises, along with how they will impact American citizens and immigrants alike.

## **Border Security**

**The Plan:** Joe Biden claims he will end all federal funding for the border wall and instead, direct federal resources to “smart border enforcement” efforts. These include improving screening infrastructure at our ports of entry by using cameras, sensors, large-scale x-ray machines, and fixed towers. The Biden campaign also promises to enact a mass-amnesty for illegal aliens residing in the United States, which has a history of causing would-be migrants to flock to the southern border.

**The Impact:** In FY2019, 99 percent of all apprehensions occurred at our southern border. Additionally, FY2019 saw the highest number of illegal alien apprehensions (859,501) in over a decade.<sup>2</sup> Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) officials have noted the success of physical barriers in deterring illegal migrants, drug traffickers, and human smugglers.<sup>3</sup>

Because of this, the Trump administration set a goal to complete 500 miles of border fencing by the end of 2020. However, as of September 1, 2020, only 301 miles of the border wall had already been built,<sup>4</sup> leaving 200 miles remaining to meet the President’s goal.<sup>5</sup> FAIR estimates that at least 750 miles of border fence needs to be constructed to achieve its maximum deterrence power.<sup>6</sup> So if a Biden administration indeed ceases construction of the border wall, it would leave 450 miles of critical border fencing uncompleted.

Furthermore, the Biden campaign promises to grant “a roadmap to citizenship for nearly 11 million undocumented immigrants” currently residing in the United States (the true illegal alien population is more than 14 million). The promise of mass-amnesty will inevitably lead to a growing number of illegal aliens attempting to cross the southern border. In fact, the bulk of the illegal alien population currently in the country arrived in the decade or so after former President Ronald Reagan signed the “Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986” into law, which included a large amnesty.<sup>7</sup> It’s perfectly reasonable to assume that such a surge will take place again if an amnesty is offered.

The annual cost of illegal immigration far outweighs the cost of border wall construction. According to a FAIR study, illegal aliens cost American taxpayers \$131.9 billion annually and is predicted to rise to \$200 billion by 2025.<sup>8</sup> Comparatively, border wall construction costs are somewhere between \$20-50 billion. Therefore, FAIR argues that a wall would produce a great return on investment as it will save taxpayers billions of dollars in the long run.

The ability to govern our borders is key to maintaining national sovereignty, safeguarding citizens, and regulating international commerce and travel. While improving the technology readily available at the border is a fantastic idea, it should not be considered as a viable substitute for a physical barrier along high-traffic corridors of our southern border with Mexico.

## **Interior Enforcement**

***The Plan:*** The Biden platform includes a promise to “end mass work-place raids,” otherwise known as worksite enforcement.

***The Impact:*** Promoting worksite enforcement is a vital step to upholding the rule of law and ensuring that employers are not hiring illegal aliens over U.S. citizens and lawful migrants. Ending worksite enforcement would allow employers to hire immigration lawbreakers with impunity.

FAIR estimates that the illegal alien population in the United States has grown by 3.1 million since 2010.<sup>9</sup> The biggest reason for this increase is that there have been few consequences for employers who hire illegal aliens. FAIR projects that if the current trend continues, there could be as many as 20 million illegal aliens in the United States by the end of 2024.<sup>10</sup> However, even though worksite enforcement is already rare, promising that it will never happen will only incentivize more illegal immigration, so this estimate is almost certainly on the conservative side should a Biden administration formally end worksite enforcement measures.

Especially during a time when so many are without gainful employment due to COVID-19, American citizens and lawfully present migrants should not be overlooked due to the appeal of cheap, illegal foreign labor.

Freeing up positions currently held by those who are unauthorized to work in the United States would help qualified Americans and lawfully present migrants who are trying to find employment during a strained job market. And contrary to the myth that illegal aliens “only work jobs that Americans refuse,” history has shown that unemployed citizens will happily fill these roles so long as they are offered a fair-market wage.<sup>11</sup>

## DACA

**The Plan:** Joe Biden plans on “reinstating the DACA program.” He also promises to “ensure [DACA recipients] are eligible for federal student aid (loans, Pell grants) and are included in his proposals to provide access to community college without debt.”

**The Impact:** As of 2020, there were approximately 650,000 Deferred Action for the Children of Aliens (DACA) recipients in the United States. As the Trump administration ceased accepting new DACA applicants in September of 2017, the vast majority of these were initially approved during the Obama administration – when Joe Biden was Vice President. It is estimated that there are at least 1.3 million illegal aliens who currently meet the eligibility requirements to receive DACA.<sup>12</sup>

In addition to the profound impact this plan would have on incentivizing future waves of illegal immigration, it would traumatize the pocketbooks of American taxpayers.

Currently, 50 percent of the current DACA population is between the ages of 16-25, a prime age to pursue community college. With an average tuition cost of nearly \$7,500 to complete a two-year degree, offering degrees to this cohort alone would cost taxpayers a staggering \$2.5 billion. And that figure does not include those who would likely apply for DACA status simply to take advantage of this benefit.

Furthermore, the current federal student loan debt is a troubling \$1.6 trillion. Right now, approximately 32 percent of foreign-born individuals in the United States hold a Bachelor’s degree or higher.<sup>13</sup> If that figure holds true for DACA recipients as multiple studies have indicated, and they accrue an average amount of college loans,<sup>14</sup> they would be adding \$6.9 billion to that student debt total. If they default on these loans at the average rate, approximately \$1.2 billion of that tab would be picked up by American taxpayers.<sup>15</sup>

## Chain Migration Stemming from Mass-Amnesty

**The Plan:** As noted previously, Joe Biden wishes to provide “a roadmap to citizenship for nearly 11 million undocumented immigrants.” (The true number of illegal aliens in the country is actually closer to 14.3 million, with approximately 12.6 million of those being adults.)

**The Impact:** Aside from acting as a massive magnet for future illegal immigration, as noted in the “Border Security” portion of this report, a mass amnesty would allow the illegal aliens of yesterday to determine the lawful immigrants of tomorrow.

According to the federal government, each immigrant to the United States, on average, sponsors 3.45 additional family members for green cards.<sup>16</sup> There are 12.6 million adult illegal aliens currently in the country. So, if each of these adults were given lawful status and sponsored green cards for 3.45 additional family members, that would result in an

additional 43.3 million immigrants eventually entering the country. This would effectively double the number of foreign-born individuals living in the United States.

## **New Visas and other Legal Immigration Categories**

**The Plan:** The Biden/Harris campaign promises to undertake a massive expansion of legal immigration into the United States. They intend to accomplish this by promoting the “diversity lottery visa,” expanding temporary skills-based visa and “green card” programs, and implementing a massive program where cities and countries can request visas for immigrants to move into their jurisdictions to replace lost population. Biden also promises to expand several other visa categories.

**The Impact:** If the full extent of these proposed policies were enacted, they would increase the number of new migrants admitted into the United States by at least 610,000 per year. That’s a 50 percent increase!

The bulk of this new immigration would be through a proposed system that would allow individual cities and counties to request new migrants in order to mitigate population loss, or to spur population growth. The report that the Biden campaign touts in their platform promotes a program that would allocate roughly half a million new visas to this program every year.<sup>17</sup> Such a program would almost certainly have a crushing effect on the ability of Americans to compete for jobs in the cities that participate. Indeed, the aforementioned report touts importing new migrants to places where Americans already struggle to find employment, such as the city of Detroit.

Biden also wishes to drastically inflate existing employment-related temporary visa programs, such as the H-1B program. In fact, he suggests potentially eliminating the “temporary” aspect of those programs all together, and instead, offer hundreds of thousands of foreign workers permanent residency in the United States. He also intends to exempt PhD graduates from any visa cap and proposed offering them “green cards” as well. Currently, around 20,000 student-visa holders earn a doctorate degree in the United States every year.<sup>18</sup>

The Biden platform also calls for significant increases in the U and T visa programs, which allows for certain migrants, including illegal aliens, to remain in the United States if they are assisting law enforcement with investigating/prosecuting certain crimes. He also intends to accelerate the processing of migrants who self-petition for legal status under the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). While this program was designed to protect victims of domestic abuse, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) has found that it’s wrought with fraudulent applications.<sup>19</sup> If all of these changes are implemented, it would likely lead to about 35,000 additional new visas issued every year.

In addition to increasing the number of visas offered under certain categories and offering hundreds of thousands of additional “green cards,” the campaign also intends to promote, and potentially grow, the “Diversity Immigrant Visa” lottery program. While this

program is capped at 55,000 visas annually, each recipient can then sponsor their family members. As of Fiscal Year 2016, diversity lottery visa holders and their family members accounted for approximately 160,000 new immigrants every year.<sup>20</sup>

The Biden Campaign recently released an aggressive “Buy American” campaign that is supposed to promote the purchase of American products over foreign goods.<sup>21</sup> However, something that is notably missing from this patriotic-sounding slogan is a call to “Hire American.” Based on these massive new visa and green card proposals, it’s clear that this omission is no mistake. In a time when so many Americans are without gainful employment, proposing that we add millions of new migrants to the workforce – most of whom are willing to work for far less than the market rate – will only make this situation much, much worse.

## **Conclusion**

The duties of the President of the United States include protecting the safety and interests of American citizens and ensuring that the laws of the country – as passed by Congress – are properly enforced. Should he be elected, Joe Biden would swear an oath to fulfill these duties. However, many of the proposals on his campaign’s immigration platform neither represent the best interests of American citizens or respect duly passed law.

If enacted in its entirety, the Biden/Harris platform would potentially invite more than 50 million additional lawful and illegal immigrants into the country. During a time when tens of millions of Americans are out of work,<sup>22</sup> the focus of all presidential candidates needs to be on how to help American citizens find gainful employment, not importing millions of new migrants to compete for the few jobs currently available.

Joe Biden owes it to all hardworking American citizens to put forth an immigration platform that favors the American worker over imported labor.

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