

Mitt Romney on Immigration

Source: <http://www.mittromney.com/issues/immigration>



America is a nation of immigrants. We are not a nation bound by ethnicity, but one bound by the idea that all people are endowed by their Creator with the unalienable rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. That idea brought many of our forefathers to America and moves so many today to wait in line to come to our country. Welcoming newcomers who share our ideals and work hard to secure a better life for themselves and their families is part of our heritage. A strong legal immigration system is an integral component of what makes America exceptional.

But today, our immigration system is broken.

Our immigration system is not optimized for today's economy. The United States is currently excluding too many workers who will start businesses, create jobs, foster innovation, and help grow our economy.

We do not grant enough visas to high-skill job creators and innovators our economy needs to make up for labor shortages and gaps in skills. Plus, the current system sends away the great majority of the over 300,000 foreign students who are earning advanced degrees at U.S. universities. And the system for bringing in temporary, seasonal workers is so cumbersome and time-consuming, that too often an employer finds that harvest or tourist season passes before temporary worker visas are approved.

A porous border allows illegal immigrants to enter the United States, violent cartel members and terrorists possibly among them. And many visitors ignore the terms of their visas and stay in the U.S. illegally.

The current system is keeping nuclear families apart. Currently, legal immigrants in America often have to wait years to be with husbands, wives, and young children.

Obama's Failure

Immigration represents one more broken promise by President Obama. As a candidate for president, he promised to tackle immigration in his first year in office. Three-and-a-half years later, America is still waiting for his plan.

President Obama has failed to update our immigration system to serve the modern economy. We still do not admit enough high-skill job creators and innovators, and our system still turns away those foreign students whom we educate here and to whom we grant advanced degrees.

President Obama has utterly failed to secure the border. And instead of taking a strong stand on illegal immigration, he has ordered immigration officials to enforce immigration laws “selectively,” leading to the dismissal of many deportation cases. At the same time, his Department of Justice has sued to stop states from assisting the federal government in enforcing immigration laws.

Mitt's Plan

As president, Mitt Romney will implement a national immigration strategy that bolsters the U.S. economy, ensures our security, keeps nuclear families together, addresses the problem of illegal immigration in a civil and resolute manner, and carries on America’s tradition as a nation of legal immigrants.

Grow Legal Immigration To Grow Our Economy

Attract More Highly Skilled Immigrants:

To ensure that America continues to lead the world in innovation and economic dynamism, a Romney administration would press for an immigration policy designed to maximize America’s economic potential. Foreign-born residents with advanced degrees start companies, create jobs, and drive innovation at a high rate. While lawful immigrants comprise about 8 percent of the population, immigrants start 16 percent of our top-performing, high-technology companies, hold the position of CEO or lead engineer in 25 percent of high-tech firms, and produce over 25 percent of all patent applications filed from the United States.

- The United States is projected to face a shortage of 230,000 science and technology workers by 2018. At the same time, we have set the caps on high-skill visas so low that, for some countries, an entire year’s quota has been filled in an hour. Mitt Romney will ask Congress to raise the caps on visas for highly skilled immigrants.
- Many country caps—or limits on immigrants from specific countries—are so low, that America is losing some of the best and brightest to our international competitors. Mitt Romney will work with Congress to raise the country caps.
- Every foreign student who obtains an advanced degree in math, science, or engineering at a U.S. university should be granted permanent residency.

Make The Temporary Worker Visa System Functional:

- As president, Mitt Romney will make the system for bringing in temporary agricultural workers and other seasonal workers functional for both employers and immigrants. We

should get rid of unnecessary requirements that delay issuance of a visa, and we should speed the processing of applications.

- Mitt Romney will work with Congress, states, and employers to properly set the cap on non-agricultural temporary worker visas. Many tourist-oriented businesses in the United States rely on these workers and would have to cut back or cease operations if there are not enough visas.

Secure Our Borders & Discourage Illegal Immigration

Mitt Romney will protect legal immigration and the 4.5 million who are waiting in line to enter the United States legally by taking a strong stand against illegal immigration. He believes that illegal immigration must end and has a proven track record of advancing that goal.

Secure The Borders

According to the non-partisan Government Accountability Office, Border Patrol lacks control of over half of our southwest border. And some estimates indicate that over 40% of illegal immigrants in America entered the country legally, but then overstayed their visas.

- Mitt Romney will complete a high-tech fence to enhance border security.
- Governor Romney will ensure that we have the officers on the ground we need to gain control of the border.
- A Romney Administration will work to develop an efficient, effective system of exit verification to ensure people do not overstay their visas.

Discourage Illegal Immigration

- Mitt Romney will develop an effective, mandatory employment verification system that will enable employers to be sure that those they hire are eligible to work. This will discourage illegal immigrants from coming to America to seek jobs.
- Governor Romney opposes all “magnets” that entice illegal immigrants to come to our country. As governor, he vetoed in-state tuition benefits for illegal immigrants and opposed driver’s licenses for illegal immigrants.
- As president, Mitt Romney will foster a legal immigration system that works. This will offer an alternative to those who would otherwise enter illegally. For instance, reforming our current temporary worker program will offer employers who need such staff a legal option to find employees.

Enforce The Law

Mitt Romney believes in the rule of law and will fully enforce federal immigration law. As governor, he authorized state police to assist the federal government in immigration enforcement.

Cut Red Tape That Is Keeping Immediate Families Apart

As president, Mitt Romney will ensure that husbands, wives, and their minor children are brought together on a timely basis.

- Mitt Romney will speed the processing of applications by eliminating the red tape that is keeping immediate families apart.
- Mitt Romney will work with Congress to give legal permanent residents the same priority as citizens when applying to bring husbands, wives, and minor children to the United States.
- Mitt Romney will reallocate green cards to family of citizens and legal permanent residents.

Military Service

Mitt Romney believes that young illegal immigrants who were brought to the United States as children should have the chance to become permanent residents, and eventually citizens, by serving honorably in the United States military.

Address The 11 Million Illegal Immigrants In America In A Civil and Resolute Manner That Respects the Rule of Law

Mitt Romney opposes amnesty because he believes that it acts as a magnet encouraging illegal immigration. The last amnesty law passed in 1986 granted legal status to 2.7 million illegal immigrants. In the decades since, the illegal immigrant population has quadrupled. Mitt believes that an amnesty should not be permitted to happen again. Illegal immigrants who apply for legal status should not be given any advantage over those who are following the law and waiting their turn. Mitt absolutely opposes any policy that would allow illegal immigrants to “cut in line.”