

Republican and Democratic Party 2012 Immigration Platform Comparison

This chart directly cites only from the platforms approved at the Republican and Democratic party conventions in 2012. The categories are our own, reflecting the various issues addressed in the platforms, for purposes of organizing the comparisons of positions. Links to original documents listed at end of the chart.

	Republican Party	Democratic Party
Introduction	<p>The Rule of Law: Legal Immigration</p> <p>The greatest asset of the American economy is the American worker. Just as immigrant labor helped build our country in the past, today’s legal immigrants are making vital contributions in every aspect of our national life. Their industry and commitment to American values strengthens our economy, enriches our culture, and enables us to better understand and more effectively compete with the rest of the world.</p>	<p><i>Strengthening the American Community</i></p> <p>Immigration</p> <p>Democrats are strongly committed to enacting comprehensive immigration reform that supports our economic goals and reflects our values as both a nation of laws and a nation of immigrants. The story of the United States would not be possible without the generations of immigrants who have strengthened our country and contributed to our economy.</p> <p>Our prosperity depends on an immigration system that reflects our values and meets America’s needs.</p>
Broad Policy Points	<p>Illegal immigration undermines those benefits and affects U.S. workers.</p>	<p>But Americans know that today, our immigration system is badly broken – separating families, undermining honest employers and workers, burdening law enforcement, and leaving millions of people working and living in the shadows.</p>

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	In an age of terrorism, drug cartels, human trafficking, and criminal gangs, the presence of millions of unidentified persons in this country poses grave risks to the safety and the sovereignty of the United States.	We need an immigration reform that creates a system for allocating visas that meets our economic needs, keeps families together, and enforces the law.
	Our highest priority, therefore, is to secure the rule of law both at our borders and at ports of entry.	President Obama’s administration has streamlined the process of legal immigration for immediate relatives of U.S. citizens, supporting family reunification as a priority...
	We recognize that for most of those seeking entry into this country, the lack of respect for the rule of law in their homelands has meant economic exploitation and political oppression by corrupt elites.	...President Obama has made important progress in implementing immigration policies that reward hard work and demand personal responsibility.
	In this country, the rule of law guarantees equal treatment to every individual, including more than one million immigrants to whom we grant permanent residence every year.	
Amnesty/Immigration Reform	That is why we oppose any form of amnesty for those who, by intentionally violating the law, disadvantage those who have obeyed it. Granting amnesty only rewards and encourages more law breaking.	Democrats know there is broad consensus to repair that system and strengthen our economy, and that the country urgently needs comprehensive immigration reform that brings undocumented immigrants out of the shadows and requires them to get right with the law, learn English, and pay taxes in order to get on a path to earn citizenship.

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		<p>So the Obama administration provided temporary relief for youth who came to the United States as children, through no fault of their own, grew up as Americans and are poised to make a real contribution to our country.</p> <p>These are not permanent fixes. Only Congress can provide a permanent, comprehensive solution. But these are steps in the right direction.</p>
E-Verify & Workplace Enforcement	<p>We support the mandatory use of the Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (S.A.V.E.) program—an internet-based system that verifies the lawful presence of applicants—prior to the granting of any State or federal government entitlements or IRS refunds.</p>	<p>We are continuing to work to hold employers accountable for whom they hire.</p>
	<p>We insist upon enforcement at the workplace through verification systems so that jobs can be available to all legal workers. Use of the E-verify program—an internet-based system that verifies the employment authorization and identity of employees—must be made mandatory nationwide.</p>	
	<p>State enforcement efforts in the workplace must be welcomed, not attacked. When Americans need jobs, it is absolutely essential that we protect them from illegal labor in the workplace.</p>	

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Criminalization	In addition, it is why we demand tough penalties for those who practice identity theft, deal in fraudulent documents, and traffic in human beings.	
Detention	It is why we support Republican legislation to give the Department of Homeland Security long-term detention authority to keep dangerous but undeportable aliens off our streets...	
Deportations	... expedite expulsion of criminal aliens...	The Department of Homeland Security is prioritizing the deportation of criminals who endanger our communities over the deportation of immigrants who do not pose a threat, such as children who came here through no fault of their own and are pursuing an education.
	... make gang membership a deportable offense...	
	We will create humane procedures to encourage illegal aliens to return home voluntarily while enforcing the law against those who overstay their visas.	
Critique of Opposition	The current Administration's approach to immigration has undermined the rule of law at every turn.	But instead of promoting the national interest, Republicans have blocked immigration reform in Congress and used the issue as a political wedge.

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	It has lessened work-site enforcement...	President Obama and the Democrats fought for the DREAM Act, legislation ensuring that young people who want to contribute fully to our society and serve our country are able to become legal residents and ultimately citizens. Although this bill has a long history of bipartisan support, Republicans decided to play politics with it rather than do the right thing.
	... and even allows the illegal aliens it does uncover to walk down the street to the next employer—...	President Obama and the Democratic Party stand for comprehensive immigration reform that intelligently prioritizes our country’s security and economic needs, while Mitt Romney and the Republicans have opposed commonsense reforms and pandered to the far right.
	... and challenged legitimate State efforts to keep communities safe, suing them for trying to enforce the law when the federal government refuses to do so.	
	It has created a backdoor amnesty program unrecognized in law...	
	... granting worker authorization to illegal aliens...	
	... shown little regard for the life-and-death situations facing the men and women of the border patrol.	
	Perhaps worst of all, the current Administration has failed to enforce the legal means for workers or employers who want to operate within the law.	

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Local policing	In contrast, a Republican Administration and Congress will partner with local governments through cooperative enforcement agreements in Section 287g of the Immigration and Nationality Act to make communities safer for all.	
State immigration initiatives	State efforts to reduce illegal immigration must be encouraged, not attacked. The pending Department of Justice lawsuits against Arizona, Alabama, South Carolina, and Utah must be dismissed immediately.	When states sought to interfere with federal immigration law by passing local measures targeting immigrants, this administration challenged them in court.
Border enforcement	The double-layered fencing on the border that was enacted by Congress in 2006, but never completed, must finally be built.	Today, the Southwest border is more secure than at any time in the past 20 years. Unlawful crossings are at a 40-year low, and the Border Patrol is better staffed than at any time in its history.
Guestworkers	...will consider, in light of both current needs and historic practice, the utility of a legal and reliable source of foreign labor where needed through a new guest worker program.	
Sanctuary cities	In order to restore the rule of law, federal funding should be denied to sanctuary cities that violate federal law and endanger their own citizens...	
In-state tuition	...federal funding should be denied to universities that provide in-state tuition rates to illegal aliens, in open defiance of federal law.	

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Immigrants in the Armed Services	We are grateful to the thousands of new immigrants, many of them not yet citizens, who are serving in the Armed Forces. Their patriotism should encourage us all to embrace the newcomers legally among us, assist their journey to full citizenship, and help their communities avoid isolation from the mainstream of society.	
Language	To that end, while we encourage the retention and transmission of heritage tongues, we support English as the nation’s official language, a unifying force essential for the educational and economic advancement of—not only immigrant communities—but also our nation as a whole.	...has enhanced opportunities for English-language learning and immigrant integration.

[Click here](#) -- Republican Party 2012 platform language on immigration (excerpt)

[Click here](#) -- Democratic Party 2012 platform language on immigration (excerpt)

[Republican Party 2012 platform](#) (full version)

[Democratic Party 2012 platform](#) (full version)