

Focusing on the Solutions: Key Principles of Comprehensive Immigration Reform

In Breaking Down the Problems, What's Wrong with Our Immigration System?, the Immigration Policy Center (IPC) laid out key structural problems within immigration law, as well as the inadequate, enforcement-only responses that have given rise to our current immigration crisis. Genuine immigration reform requires a thoughtful, coordinated approach that restores balance to the process, giving America the tools it needs to remain a leader in a rapidly changing world.

Download [Focusing on the Solutions: Key Principles of Immigration Reform](#) [1].

Download [Breaking Down the Problems, What's Wrong with Our Immigration System?](#) [2]

Download the [Powerpoint](#) [3]

Today, IPC released the first in a set of solution papers which features key principles that must be part of any comprehensive immigration reform program:

Electronic Employment Verification System

[Employment Verification: Repairing our Broken Immigration System](#) [4]

We can expect comprehensive reform legislation to mandate that all employers use some sort of system that verifies the work authorization of all workers. Since this will affect every single worker in the United States - immigrants and citizens alike - and because an error in the system can cost a worker his job and paycheck, it is important to make the system workable. This report lays out the must-haves for any broad employment verification system and lays out why a system like this can only work if it is within the context of a broader reform package.

Legalization

[Economic Progress via Legalization: Lessons Learned from the Last Legalization](#) [5]

This report provides insight into the socioeconomic improvement of "IRCA immigrants." The findings presented in this report support the notion that legalization of unauthorized immigrants can play a role in promoting economic growth and lessening socioeconomic disparities.

[Back to the Future: The Impact of Legalization Then and Now](#) [6]

While there are many facets to an intelligent immigration reform package, one thing is clear: legalization for undocumented immigrants helps all of us. This report examines three areas of concern: work, family, and community, and looks at what economic and social benefits would be derived from a legalization program in 2010.

[Earned Legalization: Repairing our Broken Immigration System](#) [7]

We can expect every major piece of comprehensive reform legislation to tackle the issue of creating a legal status for the 11- 12 million undocumented immigrants residing in the United States. Ultimately, most politicians and policy makers agree that practically, the U.S. cannot deport this population, and some kind of process for legalizing status is necessary. This report examines key principals to a successful legalization program.

Listen to the Telebriefing:

Citizenship

[Naturalization and Integration: Repairing our Broken Immigration System](#) [8]

Immigrant integration benefits everyone because it enables immigrants to realize their full potential, contribute more to the U.S. economy, and develop deeper community ties. While the United States encourages legal permanent residents to become citizens, there is no national strategy for facilitating integration and insufficient infrastructure to facilitate a smooth transition from immigrant to citizen. Failure to address this problem in the context of comprehensive immigration reform could lead to endless delays for the millions who currently seek services from USCIS and the millions more who will become part of the applicant pool following legalization. This report examines the benefits of a comprehensive integration strategy as well as key principles for naturalization and integration within the context of comprehensive immigration reform.

Enforcement

[Enforcing Immigration Laws: Repairing our Broken Immigration System](#) [9]

Comprehensively reforming our broken immigration system will necessarily transform the role of immigration enforcement. Legalization of unauthorized immigrants already in the United States will result in a significantly smaller unauthorized population, and the creation of flexible legal channels for those immigrants we want and need will ensure that future flows of illegal immigration are minimal. However, there will continue to be a need to enforce our nation's immigration laws. The challenge is designing appropriate, effective enforcement mechanisms for a new, well-functioning legal immigration system. Read IPC's latest Fact Check, [Enforcing Immigration Laws: Repairing our Broken Immigration System](#), which examines key principles for immigration enforcement within the context of comprehensive immigration reform.

Family

[Family Immigration: Repairing our Broken Immigration System](#) [10]

Family-based immigration is now capped at 480,000 visas per year. Immigrant families must go through the family preference system, which limits the number of visas available for each "preference." Because there are more people who qualify than visas available, many close family members of U.S. citizens and legal permanent residents are waiting in long backlogs. Reforming our broken immigration system will require us to transform our family-based immigration system, clear out the backlogs, recapture unclaimed family-based visas, reset numerical caps and allow law-abiding families to reunite with loved ones in a humane and reasonable timeline. This paper lays out the key principles for family immigration within the context of comprehensive immigration reform.

Future Flow

[Future Employment-Based Immigration Flow](#) [11]

This paper discusses the difficult challenge of addressing future flow and how it will impact our future employment-based immigration needs. This includes permanent and temporary visas, high-skilled and low-skilled workers. Policymakers must recognize that if we create a legal immigration system that functions well, there will be less pressure on immigrants to come to the U.S. illegally and for employers to hire unauthorized workers. Given the current weakened economy and high unemployment rates, it is difficult to estimate the U.S.'s future labor needs. However, the economy will eventually improve, and a reasonable, flexible legal immigration system must be put into place to fill our future labor needs. If the U.S. is to thrive in the globalized 21st century

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economy, employment-based immigration must be seen as a strategic resource that can both meet labor market needs and foster economic growth and competition while still protecting U.S. workers and improving wages and working conditions.

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[3] [http://www.immigrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/docs/IPC Problems & Solutions 032310.ppt](http://www.immigrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/docs/IPC_Problems_&_Solutions_032310.ppt)

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[9] <http://www.immigrationpolicy.org/just-facts/enforcing-immigration-laws-repairing-our-broken-immigration-system>

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