

Learning from IRCA: Lessons for Comprehensive Immigration Reform

If the current political stalemate over immigration reform is any indication, many U.S. policymakers have yet to heed the lessons of recent history when it comes to formulating a realistic strategy to control undocumented immigration. In 1986, lawmakers passed the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) in an attempt to reign in undocumented immigration through heightened worksite and border enforcement, combined with legalization of most undocumented immigrants already in the country. Lawmakers should take care not to make the same mistakes in crafting new immigration reform legislation.

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