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BACKGROUND PAPER

Topic: “Comprehensive Reform of the United States Immigration System”

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United States of America

Chair and Moderator names

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Committee Background

For generations, the United States has been seen as a land of opportunity a place where people from around the world come seeking safety and a better life. Yet today, its immigration system struggles to meet modern realities. Millions of undocumented immigrants live and work in the country without legal protection, while families continue to face long waits and uncertainty at the border. Previous reforms made progress but never solved the root issues, leaving the system outdated and deeply divided.

Now, the call for comprehensive reform is about more than laws it's about people. A fair and humane approach must protect national security while also opening doors for those who contribute to society. Delegates in this committee are invited to rethink what immigration should look like in the 21st century and how the U.S. can build a system that reflects both its values and its responsibility to those who seek a new beginning.

Introduction of the Topic



Immigration has always been at the heart of the United States—a nation built by people from different places, languages, and cultures searching for a better life. Yet today, the country faces one of its biggest challenges: how to create an immigration system that is both fair and secure. The debate around comprehensive immigration reform goes beyond laws and policies—it's about people, families, and the values the U.S. stands for.

On one side, many believe that the current system must be strengthened to protect national security, control the border, and ensure that immigration happens legally and responsibly. On the other side, others argue that the system should be more humane and inclusive, offering a clear path to citizenship for Dreamers and long-term undocumented immigrants who already contribute to American society.

Finding a balance between enforcement and compassion has become one of the most difficult political issues in the U.S. Senate. Every proposal reflects a choice between security, opportunity, and human dignity—showing that immigration reform is not just a political matter, but a moral one.



Evolution of the Topic

At first, immigration was seen as an opportunity for growth. Millions came to the U.S. from around the world. Over time, laws became stricter. The 1965 Immigration Act ended racist quotas, and the 1986 Reform Act legalized millions of undocumented immigrants while tightening enforcement.

Immigration became more controversial. After 9/11, border security increased sharply. The 2013 “Gang of Eight” bill tried to balance border control with a path to citizenship, but Congress couldn’t agree, and reform once again failed.

Today, immigration remains deeply divided. Topics like DACA, asylum, and border control dominate. Some senators focus on strict enforcement, while others call for humane solutions and legalization for long-term immigrants.

External Actions

True immigration reform begins with understanding that migration is a global story, not just a national one. The United States can work hand in hand with its neighboring countries and organizations like the IOM and UNHCR to make migration safer and more humane. Through cooperation and shared responsibility, it is possible to protect families seeking safety while managing borders in a fair and compassionate way.

Beyond enforcement, the U.S. should focus on the reasons why people migrate in the first place. Many leave their homes because of poverty, violence, or the effects of climate change. By supporting development projects, education, and job opportunities in those regions, the United States can help people find hope where they are instead of being forced to move in desperation.

Finally, it is essential to change how migration is seen. Working with NGOs, communities, and the media to share real stories and accurate information can replace fear with empathy. Through these actions, the United States can show that immigration reform is not only about laws or borders—it is about people, dignity, and the shared responsibility of building a better future together.





Committee Focus

The U.S. Senate Committee on Immigration Reform faces the complex challenge of designing policies that protect national security while respecting human rights and the nation's immigrant heritage. The goal is to find common ground between those who prioritize border control and those who call for humane and inclusive reform.

This committee will focus on three key areas:

1. **Border Security and Law Enforcement** ensuring safe and effective management of U.S. borders.
2. **Pathways to Citizenship** exploring fair legalization options for Dreamers and long-term undocumented immigrants.
3. **Humanitarian and Economic Impacts** balancing national interests with compassion, family unity, and labor needs.

Through debate and negotiation, senators must work toward a balanced proposal that represents both security and opportunity, reflecting the values of the United States as a nation built by immigrants.



Conclusion

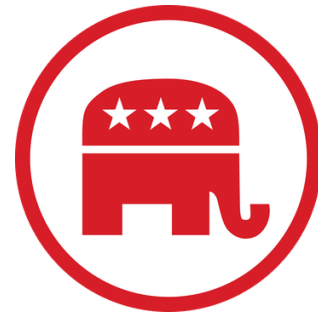
Immigration reform continues to be one of the most complex and emotional issues in the United States. For years, the nation has tried to balance its identity as a land of opportunity with the need to maintain order and security at its borders. Countless families, workers, and young Dreamers live in uncertainty, waiting for a system that recognizes both their humanity and their contribution to the country. Despite repeated efforts, deep political divisions have kept a comprehensive solution out of reach.

Today, the Senate Committee on Immigration Reform has the responsibility to revisit this issue with a renewed sense of cooperation and understanding. The challenge is not only political but deeply moral: how to protect the country while giving people a fair chance at belonging. A true reform must address border management, create realistic pathways to citizenship, and ensure that laws reflect compassion, justice, and respect for human rights.

Each senator's perspective whether focused on enforcement or humanitarian reform is part of the bigger picture. The goal of this debate is not to favor one side, but to build a bridge between them. Through dialogue, compromise, and empathy, the committee can create proposals that honor the values of freedom and equality on which the United States was founded.

Immigration reform is ultimately about people: the workers who build the economy, the families who seek safety, and the young dreamers who see the U.S. as their only home. The committee's decisions will not only shape policy, but also define the nation's character and the kind of future it wants to create one that remains open, fair, and true to the idea that diversity is its greatest strength.

Senators Position Republicans



● John Cornyn (Texas)

Supports stronger border security and more enforcement at the southern border. He's not in favor of offering citizenship unless there are strict conditions.

● Susan M. Collins (Maine)

Considered a moderate. She would likely support better border control but stay open to bipartisan deals that protect Dreamers or allow limited legalization.

● Lindsey Graham (South Carolina)

Backs tough border measures but has shown interest in bipartisan reform before. Would probably look for middle ground: enforcement paired with some path to legality.

● Ted Budd (North Carolina)

Strongly supports tighter border control and limiting immigration. Opposes any kind of amnesty.

● John Barrasso (Wyoming)

Firmly against pathways to citizenship. Focuses on stopping illegal crossings and enforcing current laws.

● Joni Ernst (Iowa)

In favor of border wall funding and strict security. Supports only limited legal immigration.

● Mike Lee (Utah)

Prefers lawful, orderly immigration but opposes wide amnesty or executive actions expanding DACA.

● Roger Marshall (Kansas)

A strong advocate for stricter immigration policies and more border wall expansion.

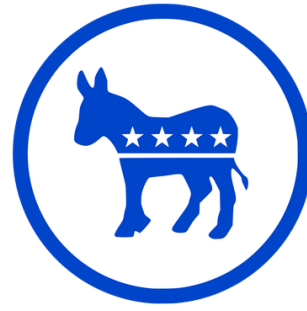
● Eric Schmitt (Missouri)

Opposes lenient immigration policies and prioritizes national security at the border.

● Lisa Murkowski (Alaska)

Moderate voice among Republicans. Could support a bipartisan reform plan that combines border security with protections for Dreamers.

Senators Position Democrats



● Tammy Baldwin (Wisconsin)

Supports a pathway to citizenship and protection for DACA recipients. Promotes family reunification and a more humane immigration system.

● Cory Booker (New Jersey)

Strong advocate of full immigration reform. Defends Dreamers and supports policies that treat migrants with dignity instead of punishment.

● Catherine Cortez Masto (Nevada)

Pushes for reform that protects Dreamers and reunites families. Emphasizes humane treatment and the economic benefits immigrants bring.

● John Fetterman (Pennsylvania)

Generally supports immigrants' rights and DACA. Would aim for a fair system that balances humanitarian aid with accountability at the border.

● Kirsten Gillibrand (New York)

Wants a clear pathway to citizenship and better treatment of refugees. Opposes family separations and detention-focused policies.

● Amy Klobuchar (Minnesota)

Believes in bipartisan reform — combining border security with legal pathways. Would highlight programs for Dreamers and temporary workers.

● Mazie Hirono (Hawaii)

A strong defender of immigrant families. Supports legalization and opposes harsh deportation or detention policies.

● Raphael Warnock (Georgia)

Focuses on moral and humane immigration solutions. Favors family reunification and a path to citizenship for Dreamers.

● Alex Padilla (California)

One of the biggest supporters of immigration reform. As the son of Mexican immigrants, he advocates for DACA expansion and fair legalization opportunities.

● Sheldon Whitehouse (Rhode Island)

Supports comprehensive reform and refugee protections. Often emphasizes the moral and economic importance of welcoming immigrants.

Participation List



John Cornyn



Susan M. Collins



Lindsey Graham



Ted Budd



John Barrasso



Joni Ernst



Mike Lee



Roger Marshall



Eric Schmitt



Lisa Murkowski



Tammy Baldwin



Cory A. Booker

Participation List



Catherine Cortez



John Fetterman



Kirsten E. Gillibrand



Amy Klobuchar



Mazie K. Hirono



Raphael G. Warnock



Alex Padilla



Sheldon Whitehouse



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