

Immigration Reform Principles and Policy Recommendations



The following outlines national immigration reform principles developed by the Latino Policy Forum and its *Acuerdo* members. These principles lay out a framework for the necessary and essential components that the United States should follow when dealing with immigration reform and policy changes. The Forum and its allies will use these principles as a guided litmus test when analyzing any pending legislation or policy change on the federal level.

- 1) **Family Reunification/Unity:** All legislation must commit to American values of strong and stable families. Stable families strengthen communities and contribute to the well-being of society.
- 2) **Path to Legalization:** Legislation must provide for a swift, fair and humane path to legal permanent residency for the 11-12 million unauthorized individuals who have contributed significantly to the strength and expansion of our nation's economy and social fabric. A roadmap for citizenship will be made particularly for those who have lived and worked productively in the country for a number of years.
- 3) **Civil Protections & Due Process:** Legislation must restore due process and stop the criminalization of the immigrant population. The current detention and deportation process has increased hardship for immigrant and U.S. families which have placed a heavy economic and administrative burden on governmental systems to incarcerate and deport these individuals.
- 4) **Current & Future Migration Flows/Workers Rights:** Legislation must provide a system to manage the flow of future migrant workers within the framework of international human rights. It must consider the effect of global economic forces and business cycles on international migration.
- 5) **Immigrant Integration:** Legislation must develop systems and programs that will work to fully integrate immigrants into the social, political, and economic activities and to strengthen these American values while maintaining the values of democracy and opportunities for all. Any legislation must emphasize the value each individual brings to their communities.
- 6) **National Security (Fair Enforcement Policies):** Legislation should reflect enforcement and national security policies that keep the United States safe and demonstrates our country's value and respect. Policies should limit the unnecessary criminalization and incarceration of immigrants and prioritize the safety and security of communities directly affected by these enforcement policies.
- 7) **Transnational Policy:** A fair immigration system must acknowledge and consider the impact of U.S. policies, both foreign and domestic, on the economic and political stability and health of foreign nations. Legislation must also build on the long history of U.S. international protection policies for individuals who seek refuge from political, religious and other forms of persecution around the world through improving current practices and instituting progressive protection policies that take into consideration current international realities.