



THE WHITE HOUSE  
PRESIDENT  
GEORGE W. BUSH



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## Fact Sheet: Comprehensive Immigration Reform

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**Tonight, President Bush Discussed His Vision For Comprehensive Immigration Reform.** The five clear objectives of comprehensive immigration reform are securing our borders, creating a temporary worker program, making it easier for employers to verify employment eligibility and continuing to hold them to account for the legal status of workers they hire, dealing with the millions of illegal immigrants who are already here, and honoring the great American tradition of the melting pot.

**The President Believes America Can Be A Lawful Society And A Welcoming Society At The Same Time.** We will fix the problem of illegal immigration, and we will deliver a system that is secure, orderly, and fair.

### 1. The United States Must Secure Its Borders

**Securing Our Borders Is The Basic Responsibility Of A Sovereign Nation And An Urgent Requirement Of Our National Security.** President Bush's proposals to better secure our borders include increasing the number of Border Patrol agents, using enhanced border security technology, ending the practice of "catch and release" along the southern border, eliminating bureaucratic obstacles to returning illegal immigrants to their home countries, and working with our Nation's Governors to send National Guard members to the border for temporary assignment to assist the Border Patrol during the transition as new Border Patrol agents are added and new technologies come online.

**Since President Bush Took Office, We Have Increased Funding For Border Security By 66 Percent And Expanded The Border Patrol From About 9,000 To 12,000 Agents.** Over the past five years, we have apprehended and sent home more than 6 million people entering America illegally.

**The President's Secure Border Initiative (SBI) Is The Most Technologically Advanced Border Enforcement Initiative In American History.** This year, we will begin a comprehensive program to construct high-tech fences in urban corridors and build new patrol roads and barriers in rural areas. We will employ motion sensors, infrared cameras, and unmanned aerial vehicles to detect and prevent illegal crossings. We will better integrate our homeland security forces to dramatically improve the efficiency and effectiveness of our border security efforts.

**President Bush Is Asking Congress For \$327 Million To Help End The Policy Of "Catch And Release."** More than 85 percent of the illegal immigrants apprehended at the southern border are from Mexico, and most are returned within 24 hours. For many years, government detention facilities did not have enough beds for many non-Mexican illegal immigrants caught at the border. As a result, most were released back into society. They were each assigned a court date, but the vast majority did not show up.

- **The President's FY06 Budget Funds 20,800 Beds For Detention Facilities.** The President is asking Congress to provide money to increase the number of beds in detention facilities by 4,000 beds and to increase efficiency in the detention and removal system. The President's FY07 budget proposes increasing the number of beds in detention facilities to 27,500 by the end of FY07. The Administration has expanded the use of "expedited removal," which allows us to send non-Mexican illegal immigrants home more quickly. We are also continuing to make it clear to foreign governments that they must accept back their citizens who violate our immigration laws.
- **The President Is Eliminating Bureaucratic Obstacles So That We Can Return More Non-Mexican Illegal Aliens In Shorter Periods Of Time Than Ever Before.** We have expedited the legal process to cut the average deportation time. We have ended "catch and release" for illegal immigrants from Brazil, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua caught crossing our southern border. The Administration will work with Congress to close loopholes making it difficult to process illegal immigrants from certain countries and will continue pressing foreign governments who are reluctant to take back their citizens who violate our immigration laws.
- **The President Is Working With Congress To Eliminate Rules Requiring The Federal Government To Release Illegal Immigrants If Their Home Countries Do Not Take Them Back In A Set Period Of Time.** These rules have forced the government to release even violent criminals. The President is also working with Congress to address the cycle of endless litigation that clogs immigration courts, rewards illegal behavior, and delays justice for immigrants with legitimate claims.
- **The Administration Is Working To Expand "Operation Streamline."** Through "Operation Streamline," the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Department of Justice (DOJ), and numerous local law enforcement organizations are working to expedite prosecution of aliens for illegal entry in conjunction with removal proceedings.

**We Are Working Closely With State And Local Law Enforcement To Stop Illegal Immigration.**

- **The Law Enforcement Support Center (LESC) Is Enabling DHS To Share Critical Law Enforcement Information - Such As Immigration Status And Identity Information - With State And Local Law Enforcement Officials.** Responses to requests for information sent to the LESL are usually answered within an hour. In FY 2004, the LESL provided immigration-related information requested by Federal, State, and local law enforcement officials on over 668,000 occasions. The LESL regularly responds to over 60,000 queries per month. The LESL

also provides training to officers in Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, California, the District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Maryland, Minnesota, Mississippi, Nevada, New York, and Texas.

- **DHS Is Continuing Its Program, In Conjunction With State And Local Law Enforcement Agencies, To Identify Illegal Aliens Who Are Incarcerated In Non-Federal Jails.** Under this program, when a criminal alien is booked into a State, county, or local jail, an electronic query is automatically sent to DHS to verify the alien's immigration status. Certain jails in Arizona, California, Florida, and Texas are using this program.

**The United States And Mexico Are Engaging In Renewed Discussions On Collaborative Border Security And Safety Initiatives.** The United States and Mexico have a shared interest in addressing violence against law enforcement personnel and innocent people and increased lawlessness that is occurring in some border areas.

- **U.S.-Mexico Action Plan To Combat Border Violence:** On March 3, 2006, in accordance with the Security and Prosperity Partnership, Mexico and the United States signed an Action Plan to combat border violence and improve public safety. This agreement strengthens procedures to enhance cooperation on both sides of the border to respond to scenarios ranging from accidental crossings to incidents of violence, or other situations that present risks to those who live, work, or travel at our common border. Both governments endorsed a multi-step plan for bi-national coordination during emergency situations and committed to ensure immediate communication and information sharing during any such situations that may have cross-border implications. The Action Plan also sets forth the groundwork for ensuring coordinated investigations and detentions of persons believed to be involved in violent activity along the border.
- **We Are Working With The Mexican Government On Interior Repatriation - Returning Illegal Immigrants To The Towns They Came From In Mexico.** Over the past two years, nearly 35,000 illegal immigrants were returned to Mexico through interior repatriation to decrease their likelihood of trying to cross again.

**President Bush Is Calling On Congress To Provide Funding For Improvements In Manpower And Technology And Better Collaboration With State And Local Law Enforcement Officials.**

- **We Will Increase The Number Of Border Patrol Agents By 6,000 By The End Of 2008 - Doubling The Size Of The Border Patrol During The President's Time In Office.** So far, President Bush has increased the number of Border Patrol agents from about 9,000 to about 12,000. More agents mean more area will be covered and more illegal cross-border traffic will be interdicted. Crime will decrease around the border as criminal enterprises are dismantled and human and narcotic smuggling corridors are disrupted.

**We Will Continue Expanding The Federal Government's Partnership With Border Counties And Targeted States.** Targeted training and grant programs like the 287(g) program and Operation Stonegarden allow State and local law enforcement to assist the Border Patrol in helping the Federal

government quickly expand border security efforts on a temporary basis.

- **Operation Stonegarden Provides Grants For Overtime And Travel Expenses, Enabling Local, State And Tribal Law Enforcement Agencies To Increase Manpower Required For Area-Specific Operations.** These agencies work in direct coordination with the U.S. Border Patrol. During these joint operations, there is an increased area of coverage, which increases apprehension of illegal cross-border traffic and deters local crime.
- **Section 287(g) Of The Immigration And Nationality Act Authorizes DHS To Train State And Local Law Enforcement Officials In Immigration Enforcement So They Can Identify And Process Incarcerated Aliens.** DHS is working with State and local law enforcement across the Nation to ensure illegal aliens are removed from the United States. 287(g) programs have already been established in Alabama, Florida, Arizona, North Carolina, and California. DHS will work with its State and local partners to expand these programs to increase targeted enforcement and will be requesting \$50 million dollars for this effort along the southern border.
  - These Additional Resources Will Enhance Partnerships Between ICE And State and Local Law Enforcement As Newly Trained and Certified Officers Join DHS Task Forces, Including Border Enforcement And Security Task Forces, Document And Benefit Fraud Task Forces, And Human Trafficking Task Forces. The expanded participation will increase the apprehension, prosecution, and removal of criminal aliens and alien smuggling rings at the southern border and throughout the country.
  - **ICE Is Projecting To Train Approximately 250 To 500 State And Local Law Enforcement Officers Under The 287(g) Delegation Authority Program.** Focused primarily on the southern border states, expansion of the 287(g) delegation of authority in a managed and focused approach will significantly enhance ICE's capabilities.

**To Help During This Period Of Transition And In Coordination With Governors, Up To 6,000 National Guard Members Will Be Sent To Our Southern Border.** The Department of Homeland Security will remain in the lead. National Guard units will assist the Border Patrol by operating surveillance systems, analyzing intelligence, installing fences and vehicle barriers, building patrol roads, and providing training. National Guard units deployed to our border will not be involved in direct law enforcement activities - that duty will be done by the Border Patrol.

- **This Initial Commitment Of Guard Members Would Last For One Year.** After that, the number of National Guard members will be reduced as new Border Patrol agents are added and new technologies come online. At any one time, these 6,000 Guard members account for less than 2 percent of the total National Guard force of more than 440,000. Guard members will be deployed in two- to three-week rotations to meet this 6,000 person level. We have enough National Guard members to deploy to our border, while continuing to respond to natural disasters and fight and win the War on Terror.
- **The National Guard's Primary Role Will Be Support For DHS - As Is Currently Provided On A More Limited Basis.** National Guard units will not be involved in the apprehension or

detention of illegal immigrants, perform detention operations, take or maintain custody of illegal aliens, or directly perform any law enforcement activities. Apprehensions and detention operations will be conducted by the Border Patrol.

- **The President Is Committed To Working With Our Nation's Governors.** Military personnel will be employed consistent with applicable Federal, state, and local law. The National Guard units from the Southwest Border (SWB) States will be under the command and control of their respective State Governors and Adjutants General. National Guard units from other States will deploy to the SWB States, and through an agreement between Governors of providing States and receiving States, will be under the command and control of the Governors and Adjutants General of the receiving States. The National Guard Bureau will serve as the coordinating authority to deploy National Guard units from across the country to perform the border security mission in support of DHS. The SWB States will establish a National Guard Joint Task Force in each State to serve as the command and control element for the border security mission. These Joint Task Forces will provide the necessary logistical and administrative support for mobilized forces. These Joint Task Forces will establish coordinating relationships with the each other and DHS to ensure unity of effort and information sharing.
- **The United States Is Not Going To Militarize The Southern Border.** Mexico is our neighbor and friend. We will continue to work cooperatively to improve security on both sides of the border, confront common problems like drug trafficking and crime, and reduce illegal immigration.
- **National Guard Support Will Enable Us To Move More Than 500 Border Patrol Agents From Jobs In The Back Office To The Front Lines.** This will free well-trained border patrol agents now performing clerical, transportation, and logistics jobs and return them to helping detect and apprehend illegal aliens. These veteran agents will not have to undergo additional training to be effective in their areas of operation.

**The United States, Canada And Mexico Have A Common Border Security Workplan Under The Security Pillar Of The Security And Prosperity Partnership (SPP) Of North America.** When the three leaders met in Cancun, Mexico, in March 2006, they committed to working together on a "North American Smart, Secure Borders Plan," which includes close coordination on screening of goods and people, collaboration and prioritization of border infrastructure and technology investment, and concerted law enforcement cooperation to respond to criminal or terrorist threats.

- **The United States And Canada Cooperate Extensively On A Range Of Border Security And Counterterrorism Initiatives.** Since 2001, Canada has demonstrated its commitment to increased internal security by investing billions of dollars on security enhancements to increase coordination among agencies, enhance border, airport, and maritime security, improve screening of immigrants and refugee claimants, and improve critical infrastructure protection. Together, the United States and Canada have established 15 Integrated Border Enforcement Teams combining U.S. and Canadian law enforcement agencies in a unified effort along the border.

## 2. To Secure Our Border, We Must Create A Temporary Worker Program

**President Bush Supports A Temporary Worker Program That Would Create A Legal Path For Foreign Workers To Enter Our Country In An Orderly Way, For A Limited Period Of Time.** This program would match willing foreign workers with willing American employers for jobs Americans are not doing. Every worker who applies for the program would be required to pass criminal background checks, and temporary workers must return to their home country at the conclusion of their authorized stay.

- **A Temporary Worker Program Would Meet The Needs Of Our Economy, Ease The Financial Burden On State And Local Governments, And - Most Importantly - Add To Our Security.** A temporary worker program would give honest immigrants a way to provide for their families while respecting the law, replace illegal workers with lawful taxpayers, and enable us to make certain we know who is in our country and why they are here.

## 3. We Need To Hold Employers To Account For The Workers They Hire

**Comprehensive Immigration Reform Must Include The Creation Of A New Identification Card For Every Legal Foreign Worker So Businesses Can Verify The Legal Status Of Their Employees.** This card should use biometric technology to make it tamper-proof. A tamper-proof card would help us enforce the law - and leave employers with no excuse for violating it. We will also work with Congress to expand "basic pilot" - an electronic employment verification system - and mandate that all employers use this system to quickly and accurately confirm work eligibility for all prospective employees. By making it harder for illegal immigrants to find work in our country, we would discourage people from crossing the border illegally in the first place.

## 4. We Must Deal With The Millions Of Illegal Immigrants Who Are Already Here

**Illegal Immigrants Should Not Be Given Amnesty.** President Bush opposes amnesty and believes illegal immigrants should not be given an automatic path to citizenship because it would be unfair to those who are here lawfully and would invite further waves of illegal immigration. The President supports increasing the annual number of green cards that can lead to citizenship, but for the sake of justice and security, the President is firmly opposed to amnesty.

**President Bush Believes That Deporting Every Illegal Immigrant Is Neither Wise Nor Realistic.** There is a rational middle ground between granting an automatic path to citizenship for every illegal immigrant and a program of mass deportation.

**President Bush Believes Illegal Immigrants Who Have Roots in America And Who Want To Stay Should Have To Pay A Meaningful Penalty For Breaking The Law, Pay Their Taxes, Learn English, And Work In A Job For A Number Of Years.** The President also believes that there are differences between an illegal immigrant who crossed the border recently - and someone who has worked here for many years, and has a home, a family, and an otherwise clean record. Those who meet our conditions should be able to apply for citizenship - but approval will not be automatic, and they will have to wait in line behind those who played by the rules and followed the law.

## **5. We Must Honor The Great American Tradition Of The Melting Pot**

**The Success Of Our Country Depends Upon Helping Newcomers Assimilate Into Our Society And Embracing Our Common Identity As Americans.** Americans are bound together by our shared ideals, an appreciation of our history, respect for the flag we fly, and an ability to speak and write the English language.

- **English Is The Key To Unlocking The Opportunity Of America.** English allows newcomers to go from picking crops to opening a grocery, from cleaning offices to running offices, from a life of low-paying jobs to a diploma, a career, and a home of their own. When immigrants assimilate and advance in our society, they realize their dreams, they renew our spirit, and they add to the unity of America.

## **The House And Senate Must Pass A Comprehensive Immigration Reform Bill**

**All Elements Of This Problem Must Be Addressed Together - Or None Of Them Will Be Solved At All.** The House has passed an immigration bill. The Senate should act by the end of this month - so that the House and Senate can work out their differences and send the President a comprehensive bill to sign.

**America Needs To Conduct This Debate In A Reasoned And Respectful Tone.** Feelings run deep on the matter of immigration - and as we work out this issue, all of us need to keep some things in mind. We cannot build a unified country by inciting people to anger, or playing on anyone's fears, or exploiting the issue of immigration for political gain. We must always remember that real lives will be affected by our debates and decisions, and that every human being has dignity and value no matter what their citizenship papers say.

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