

THE UNITED STATES AND MEXICO: IMMIGRATION POLICY IN 2021

A view from California

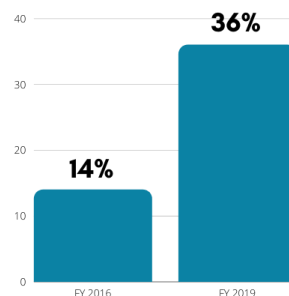
The Pacific Council on International Policy, under the auspices of its Mexico Initiative program, is producing a First 100 Days Memo on U.S.-Mexico policy for President-elect Biden with immigration as one of the main focus areas. A non-partisan committee of Pacific Council members encourage President-elect Biden to work with Mexico as a partner and ally to address immigration issues at our shared border. The Council supports Biden's priority to convene a regional meeting of leaders to address the factors driving migration and further suggests that this issue will require ongoing focus from a cross-agency subset of the U.S. Government. Ultimately, better cooperation with our neighbors on the part of a broad subsection of our agencies will lead to greater security for the United States, Mexico, and countries in Central America.

Trump's Immigration Policies

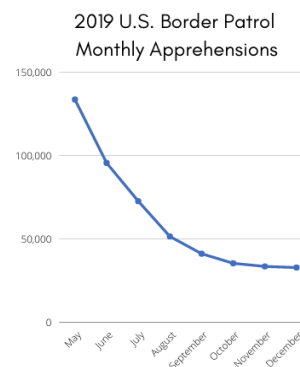
In 2016, then-candidate Donald Trump made immigration reform one of his campaign's top priorities. The Trump Administration made good on those promises with sweeping presidential proclamations and executive orders starting in 2017. These orders focused on border security, interior enforcement, and refugees. Additionally, the Trump Administration worked with the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) and U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to institute policies that significantly reduced asylum at the border and affected unauthorized immigrants in the United States.

Highlights of the changes pushed through in executive orders, DOJ policies, and DHS policies¹

- Construction of a border wall and additional border patrol personnel
- Increased construction of detention facilities and detention of immigrants
- Prioritization of all unauthorized immigrants for removal
- Zero tolerance policy that led to family separation at the border
- Halted acceptance of new Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) applicants
- Asylum Cooperation Agreements with Central American countries allowing the United States to send asylum seekers abroad
- Ramping up of the Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP), requiring migrants to wait in Mexico for their adjudications



The non-criminal share of immigrants arrested by ICE **has more than doubled** over the course of the Trump administration.³



By January 2020, **apprehensions had decreased for the eighth month in a row**, the longest stretch of declining apprehensions since April-December 2008.⁴

¹ Migration Policy Institute. (2020). *Dismantling and Reconstructing the U.S. Immigration System: A Catalog of Changes under the Trump Presidency*

Biden's Early Commitments on Immigration

Immigration is one of President-elect Biden's key priorities, many changes of which he promises to begin on day one. Biden commits to undoing the majority of Trump's policies and to "reclaim America's values as a nation of immigrants".²

Highlights of the Biden Administration's commitments on immigration in his first 100 days include:

- Immediate reversal of the Trump Administration's policies that separate parents from their children at the U.S.-Mexico Border
- End Trump's asylum policies starting with Trump's Migrant Protection Protocols
- Surge humanitarian resources to the border and foster public-private initiatives
- End prolonged detention, reinvest in a case management program, and restore sensible enforcement priorities
- End the National Emergency and cease building a wall on our southern border
- Protect Dreamers and their families by reinstating the DACA program
- Convene a regional meeting of leaders, including from El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, and Canada, to address the factors driving migration and to propose a regional resettlement solution

Mexico is a key actor and necessary partner for the United States to consider when addressing issues of immigration. The Pacific Council plans to share its First 100 Days memo with President-elect Biden and to disseminate it to relevant cabinet members towards the purpose of strengthening the U.S.-Mexico relationship. Additionally, the Council will share the memo more widely amongst the general public to bring attention to the importance of the U.S.-Mexico relationship for the next administration.

ABOUT THE PACIFIC COUNCIL ON INTERNATIONAL POLICY

The Pacific Council on International Policy promotes global engagement across Los Angeles and California. We believe that everyone has a role to play in global affairs. The Pacific Council builds the capacity of local citizens to become global affairs champions, harnesses the collective power of individuals, businesses, and institutions in our city, and exports Los Angeles's talents to the world on issues where we add value.

The Council is committed to representing and addressing California's diverse perspectives and challenging all citizens to think critically about global issues. We believe that community awareness, civic participation, and cross-sector partnerships improve local leadership on global issues and lead to better policy outcomes.

Learn more at pacificcouncil.org and follow us on Twitter at [@paccouncil](https://twitter.com/paccouncil).

² "The Biden Plan for Securing Our Values as a Nation of Immigrants." Joe Biden for President: Official Campaign Website, 5 Aug. 2020, joebiden.com/immigration/.

³ ICE, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Fiscal Year 2019 Enforcement and Removal Operations Report; ICE, Fiscal Year 2016 ICE Enforcement and Removal Operations Report.

⁴ CBP, "Southwest Border Migration FY 2020"; U.S. Border Patrol, "Total Illegal Alien Apprehensions by Month (FY 2000 – FY 2019)," accessed July 14, 2020)