



# IMMIGRATION

Updated - 1.24.24

## ***Despite Facts, A Purposely Contrived Hostage Issue by Callous Republicans***

The White House and Congressional legislators again struggle to negotiate a U.S. border security deal that would enable funding of President Biden's urgent request for billions of dollars for military aid for Ukraine, Israel, and national security.

The negotiations are further complicated by a wave of misinformation and political rhetoric broadcast by right-wing extremists, including from Donald Trump who continues to deliver alarming anti-immigrant remarks echoing Nazi slogans of World War II. Speaking about the record numbers of undocumented immigrants coming to the U.S. he has repeated, "They're poisoning the blood of our country" and also claims that these immigrants include many terrorists, human and drug traffickers.

Immigrants constitute 18 percent of the U.S. workforce of 164 million and historically have been a key factor to meet the employment demands of a healthy U.S. economy given the declining birth rates of Americans. In 2023 1.1 million immigrants legally entered the United States. In Florida, immigrant business owners account for 437,690 (33%) of all self-employed Florida residents and generate \$7.1 billion in business income.

The Biden administration, however, faces an increasingly difficult political situation. Many non-documented migrants, comprised largely of families and unaccompanied children, are fleeing to the United States from countries ravaged by war, violence, hunger or economic crises. Leading countries of origin are Mexico, Venezuela, and Central America.

While 2.5 million undocumented persons crossed the southern border last year, about 17% of these were admitted through "official ports of entry." The majority of the others (80%) were promptly intercepted and apprehended by U.S. Customs and Border Protection and placed for processing by U.S. authorities and immigration courts. In 2023, 980,000 migrants were deported from the country. Noncitizens who cross the border unlawfully are placed into Expedited Removal or Section 240 Removal Proceedings.

Meanwhile the rhetoric of GOP critics raise fears of deportations of immigrants already living in the U.S. Proposals by Trump are described as extreme, racist, and cruel. These include massive deportations, cruel detention camps, and a new Muslim ban, all intended to fire up the extreme right who favor nationalistic policies of isolationism.

After ten years of continuous alarm and debate over the existing U.S. immigration system, the system remains overly complicated in its required processes and severely underfunded. House Speaker Mike Johnson and callous Republican legislators, prompted by former President Trump, continue to refuse to fix it and remain committed to using it as a campaign weapon against Democrats, regardless of the economic, human damage and loss of lives suffered primarily by the Hispanic community. These anti-immigration policies are being mirrored in many Republican governed states, such as Florida with Governor DeSantis and Texas with Governor Abbot.

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