

# Operation Wildfire: Good Things Happen When YOU Vote

September 6, 2024

## On the Issues: Immigration

Immigration has been a touchstone of the U.S. political debate for decades, as policymakers have weighed economic, security, and humanitarian concerns. However, Congress has continued to disagree on comprehensive immigration reform, effectively moving some major policy decisions into the executive and judicial branches of government and fueling debate in the halls of state and municipal governments. President Joe Biden had pledged to reverse Trump's first-term actions and reform the system, but the end of pandemic-related border restrictions and a historic surge in migration have complicated his plans. In this issue, Operation Wildfire reviews where the presidential candidates stand on immigration.

Vice President Kamala Harris	Former President Donald Trump
<p>Democratic Party Platform on Immigration: <a href="https://democrats.org/where-we-stand/the-issues/immigration-reform/">https://democrats.org/where-we-stand/the-issues/immigration-reform/</a></p> <p><b>Supports addressing the root causes of unauthorized entry.</b> <a href="https://www.allsides.com/blog/2024-voter-guide-where-presidential-candidates-stand-immigration">https://www.allsides.com/blog/2024-voter-guide-where-presidential-candidates-stand-immigration</a></p> <p>Harris said she planned to decrease immigration by supporting efforts to improve difficult living conditions in Central America, as many migrants are “fleeing some harm or they cannot stay and satisfy the basic necessities of life.”</p> <p>In alignment with her Root Causes Strategy, Harris worked with Central American leaders and the UN to provide humanitarian relief, increase economic and educational opportunities, expand border security and reduce drug and weapons smuggling and corruption.</p> <p>Harris met with the president of Mexico and signed a memorandum of understanding to expand economic opportunities in Central America.</p> <p>The Biden-Harris Administration ended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Title 42, a COVID-19 public health policy that allowed border patrol agents to expel unauthorized migrants before they could apply for asylum, in 2023;</li><li>• Trump-era Migrant Protection Protocols, also known as the “Remain in Mexico” policy, which mandated that asylum seekers wait in Mexico while their cases were processed; and,</li><li>• Temporarily paused asylum claims when daily border crossings exceed 2,500 migrants, through executive order.</li></ul> <p><b>Supports increased border security including a border wall.</b> <a href="https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/politics/kamala-harris-used-to-think-border-wall-was-un-american-now-she-supports-it/ar-AA1pwwFG">https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/politics/kamala-harris-used-to-think-border-wall-was-un-american-now-she-supports-it/ar-AA1pwwFG</a></p>	<p>Republican Party Platform on Immigration: <a href="https://prod-static.gop.com/media/RNC2024-Platform.pdf?">https://prod-static.gop.com/media/RNC2024-Platform.pdf?</a></p> <p><b>Advocates for limiting legal immigration and visas and expanding efforts to remove unauthorized migrants.</b> <a href="https://www.allsides.com/blog/2024-voter-guide-where-presidential-candidates-stand-immigration">https://www.allsides.com/blog/2024-voter-guide-where-presidential-candidates-stand-immigration</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Trump supports limits on legal immigration and visas, and raising visa fees to fund the border wall;</li><li>• He opposes the H-1B visa program which allows companies to employ foreign workers in specialized industries;</li><li>• At the beginning of the pandemic in 2020, Trump invoked Title 42, which is a public health measure that allows U.S. authorities to remove unauthorized migrants quickly;</li><li>• As President, he banned travelers from majority-Muslim countries for 90 days via an executive order; and,</li><li>• He slashed the State Department's refugee resettlement program, limiting the yearly refugee admissions cap to 15,000.</li></ul> <p><b>Supports the completion of the wall and increasing security efforts at the border.</b></p> <p>Trump has pledged to finish building a wall at the southern border. During his presidency, a quarter of the border was walled off.</p> <p>If elected, Trump wants to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Seal the border;</li><li>• Order a massive increase in border patrol agents to tighten surveillance at the border;</li><li>• Use advanced technology to monitor and secure the border;</li><li>• Move Troops currently stationed overseas to the Southern border; and,</li><li>• Deploy the U.S. Navy to impose a full fentanyl blockade on the waters of our region, boarding</li></ul>

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Harris backs the bipartisan border bill proposed in February, which would require public dollars to be spent on further construction of a border wall, according to *Axios*.

The Biden-Harris Administration:

- Ended the national emergency at the Southern Border declared during the Trump Administration on the first day of their term;
- Ended construction of a border wall;
- Department of Defense cancelled all border wall projects that were paid for with military funding in June 2021
- Resumed construction on a section of the border wall in Texas in 2023.
- Requested supplemental funding for additional border patrol staff, immigration judge teams and detection systems in 2023.

**2022:** During an interview with Chuck Todd of Meet The Press, Vice President Harris said, "The Border is secure."

[https://www.realclearpolitics.com/video/2022/09/11/kamala\\_harris\\_we\\_have\\_a\\_secure\\_border\\_in\\_that\\_that\\_is\\_a\\_priority\\_for\\_any\\_nation.html](https://www.realclearpolitics.com/video/2022/09/11/kamala_harris_we_have_a_secure_border_in_that_that_is_a_priority_for_any_nation.html)

**2020:** Harris described the border wall as "un-American," "a stupid waste of money," and Trump's "medieval vanity project." She also called a wall "ridiculous" because she did not believe it effectively prevented border crossings and transnational crime. However, she said she was "all for increased border security" like drones and cameras.

## Enforce Immigration Laws.

- Prosecute illegal border crossings;
  - Stop the flow of immigrants;
  - Limit asylum;
  - Increase funding for Border Patrol Operations; and,
  - Provide an earned pathway to citizenship.
- <https://www.politico.com/news/2024/08/09/harris-promises-to-go-tough-on-border-security-00173485>

**2020:** Senator Harris suggested that entering the country without authorization should not be a criminal offense.

**2018:** Senator Harris said Congress should reconsider the nation's immigration enforcement system and possibly "start from scratch" by eliminating the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency.

[https://www.huffpost.com/entry/kamala-harris-abolish-ice\\_n\\_5b2fb918e4b0321a01d25415](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/kamala-harris-abolish-ice_n_5b2fb918e4b0321a01d25415)

and inspecting ships to look for fentanyl and fentanyl precursors.

## Enforce Immigration Laws.

- Strengthen ICE;
- Increase penalties for illegal entry and overstaying Visas;
- Reinstate "Remain in Mexico"
- Invoke the Alien Enemies Act to remove all known or suspected gang members, drug dealers or cartel members from the U.S.;
- Reinstate the Travel Ban;
- Send Illegal aliens back home and remove those who have violated our laws and,
- Use Title 42 to end child trafficking by returning all trafficked children to their families in their home countries.
- Prioritize merit-based immigration, ensuring those admitted to the U.S. contribute positively to society and the economy; and,
- End chain migration.

## Opposes Sanctuary Cities.

- Promises to cut federal funding for sanctuary jurisdictions.
- Local cooperation with Federal Immigration Enforcement will be required.

As President, he signed an executive order to limit and prohibit certain federal funding to sanctuary cities.

## Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) Act

Trump tried to end a program that grants deportation relief and work permits to "Dreamer" immigrants brought to the U.S. illegally as children, but the termination was rebuffed by the Supreme Court in June 2020.

According to *The New York Times*, Trump plans to try again to end DACA if elected as part of his overall immigration plan. <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/how-trump-would-crack-down-immigration-second-term-2023-11-14/>

*The New York Times* also reported: Trump immigration proposals include:

- Building mass detention camps;
- Overseeing mass deportations;
- Expanding ideological screenings for visa applications;
- Suspending the refugee program; and,
- Terminating temporary immigration protections; and, Invoking a 1700s-era law to deport people without due process.

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### **Supports Sanctuary Cities.**

Hideouts for illegal immigrants have surged under the Biden-Harris Administration, with the nation adding 170 new sanctuary cities and counties to the list of state, county, and local police sites that refuse to turn over criminal migrants to federal officials. Prior to the update, the list stood at 425.

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/us/170-new-sanctuary-locations-under-biden-harris-administration-a-40-surge>

### **Supports the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) Act**

<https://www.newsweek.com/donald-trump-kamala-harris-attack-ad-2024-election-immigration-fact-check-1946299>

- Allows recipients to live and work legally in the U.S.
- Provides recipients with a work permit;
- Allows recipients to enroll in college;
- Permits recipients to obtain valid driver's licenses;
- Provides affordable healthcare; and,
- Prevents deportation.

Harris believes that Congress, through DACA, needs to define a path to citizenship for the children of parents who brought them into the U.S. illegally.

### **Biden-Harris Administration Funded Secret Flights for Over 320,000 Illegals into the U.S.**

President Biden exercised "parole" authority which under 1952 law allows the president to admit people "only on a case-by-case basis for urgent humanitarian reasons or significant public benefit."

The White House announced the Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans, and Venezuelans (CHNV) parole program in January 2023, allowing individuals from those four countries to apply for legal entry into the U.S. In January 2024, U.S. Customs and Border Protection said that 327,000 people from these four nations had been vetted and authorized for travel.

<https://www.newsweek.com/donald-trump-kamala-harris-attack-ad-2024-election-immigration-fact-check-1946299>

The Trump campaign pushed back against stories like *The New York Times*, calling them "speculative and theoretical." <https://www.politifact.com/article/2023/nov/21/how-viable-is-donald-trumps-2024-immigration-plan/>