AMERICAN IMMIGRATION LAWYERS ASSOCIATION

A Better Way on Immigration

AILA Calls on the 120th Congress to Take Action on Immigration

America is at its best when guided by our shared values: fairness, opportunity, the rule of law, and the belief that every person deserves a chance to build a better life. Over the last 250 years, these foundational principles have transformed America into a beacon for generations of immigrants who have helped our nation prosper. Immigrants power American industries, contribute to Social Security and Medicare, found businesses that employ our neighbors, and serve honorably in our armed forces.

For decades, leaders in both parties have failed to modernize our immigration laws, leaving us with a system unable to serve the country. The Trump Administration has gone even further, dismantling core American principles and jeopardizing the country's future. Immigrant families are being ripped apart on the streets and in courthouses, workplaces, and places of worship. Businesses cannot find and retain the workers they need. The Administration's excesses threaten the freedoms, rights, and, tragically, the lives of U.S. citizens and immigrants alike.

At the polls, American voters forcefully repudiated the Administration's extreme immigration policies. As the nation's immigration bar, representing 18,000 immigration attorneys, AILA calls on the new leadership in Congress to take bold action. We urge a two-pronged approach: **First, demand the Trump Administration stop its abuses and lawless actions. Second, move forward with solutions that make the immigration system work for Americans and advance the national interest. Sensible immigration policies strengthen Americans' shared goals of affordability, security, health care and family unity.** To that end, we suggest the following actions:

1. **Restore public trust through rigorous, independent oversight**. The new Congress should commence investigations and hearings and pass legislation mandating corrective action to stop unlawful, abusive enforcement actions and ensure due process and fair decision-making.

2. **Strengthen American communities with solutions for longtime residents**, creating earned pathways for families of U.S. citizens, Dreamers, essential workers, and others who have already built their lives here and who are increasingly targeted for enforcement.

3. **Calibrate the immigration system to the dynamic needs of a modern economy, workforce, and families**, ensuring our laws reflect the country we are today and the prosperity we aim to build.

4. **Establish a streamlined, well-resourced asylum system to ensure protection and order** at the border, restoring lawful, orderly processes while honoring America's humanitarian commitment.

5. **Restore the rule of law, ensure an orderly border, and foster compliance through a system of proportional enforcement**. Just like the punishment for shoplifting should not be the death penalty, immigration enforcement should not automatically result in detention and deportation. Effective enforcement requires focusing resources on genuine threats to public safety, not rounding up random people. An orderly, lawful system can be achieved without resorting to extremes and unlawful practices.

Drawn from AILA's proposal, A Better Way on Immigration, these principles offer a way to meet the challenges of this moment. A system built on these foundations will be faster, fairer, and more secure, and will once again reflect the country Americans believe in.