

Immigration Laws, Bills, and Related Actions from 1789 to 2018 (Comprehensive Sample of Major Changes)¹

Part I (Late XVIII Century to 2013)

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Late XVIII Century

- 1789 The U.S. Constitution becomes effective. The Constitution establishes that the President must be a citizen of the United States by birth (or a citizen at the time of the adoption of the Constitution) and resident of the United States for at least 14 years. It grants Congress the power to establish a uniform rule of naturalization.
- 1790*² **Alien Naturalization Act of 1790:** It confers the right to become naturalized to "free white persons" who reside in the United States for two years and one year in the state where the petition is made, have "good moral character" and renounce their allegiance to their former country. The law does not include indentured servants, slaves or women. The *jus sanguinis* principle for the acquisition of citizenship was legally framed by extending citizenship to any individual under the age of 21, regardless of their birthplace, based on the parent's citizenship. Foreigners deemed to be dangerous were allowed to be deported.
- 1791 The Bill of Rights introduces the first ten constitutional amendments.

- 1795 **Naturalization Act of 1795:** Expands the residence requirement from two to five years and establishes the “first papers” (the declaration of intention to become a citizen) as a requirement.
- 1798 **The Aliens Sedition Acts of 1798:** Extends the residence requirement for naturalization to fourteen years. The principle of deportation is ruled by investing the President with the power to detain or deport individuals deemed “dangerous to the peace and safety” of the nation. Four laws were associated with the Act: Naturalization Act, Alien Act, Alien Enemies Act and, the Sedition Act. The arrest and deportation of “subjects of foreign powers at war with the U.S.” was ruled as well as the criminalization of printing or distributing “false, malicious, or scandalous statements” against the U.S. government, the President, or Congress, the fostering of opposition to Congress laws, or to assist a foreign power in plotting against the interests of the U.S. These laws would be modified and repealed in successive years and similar ones would be enacted in successive centuries in relation to geopolitical conflicts.

XIX Century

- 1802 **The Naturalization Act of 1802:** Reduces the residency requirement for citizenship from fourteen back to five years. The Act required immigrants to receive the “first papers” as proof that upon arrival they had declared their intention to become citizens. It clarifies the validity of all district courts for naturalization purposes.
- 1808 Slave importation into the United States was officially banned but it continued illegally.
- 1819 **Act of March 2, 1819.** Establishes that passenger lists for all vessels arriving from foreign territories be gathered by local collectors and copies transferred to the Department of State. Congress must receive information on “the number of aliens” entering annually.
- 1820 A continues recording of immigration to the U.S. starts for the case of Atlantic and Gulf Coast seaport entry points. Records on the Pacific Coast would start in 1850 and records of land border crossing started later (see 1904).
- 1823 American Chamber of Commerce at Liverpool was created in Europe in an effort to induce and increase labor recruitment migration to the U.S.
- 1830s Strong anti-immigrant movements gained a momentum.
- 1839-42 First Opium War creates some foundations for Chinese emigration to Western societies. They will be consolidated in relation to the Second Opium War (see 1856-1860).
- 1840s Peak in immigration from Europe. A combination of increasing demand for workers in the U.S. and events in Europe such as the Irish Potato Famine (1845- 1851), crop failures in Germany, and political unrest propelles immigration.

- 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ends the Mexican-American War. The U.S. is granted approximately 1.9 thousand square miles of Mexican territory (California, Nevada, Arizona, and Utah, as well as parts of New Mexico, Colorado, and Wyoming). Texas had already been annexed. The Treaty establishes a legal regime to deal with Mexican-Americans now residing outside their country of origin due to the geopolitical redrawing of the U.S.-Mexican border. It promised Mexicans living in the conquered territories full citizenship rights as U.S. citizens.
- Gold sources are discovered in California leading to “Gold Rush” migration waves. Chinese immigrants and waves of internal migrants led to a demographic peak. By 1849, the population that had no Mexican ancestry in California was several times higher than the Mexican American population.
- 1850 First United States Census survey regarding the “nativity” of citizens. California is admitted to the Union.
- 1854 The Know-Nothings nativist political party wins significant victories in Congress seeking to increase restrictions on immigration. Protestant dissatisfaction with growing immigration from Ireland (Catholic) was a main issue for this political force.
- 1855* **Act of February of 1855:** “All children heretofore born or hereafter born out of the limits and jurisdiction of the United States, whose fathers were or may be at the time of their birth citizens thereof, are declared to be citizens of the United States, but the rights of citizenship shall not descend to children whose fathers never resided in the United States.”³
- Citizenship of Women by Marriage Act of 1855:** "Any woman who is now or may hereafter be married to a citizen of the United States, and who might herself be lawfully naturalized, shall be deemed a citizen."⁴
- Castle Garden is established as New York’s principal point of entry for immigrants.
- 1856-1860 Second Opium War. The Treaties resulting from the Opium Wars further triggered the expansion of the Chinese diaspora in relation to the deepening of capitalism in Asia and the integration of Chinese migrants into global migration flows.
- 1857 Dred Scott v. Sandford (the Dred Scott Decision). A Supreme Court case that established that people of African descent (slave and free) were not U.S. citizens and were not protected by the Constitution. This highly controversial precedent would be overruled by the Fourteenth Amendment (see 1868).
- 1861-65 The American Civil War.
- 1862 **Homestead Act of 1862:** Redistributes public land among U.S. citizens and attracts thousands of immigrant families willing to settle and develop agricultural projects in the vast empty areas of the West and Midwest. It is revoked in 1976 (in 1986 in Alaska).
- Alien Anti-Coolie Act of 1862:** Imposes “Coolie trade” restrictions; taxes on employers hiring Chinese workers in order to discourage Chinese immigration to California.

- 1864 **Contract Labor Law of 1864:** Created incentives for the recruiting of foreign labor like allowing employers to pay the passage of migrant workers. Chinese and Irish laborers were hired to construct the first transcontinental railroad.
- 1865 **Enrollment Act of 1865.** It provides grounds for loss of citizenship in relation to the military (draft evasion and desertion).
- 1866* **The Civil Rights Act of 1866:** Establishes that “All persons born in the United States and not subject to any foreign power, excluding Indians [indigenous populations of the United States] not taxed, are declared to be citizens of the United States.”
- 1868* **The Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution** includes The Citizenship Clause: “All persons born in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside...” The definition of “citizen” is expanded to include any person born in the United States but only if "subject to the jurisdiction thereof"; a clause that still excluded certain indigenous peoples (see 1924).
- Expatriation Act of 1868:** Establishes the right of the individual to expatriation or the right to renounce to a given citizenship as a basic natural right.
- The Burlingame-Seward Treaty between the U.S. and China: Grants China recognizes freedom of conscience and religion as well as exemption from persecution among other rights for their respective nationals residing in the other country. The Chinese Exclusion Act (see 1882) rendered the treaty ineffective.
- 1870 **The Fifteenth Amendment** is modified by granting voting rights to citizens regardless of race or color.
- 1875 *Henderson v. Mayor of New York* Supreme Court decision sets an important precedent for the handling of immigration as a federal matter.
- Page Law:** Establishes sanctions for any person involved in bringing individuals from China, Japan or any other part of Asia “without their free and voluntary consent, for the purpose of holding them to a term of service” and establishes mechanisms to deter the immigration of any woman who could be perceived to be prostitute by U.S. officials at a port of exit in China or a port of entry in the U.S.
- 1878* **The National Quarantine Act of 1878:** Transfers quarantine functions from the states to the federal Marine Hospital Service.
- 1880-92* Re-organization of the quarantine system.
- 1882 **Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882:** Imposes a 10-year admission ban upon Chinese laborers both “skilled” and “unskilled” and made explicit reference to a ban on Chinese workers in the mining industry. It rules additional aspects of exclusion and administrative requirements for Chinese returning to the U.S., and imposes restrictions

concerning citizenship.

Immigration Act of 1882: Imposes a fee of 50 cents per immigrant and enhances the definition of individuals subject to exclusion.

1885 **Contract Labor Law:** Makes it unlawful to import foreigners from overseas as laborers. Cross-border labor migration is not included in the law.

Alien Contract Labor Law exception: Regulates the introduction of skilled workers needed to establish new trades/industries or perform domestic service.

1886 Statue of Liberty is built in the harbor of New York.

1891* Congress establishes the Office of the Superintendent of Immigration within the Treasury Department. It defines “ineligible immigrants” as persons suffering from a dangerous, contagious disease, persons convicted of major misdemeanors, and polygamists. Further enforcement of immigration rules and enactment of new ones, including the exclusion of individuals who had been monetarily assisted by others for their passage. Steamship companies were ordered to return ineligible immigrants to countries of origin.

The Federal Government assumed control of immigration on April 18, 1890 and Congress appropriated \$75,000 to construct America's first Federal Immigration Station on Ellis Island

The Marine Hospital Service is responsible for the medical examination of potential immigrants.

1892* **Geary Act of 1892:** Extends **the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882** for ten more years and adds a permit requirement for all Chinese. They are excluded from serving as witnesses in court and from bail rights.

Ellis Island opened in New York City as process center. It would close on 1954. Ellis Island officials indicated that women traveling by themselves had to be met by a man or they would be denied entry.

Public Health Services establishes two major medical officers to examine immigrants for diseases and disabilities. Two major categories are created for guidance through screening: Class A (“loathsome or dangerous contagious diseases” and “mental conditions”) and Class B (cases that would imply public charge).

Chalk marks were placed on the clothing of immigrants with different letters that indicated the need for light inspection only to possible eye condition, senility, or insanity. Exclusion of individuals diagnosed with infectious diseases (e.g. tuberculosis, venereal disease, trachoma and favus) was mandatory.

1894 **The Immigration Restriction League (IRL)** is founded. Its founders advocated a literacy requirement upon arrival as a means to filter the “quality” of immigrants arriving, limit their numbers, and facilitate assimilation. They made a sharp distinction between “the old immigrants” (from England, Belgium, Germany) and “the new

immigrants” (Italy, Eastern Europe, growing numbers of Jewish immigrants) as from new European areas grew in the 1880s and 1890s. They also opposed immigration from Asia. They openly used racist and classist epithets when referring to those they considered unwanted immigrants.

1895 The Office of Superintendent of Immigration is upgraded to Bureau of Immigration.

1898 *United States v. Wong Kim Ark* Supreme Court decision. It establishes an important precedent in its interpretation of “The Citizenship Clause” of the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution (see 1868). The Court decided in favor of Wong Kim Ark (born in San Francisco to Chinese parents in the early 1870s) declaring unconstitutional the government act of denying him entry after a trip abroad on the basis of the citizenship of his parents.

XX Century

1900-30 Approximately 28 million immigrants arrived between 1880 and 1930 with over 18 million immigrants entering between 1901 and 1930. Immigration from North and West Europe continued to decrease (“old immigrants”). Immigration from South and East Europe continued to increase (“new immigrants”). Immigration from Mexico and other areas grows at a fast pace although Europe remains, by far, the main immigration source.⁵

1901 **Anarchist Exclusion Act of 1901:** Prohibits entry of people judged to be anarchists/political extremists into the U.S. due to President William McKinley being shot by a Polish anarchist. Allowed exclusion of immigrants on the basis of political opinion.

1902 **Chinese Exclusion Act** is renewed indefinitely.

1903* **The Alien Immigration Act of 1903** imposes a tax of two dollars “for each and every passenger not a citizen of the United States.” Nationals from “Canada, the Republic of Cuba, or of the Republic of Mexico” are exempt. The Act also establishes that “skilled labor may be imported, if labor of like kind unemployed cannot be found in this country: And provided further: “That the provisions of this law applicable to contract labor shall not be held to exclude professional actors, artists, lecturers, singers, ministers of any religious denomination. professors for colleges or seminaries, persons belonging to any recognized learned profession, or persons employed. strictly as personal or domestic servants.”

It establishes as unlawful (for persons and companies) to prepay for the transportation “or in any way to assist or encourage the importation or migration of any alien into the United States, in pursuance of any offer, solicitation, promise, or agreement, parole or special, expressed or implied, made previous to the importation of such alien to perform labor or service of any kind, skilled or unskilled, in the United States”

Some “classes of aliens” as deemed excludable from admission into the United States: “anarchists, or persons who believe in or advocate the overthrow by force or violence of the Government of the United States or of all government or of all forms of law, or the

assassination of public officials.” The list of “excludable aliens” also includes “idiots, insane persons, epileptics, and persons who have been insane within five years previous; persons who have had two or more attacks of insanity at any time previously; paupers; persons likely to become a public charge; professional beggars; persons afflicted with a loathsome or with a dangerous contagious disease- persons who have been convicted of a felony or other crime or misdemeanor involving moral turpitude; polygamists.” Prostitutes “and persons who procure or attempt to bring in prostitutes or women for the purpose of prostitution” are excluded as well.⁶

The Bureau of Immigration transferred to the newly created Department of Commerce and Labor.

- 1904 The reporting of arrivals over land borders starts.
- 1905 Construction of Angel Island Immigration Station begins in the area of China Cove at the San Francisco Bay. It started operations in 1910 and closed in 1940.
- 1906 **Naturalization Act of 1906:** The Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization is established. Proficiency in English becomes a requisite for citizenship. Accommodations for the “the Psychopathic Ward” at Ellis Island Immigration Station hospital complex started and would be completed in 1907.
- 1907* Peak in immigration; 1.3 million immigrants arrived.
- Expatriation Act of 1907:** Rules issues concerning the issuance of passports for non-citizens and the grounds for loss of U.S. citizenship (such as taking an oath of allegiance to a foreign state or violation of time limitations for residing in a foreign state).
- Part of the law establishes that “any American woman who marries a foreigner shall take the nationality of her husband. At the termination of the marital relation she may resume her American citizenship...” It also establishes” “Any foreign woman who requires American citizenship shall be assumed to retain the same after termination of the marital relation.”⁷
- Individuals inspected at an entry point and considered to have a mental disorder (formally classified then using terms such as “idiots,” “imbeciles,” and “insane” among others) were subject to mandatory removal.
- Following an increase of public pressure on immigration issues, the Dillingham Commission is established by Congress to investigate the effects of immigration.
- Personal tax on immigrants was raised with exclusion of people with “physical or mental defects”, tuberculosis, and children unaccompanied by a parent.
- 1907-08* The Gentlemen's Agreement is signed between Japan and the United States. It encompassed six diplomatic notes issued at the highest government level. Japan agreed to deter emigration to the United States (some exceptions were established). The U.S. government agreed to take action against school segregation of Japanese immigrants in California and other actions to address the issue of widespread discriminatory and

unjust practices against Japanese- origin individuals.

- 1907-11 The Dillingham Report claims to have scientifically proven that the immigrants from southern and eastern Europe were inferior and harder to assimilate compared to previous waves of immigrants from northern and western parts of Europe. It ultimately validated the restrictions and quota system approach that would prevail in the immigration acts of the 1920s.
- 1913 The Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization is divided into separate Bureaus (the Bureau of Immigration and the Bureau of Naturalization) and placed under the newly created Department of Labor.
- California Alien Land Law:** Prohibits individuals and groups ineligible for citizenship (predominantly Chinese and Japanese) from owning property. It functioned as a model for similar anti-Asian laws in other states.
- The Commission of Immigration and Housing (CIH) is established. It deploys a vast assimilation plan that explicitly claimed to have a scientific/rational foundation.
- 1914-18 World War I lead to a dramatic reduction in immigration.
- 1917 **Immigration Act of 1917:** Prohibits immigration from Asia (except for Japan and the Philippines): Establishes proof of literacy requirement for immigrants 16 years and over. Increased the personal immigration tax upon arrival and immigration officials were granted greater power to exercise discretion in making decisions over admission and exclusion.
- Jones-Shafroth Act of 1917 (Jones Act):** U.S. citizenship by birth is granted to Puerto Ricans. Thousands of Puerto Rican males were drafted through the mandatory military draft that was established with the enactment of the **Selective Service Act** (enacted shortly after the passage of the Jones Act). The Jones Act also modified Puerto Rican government structures which since then would replicate some of the features of the U.S. constitutional government.
- 1920* **The Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution** grants female citizens the right to vote.
- 1921* **Emergency Quota Act of 1921:** Limited immigrants to 3% of each nationality present in the US as of 1910 cutting Southern and Eastern European immigrants to less than 1/4 of those in U.S. before WWI. Asians were still barred. No limits were imposed on western hemisphere. Non-quota category established. “Wives, children of citizens, “learned professionals” and “domestic servants” were not accounted for in quotas.
- 1922* **Married Women’s Independent Nationality Act of 1922 (Cable Act):** The woman who married a foreign-born man who was eligible for naturalization could retain U.S. citizenship provided that she did not reside for over two years abroad (before, a woman lost American citizenship when she married a man who was not a citizen and had to adopt the man’s citizenship). Since Asians were not eligible for naturalization at that time, an American woman marrying a national of any country of Asia would lose her citizenship.

- 1923 *United States v. Bhaghat Singh Thind* Supreme Court case established that Indians from the Asian subcontinent could not become U.S. citizens for not being “white.”
- 1924* **The Immigration Act of 1924 (Johnson–Reed Act)**, including the **National Origins Act**, and **Oriental Exclusion Act** further defines the quota system by imposing a numeric restriction of 2% of the total number of people of each nationality residing in the U.S. as per the data from the 1890 census. By basing the calculation on the total population, and not just the immigrant population as in 1921, people from Western and Northern European countries whose immigrant groups had been settling in the U.S. for many years before the 1890 census enjoyed greater representation in the new admission policy at the expense of Southern and Eastern Europeans. While large-scale immigration of Russian Jews took place in the first decade of the century, the quota system would affect the admission of Jewish groups escaping life threatening situations, turmoil and persecution during the 1930s and the 1940s. The Western Hemisphere was exempt from the quota system.
- U.S. Border Patrol is created within the Bureau of Immigration.
- The new law starts the visa authorization system for immigrants and nonimmigrants through consular offices and standardizes the system of required immigration documentation for “aliens” entering the U.S.
- It creates the precedents of what is known today as the nonimmigrant categories “treaty traders” and “treaty investors.” It included a provision that facilitated the entry of “aliens” for the purpose of carrying on trade between the U.S. and the state of origin related to a treaty of commerce and navigation.
- Medical inspection was transferred abroad and inspection through private medical exams became a prerequisite for visa approval. A greater proportion of immigrants (approximately 5%) were denied entry on the basis of disease between 1926 and 1930 compared to the previous period that had started in 1891.
- Oriental Exclusion Act of 1924:** Large numbers of potential immigrants from Asia were excluded including foreign-born wives and children of American citizens with Chinese ancestry.
- The [American] Indian Citizenship Act of 1924 (Snyder Act):** Establishes that all U.S. indigenous people should enjoy citizenship rights. Many indigenous peoples benefitted, however, many members of indigenous tribes were not granted citizenship rights due to provisions contained in the law. Voting rights were still denied in some states. This situation would not be corrected until the 1940s.
- 1929 **National Origins Formula:** The Act of 1924 is fully enforced. Annual quotas of the 1924 Act were made permanent and national annual immigration was capped at 150,000. It bans Asian immigration.
- The Japanese American Citizens League (the first Asian American civil rights organization in the United States) is formed.
- 1930-40 Immigration drops as a direct result of the Great Depression. From 1930 to 1939 “total immigration fell below 1 million for the first time since the 1830s.”⁸

- 1931* Amendment to **The Cable Act**. Any American woman is allowed to retain her citizenship even after marrying a foreign-born man who is ineligible for U.S. citizenship.
- 1933 The Bureau of Immigration and the Bureau of Naturalization are combined into a single agency: The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) which remains under the Department of Labor. It would be transferred to the Department of Justice in 1940 and completely restructured later on under Homeland Security (see 2002).
- 1934 **Tydings-McDuffe Act of 1934**: Grants independence to the Philippines from the U.S. (effective in 1946). During the transition period Filipinos would cease to be American citizens and immigration from the Philippines is restricted.
- 1940 **The Nationality act of 1940**: Establishes a more formalized and comprehensive “nationality code.” It defines eligibility for citizenship through either birth or naturalization. It establishes the criteria for termination of citizenship rights, and addresses citizenship issues of individuals born in the continental U.S. and in overseas territories such as Hawaii, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands and the Philippines, among others.
- Alien Registration Act of 1940**: Required fingerprinting and registration of “all aliens above age 14.”
- 1942 The Bracero Program, a temporary worker program, was signed between the United States government and the Mexican government to address the shortage of labor in certain sectors of the U.S. economy. The program was subsequently extended until 1964. Over 4 million guest workers from Mexico came to work in the U.S. as part of hit bilateral agreement. It is usually referred to as a tuning point in U.S.-bound Mexican migration.
- Japan attacked Pearl Harbor in December 1941 and the U.S. Congress immediately approved launching attacks against that state. These developments had a dramatic impact on the Japanese-origin population. Executive Order 9066 (February 19, 1942) authorized the U.S. military to evacuate 112,000 Japanese Americans (U.S. citizens of Japanese ancestry and non-citizen Japanese residents) from the Pacific Coast and their internment in 10 concentration camps located in different areas of the country.
- 1943 The Chinese exclusion laws were repealed and China’s quota was set at a cap of 105 immigrants annually.
- 1944 *Korematsu v. United States* Supreme Court decision ruled as constitutional the curtailing of civil rights in detriment of a specific ethnic group on the basis of “Pressing public necessity” (not racial biases). Fred Korematsu, an American- born citizen of Japanese descent had refused to leave his home in California when authorities were ordered to take him to confinement camps in compliance with an executive order (see 1942). His act led to imprisonment which he challenged in Court. Eventually the U.S. government recognized wrongdoing and granted a restitution payment for Japanese-origin survivors (see 1988).

- 1945* **War Brides Act of 1945:** Foreign-born wives of U.S. citizens serving in the armed forces during World War II may enter U.S. causing significant increase of immigration from Latin America, the Caribbean, and Asia. President Harry S. Truman instructed admission of 40,000 people in need of protection against national origins quotas if necessary.⁹
- 1946* **Luce-Celler Act of 1946:** Prohibits discrimination against South Asians but still restricted their immigration. Procedures were adopted to facilitate immigration of foreign- born wives, fiancés, husbands and children of U.S. armed forces personnel.
- 1948 **Displaced Persons Act of 1948:** Gives priority to Baltic State escapees and displaced people who would be admitted as quota immigrants. Displaced individuals from Europe were granted admission regardless of immigration quotas. Yet the law included technical provisions (such as cut-off dates) that discriminated against Jews (those provisions were dropped in 1953).¹⁰
- 1950 **Internal Security Act of 1950:** Alien Registration Receipt Card was replaced by Form I-151 (the Green Card) for immigrants with legal residency excluding communists, and persons endangering the welfare or safety of the U.S.
Greater flexibility for the admission of people in need of protection from Europe was introduced in immigration law: “By 1952, 137,450 Jewish refugees (including close to 100,000 DPs [displaced persons]) had settled in the United States.”¹¹
- 1952* **Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) of 1952 (McCarran-Walter Act):** INA introduced for the first time the whole structure of immigration law under a single legal umbrella. From 1952 onward, the Immigration and Naturalization Act (INA) would be amended many times but INA-1952 is still considered to be “the basic body of immigration law.”
It retained the quota system based on regions and national origins.
It established a preference system including a labor certification system to further manage the labor market and gave preference to immigrants with special skills. Relatives of U.S. citizens were exempt from quotas.
It established the admission cap for general immigration at 270,000 per year.
A system of refugee admission is established.
Race-related and some sex-related considerations were eliminated as bar to immigration or citizenship. Quotas to Asian nations were set at a minimum of 100 visas each year.
It eliminated laws preventing Asians from becoming naturalized American citizens.
Northern and Western Europe’s quota was placed at 85 percent of all immigrants.
Tighter restrictions were placed on immigrants coming from British colonies who until then enjoyed some immigration benefits under Britain’s immigration law.
Discriminatory provisions of previous legislation against Catholics and Jews were dropped.
Exclusion due to participation in subversive activities is further ruled. President Eisenhower established the “parole” precedent for the admission of Hungarian nationals in need of protection.¹²
- 1953 **Refugee Relief Act of 1953:** For the first time, the term “refugee” appeared in The title of U.S. immigration law. The 1948 refugee law expanded to admit

200,000 above the existing limit. Palestinians from the Middle East and an estimated 5,000 Asians benefitted from this law.

1954 Operation Wetback is established as a border enforcement initiative. A large number of operatives are deployed along border areas and to a lesser extent large cities, such as Los Angeles and San Francisco resulting in over 1 million apprehensions.

1958 **Hungarian Escapee Act of 1958** opens the doors of admission and resettlement for refugees from Hungary.

1962* **The Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1966:** Rules the appropriation and distribution of federal funds for humanitarian emergencies related to refugees. It created the administrative basis for the establishment of the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration under the U.S. Department of State. Several U.S. presidents have used the provisions of this act to advance relief initiatives during refugee crises.

Migrant Health Care Act of 1962 provides support for clinics serving agricultural workers.

1964 The Bracero Program ended.

1965* **Immigration and Nationality Act (Hart-Celler Act) of 1965:** It represents another turning point in U.S. immigration history. It abolishes the national origins quota system and gives priority to family reunification and admission of immigrants and nonimmigrants based on work-related skills and it further consolidates protection to refugees as one of the humanitarian pillars of the U.S. immigration system.

Admission preference is based on family ties and potential contributions as manual workers or in science, technology and the arts, and for refugees. Admission distributed as follows: 20% for occupational categories, 76% for close relatives of U.S. citizens and permanent residents, and 6% for refugees. Spouses, unmarried children and parents of U.S. citizens were able to enter as non-quota immigrants without any numerical limit.

The law distinguishes between the Eastern and Western Hemispheres for specifications concerning admission. An overall cap of 170,000 admissions and a 20,000 per-country limit is placed on admissions for the Eastern Hemisphere. No specific cap is placed for countries of the Western Hemisphere but an overall numeric ceiling of 120,000 admissions is placed.

H-2 visas are established for the temporary entry of agricultural workers. Other work-related visas are established as well.

Older Americans Act (OAA) of 1965: Establishes what the corresponding government entity describes as “the major vehicle for the organization and delivery of social and nutrition services to this group and their caregivers.” The Medicaid and Medicare programs are created. Immigrant eligibility would become a central aspect of future debates and legislation (see 1996).

The Voting Rights Act of 1965 makes it unlawful any practice that denies the right of any citizen to vote on account of race or color.

Head Start Program was created to assist children living in poverty. The program has been improved and reauthorized since then. Reports show that more than 20 million children and their families have benefitted from it.

1966* **Cuban Refugees Adjustment Act of 1966** “provides for a special procedure under which Cuban natives or citizens and their accompanying spouses and children may get a green card (permanent residence).” It “gives the Attorney General the discretion to grant permanent residence to Cuban natives or citizens applying for a green card if they had been present in the U.S. for at least one year, if they had been admitted or paroled and if they were admissible as immigrants.”¹³

Community Health Center and Migrants Health Center Programs were created.

1968 **Immigration Act of 1968:** Based on new U.S. civil rights laws, discrimination based on race, gender and place of birth/residence was abolished in immigration laws, including those discriminating against East Asians.

1975 **Indochina Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1975:** Establishes the basis for the admission of approximately 130,000 refugees from South Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia.

1976 **Immigration Act of 1976:** The preference admission system and country quota restrictions are extended to the Western Hemisphere Admission as permanent residents is placed a cap of 20,000 per year for a single country.

1978 The separate ceilings on immigration for the Western and the Eastern hemisphere were merged into a single world-wide limit of 290,000. It would be reduced to 270,000 in 1980.

1980 **Refugee Act of 1980:** Expands compliance with United Nations standards such as with the principle of not returning refugees to territories where their physical integrity or liberties would be jeopardized. It creates the Federal Refugee Resettlement Program which provides effective resettlement of refugees and assistance for achieving economic self-sufficiency in relatively shorter periods of time and included issues like federal support for states and local agencies for these programs. Removes “refugees” as a preference category and sets an annual refugee ceiling at 50,000 (to be changed annually in consultation with Congress). Asylum would be granted to politically oppressed people under a wider set of provisions. No ceiling is placed for the admission of asylees.

Maribel Crisis: Mass immigration of Cubans departing from Cuba’s Maribel Harbor resulting in 124,000 Cubans arriving in the U.S. between April 15 and October 31, 1980. Cubans arriving under those circumstances together with “boat Haitians” arriving at the time were eventually admitted as “conditional entrants”—this led to a special category used for the first time in U.S. immigration history: “Cuban and Haitian entrants.”

Refugee Education Assistance Act of 1980: The act focuses on the exercise of presidential authority with respect to “Cuban and Haitian entrants” based on chapter 2 of title IV of the Immigration and Nationality Act. The Cuban-Haitian Entrant Program (CHEP) was designed to provide some benefits for individuals under this special type of designation.

1981 U.S. President Ronald Reagan issued Presidential Proclamation 4865, which included the order to suspend the entry of “undocumented illegal aliens” arriving from sea.¹⁴

1982* **Amerasian Act.** Grants admission to certain Amerasian individuals who were born in Cambodia, Korea, Laos, Thailand, or Vietnam between January 1, 1951 and October 21st, 1982, and were “fathered by a U.S. citizen.”

1986* **Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) of 1986:** Grants amnesty to undocumented immigrants. Approximately three million undocumented immigrants, primarily but not exclusively from Mexico benefitted from it. Imposes sanctions on employers for hiring undocumented (illegal) workers and reinforces Border Patrol. “IRCA requires the Attorney General to beginning deportation proceedings “as expeditiously as possible” of any alien convicted of violations of the laws that lead to deportation.”

Guest worker programs were expanded beyond agricultural workers.

IRCA establishes that Cuban and Haitian “entrants” could adjust their status to permanent resident if: 1) in the case of Cubans they had entered illegally or were paroled into the U.S. between April 15, 1980, and October 10, 1980, and 2) in the case of Haitians they had entered illegally or were paroled into the country before January 1, 1981. In addition, they had to proof that they had been continuously residing in the U.S. since before January 1, 1982, and “were known to Immigration” before that date.

Emergency Medical Treatment & Labor Act of 1986 (EMTALA): Secured public access to emergency services regardless of ability to pay.

1987* Immigrant visas are issued to individuals born in Vietnam after January 1, 1962, and before January 1, 1976, who were “fathered by a U.S. citizen.” Some relatives (spouses, children, and parents) or guardians may accompany the individual.

1988 **Redress Act of 1988:** Establishes a restitution payment to each of the 60,000 surviving Japanese-Americans who were relocated or detained after the bombing of Pearl Harbor (120,000 had been sent to concentration facilities) and for members of the Aleut community who were evacuated from the Aleutian and Pribilof islands.

Omnibus Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988: Typifies “aggravated felony” as a law violation resulting in deportation.

The Alien Criminal Apprehension Program (ACAP) and the Institutional Removal Program (IRP) were created this year.

1989 A bill gave permanent status to non-immigrant registered nurses who had lived in the U.S. for at least three years and met established certification standards.

1990 **Immigration and Nationality Act of 1990** (modification and expansion of the act of 1965): Increases the limits on legal immigration to the U.S. Creates the EB- 5 visa as incentive for investment and job creation by foreign investors to help U.S. businesses attract skilled foreign workers capable of making financial, professional or educational contributions to the U.S. economy.

Temporary Protected Status (TPS). A blanket relief that is invoked by the Attorney General when a country faces a crisis of exceptional quality and specific criteria are met. Deferred Enforced Departure (DED) is also instituted as a temporary, discretionary relieve from deportation granted to deportable individuals from designated countries. Unlike TPS, DED is based on presidential authority and not built upon statutory basis. An antecedent of DED was the Extended Voluntary Departure (ED) (1960 to 1990).

1992 Executive Order No. 12807 is signed by U.S. President George Bush. It provides instructions concerning the interdiction and removal of individuals trying to reach U.S. soil from high sea. The “feet wet/feet dry” rule is derived from it. The Coast Guard establishes that if the persons “touch U.S. soil, bridges, piers or rocks, they are subject to U.S. Immigration processes for removal” but if “they are feet wet, they are eligible for return by the Coast Guard.”

1993-2010 A series of enforcement operations are launched throughout the Mexican border to curb undocumented migration and for the overall control of border areas. They have resulted in a dramatic increase of the militarization of such areas. They include Operation Blockade (El Paso), Operation Gatekeeper (San Diego), Operation Rio Grande (Texas and New Mexico), Arizona Border Control Initiative, Secure Border Initiative, and Operation Cooper Cactus, among others.

1994 Proposition 187, is an initiative launched by California voters. It prohibited public education and access to welfare services by undocumented immigrants. It would be challenged as unconstitutional by the courts and eventually became ineffective through administrative procedures. It propelled similar ballot initiatives, bills and legislation in other states.

North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) between the United States, Canada, and Mexico enters into force. The agreement includes clauses relating to managing labor migration and would have several implications for migration.

1995 “The Contract with America” was signed by over 300 Republican Congressional candidates. It included government accountability, personal responsibility, and new opportunities for the restoration of the American Dream as major pillars. Following this political initiative, which was led by Speaker of the House and prominent party ideologue Newt Gingrich, Republicans won the House of Representatives in an unprecedented historical victory. Even though the administration was headed Bill Clinton, a president from the democratic party, his main legislative legacy (immigration and welfare reform) were significantly framed by ideas from the Contract with Americans (see 1996).

1996* **Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 (IIRIRA):**
Another turning point in immigration law history.

It facilitates deportation. Long- term permanent residents who commit “an aggravated felony” are subject to mandatory detention and deportation. IIRIRA transfers to the hands of immigration enforcement officers duties, entitlements and an overall power structure which used to be retained by immigration attorneys in the Courts system.

The 287(g) provision empowers state and local police to assist in the deportation of individuals convicted of certain crimes. Together with programs such as Secure communities (see 2007), it unleashed racial profiling and removal even in the absence

of criminal charges. It has worked in tandem with The Criminal Alien Program (CAP) as a mechanism to , The Criminal Alien Program (CAP) is an expansive immigration enforcement program that leads to the initiation of removal proceedings in many cases

Asylum applicants were left with less relief ladders with the exception of the Convention Against Torture if they can proof that relief applies to their country of origin). The law also tightens border control, raises the bar for asylum, and makes immigration through family reunification more difficult both indirectly because of collateral measures and directly by further enforcing “the affidavit of support” including greater liability for sponsors of legal immigrants.¹⁵

Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996. Sanctions expedite deportation and combined with IIRIRA, it creates conditions for an increase in the number of immigrants and non-immigrants categorized as “aggravated felons” and subject to removal.

Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) of 1996: Denies undocumented immigrants public safety nets that were accessible to them before within the PRUCOL framework and excludes new legal permanent residents from government-funded means-tested assistance programs, among others, based on a set of criteria established around the category “qualified alien.”

Following intense lobbying efforts against the most restrictive and unjust aspects of the law, subsequent modifications eased some of the restrictions but others remain effective.

1997*

Congress restored health and welfare benefits to some elderly and indigent immigrants previously (before PRWORA was enacted) legally receiving them.

The State Children’s Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) was created enabling states to extend health coverage to more uninsured children.

Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Refugee Act of 1997 (NACARA): Beneficiaries include Nicaraguan and other Central Americans, Eastern Europeans and some Cubans.

1998

The Haitian Refugee Immigration Fairness Act (HRIFA): Grants a path toward permanent residence to a limited number of Haitians who have been residing in the U.S. and meet certain eligibility criteria.

Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 and the Non-citizen Benefit Clarification and Other Technical Amendments Act of 1998: Restores some public benefits for some immigrants.

American Competitiveness and Workforce Improvement Act of 1998: Rules numbers and conditions relating to admission of temporary foreign workers U.S. employers were allowed to bring into the country.

XXI Century

2000*

American Competitiveness in the Twenty-First Century Act (AC-21). It focuses on issues pertaining to the H-1B program and the employment-based immigration program. Among the various changes stands the one that allows beneficiaries of employment-based visas to change jobs and employers if their applications for adjustment of status have not been resolved in 180 days. They may not change the occupational classification of the job that was used for the petition or should stay in a similar one. It regulates other issues pertaining “portability,” extensions and related ones.

The Institute of Medicine (IOM) called for an overhaul of TB screening procedures for prospective immigrants in order to enable more accurate detection of LTBI (latent tuberculosis infection). Individuals with LTBI had to complete treatment before receiving the permanent residency card.

Legal Immigration Family Equity (LIFE) Act of 2000 and LIFE Act Amendments of 2000 enables certain individuals present in the U.S. who would not normally qualify to apply for adjustment of status in the U.S. to obtain a green card (permanent residence). Section 245(i): “allows certain persons who have an immigrant visa immediately available but entered without inspection or otherwise violated their status and thus are ineligible to apply for adjustment of status in the United States. The LIFE ACT also stipulates that they need to pay a \$1,000 penalty. The LIFE Act also “[c] reates a new temporary 'V' non-immigrant status” which allows admission for the spouses and minor children of lawful permanent residents ad to work when applicable “while they are waiting for a visa number.”

Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act OF 2010: A major goal stated in the law refers to the need of to “combat trafficking in persons, especially into the sex trade, slavery, and involuntary servitude, to reauthorize certain Federal programs to prevent violence against women, and for other purposes.”

2001

Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act (The Patriot Act) of 2001: Amends the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1990 to broaden the scope of individuals ineligible for admission or deportable due to terrorist activities. It establishes provisions concerning border control, cooperation among different federal and state agencies on immigration enforcement issues, the issuing and verification of passports, among others.

Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act is first introduced in the U.S. Senate. The bill is meant to provide relieve from deportation and facilitate integration of young undocumented immigrants. It proposes conditional permanent residency for those who arrived in the U.S. as minors and met certain criteria. It did not lead to a law.

2002*

The Homeland Security Act of 2002: Dismantles the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), places the immigration and citizenship agency under the newly created Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and creates there subagencies under DHS: U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), Immigration and Customs

Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and Border Protection (CBP).

U.S. President George W. Bush issued a Military Order regarding the “Detention, Treatment and Trial of Certain Non-Citizens in the War Against Terrorism.”¹⁶ Executive Order 13276 (“Delegation of Responsibilities Concerning Undocumented Aliens Interdicted or Intercepted in the Caribbean Region”) vests the Attorney General with the power to interdict and maintain the custody of any person not authorized to enter the U.S. believed to seek to enter through the Caribbean area. The Attorney General was vested with the authority to decide about conducting interviews to determine who is in need of protection. Some aspects concerning the duties of the Attorney General, the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Defense were established as well.¹⁷

Office of Public Health Emergency Preparedness is created to coordinate efforts against bioterrorism and other public health emergencies.

National Security Entry-Exit Registration System (NSEERS) This bill is enacted in September, after the 9/11 attacks in the United States. It requires boys and men from predominantly Arab and Muslim-majority countries to report to immigration offices to be photographed, fingerprinted, and interviewed. “Failure to comply with the program often resulted in arrest and deportation. There were criminal and civil penalties associated with NSEERS, including, arrest, detention, monetary fines and/or removal from the United States.” Although the system intended to undermine terrorism, it proved ineffective. On April 27, 2011, the Department of Homeland Security announced the termination of this system.

2003 On March 1, 2003, USCIS becomes officially in charge of the immigration service functions of the federal government.

2004 **National Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004.** The Secretary of Homeland Security is required to submit plans for “the systematic surveillance of the southwest border of the U.S. by remotely piloted aircraft.” The act mandates an increase in border patrol agents at a rate of at least 2,000 per year between 2006 and 2010 and an increase of the number of beds for immigration detention and removal purposes by at least 8,000 (depending on funding). An “in- person” consular interview is required for applicants for nonimmigrant visas between the ages of 14 and 79. Revocation of a non-immigrant visa by the State Department is established as ground for removal. Criminal penalties for immigrant smuggling are increased.

“Minuteman Project.” Private initiative to recruit civilians to patrol the border with Mexico.

The United States signed the Dominican Republic-Central America-United States Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA-DR). Five Central American countries (Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua) were included in addition to the Dominican Republic. The agreement includes clauses relating to managing labor migration.

2005 **Real ID Act.** Establishes proof of legal status for applying to a government issued ID.

2006 **Secure Fence Act.** Mandates the construction of hundreds of miles of additional fencing along the southern border; an increase in checkpoints, illumination and the use of advanced technology like cameras, “unmanned aerial vehicles” and satellites as mechanisms of border control.

Operation Jump Start authorizes the deployment of troops from the National Guard along different areas of the border with Mexico for enforcement purposes and to assist in the construction of the fence.

ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) consolidates Alien Criminal Apprehension Program (ACAP) and the Institutional Removal Program (IRP), both created in 1988, into the Criminal Alien Program (CAP).

2007* **Head Start Act of 2007:** Establishes a federal program that promotes caring and support for children ages birth to 5 from low-income families. The goals are to “enhance cognitive, social and emotional development.” Language skills, cultural aspects and literacy are important aspects of the program.

Class B2 TB is created for individuals applying for permanent resident status who are suspected of having LTBI (latent tuberculosis infection). Class B2 TB individuals may be allowed to travel to the U.S. but they must be evaluated for LTBI upon arrival.

Secure Communities Program. A program that allows state and local police to check the fingerprints of an individual they are arresting against the immigration authority database. It creates a communication system that allows to notify Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) even in cases in which the person has not been convicted of a criminal act.

The Save America Comprehensive Immigration Act of 2007 bill is introduced in Congress.

2008 The annual ceiling for refugee admission is placed at 80,000.

William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2008 adds rules to prevent and deter human trafficking such as technical assistance to foreign governments to increase investigative capacity to deal with trafficked or child labor, to provide immigrant groups with information on their rights and help the governments develop legal frameworks concerning labor regulations. It regulates the handling of unaccompanied migrant children under certain circumstances and from certain countries.

Child Soldiers Prevention Act of 2008 defines a child soldier (anyone under the age of 18 who takes “direct part in hostilities as a member of governmental armed forces” who has been forcibly recruited into the governmental armed forces or a non-state army, or anyone under the age of 15 who has been “voluntarily recruited into governmental armed forces.” It includes anyone under the age of 18 who is involved in combat “in a support role, such as a cook, porter, or sex slave.” The legislation sets a legal framework for the condemnation of the use of child soldiers; establish international standards related to the

use of child soldiers, establishes that diplomatic missions should develop a plan for these effects and prevents the United States from providing military assistance to any government involved in the use of child soldiers.

Haitian Refugee Immigration Fairness Act of 2008 (HRIFA): Allows certain Haitian nationals who are physically present in the United States on December 31, 1995 to adjust their status to legal permanent resident provided that they meet certain criteria and classes of admission.

Operation Scheduled Departure: Establishes that undocumented immigrants who had ignored a deportation order ("fugitives") and did not have criminal record could voluntarily surrender to Immigration and Custom Enforcement (ICE) to be deported. 457,000 individuals were estimated to be eligible for the program but reports indicate that only a few of them volunteered to participate in it.

2009 American Dream Act (H.R. 1751): Bill introduced on to Congress on March 26, 2009.

2010* **Support our Law Enforcement and Safe Neighborhoods Act (Arizona Law (SB 1070):** This controversial law expands the state's authority to monitor, report and deter undocumented migration.

Census reports show that Spanish is the primary language spoken at home by almost 37 million individuals five years of age or older.

Haitian Orphan Parole Program (HOPP): Prompted by the earthquakes that affected Haiti, it is created to benefit children who had been adopted by U.S. citizen parents before the earthquake or whose adoption process had significantly advanced as to be able to certify the suitability of the adoptive parents.

Help Haiti Act of 2010: Authorizes immigration authorities to grant lawful permanent resident status to children from Haiti who were paroled into the United States under the Haitian Orphan Parole Program.

Homeland Security Janet Napolitano designates Haiti for Temporary Protected Status.

Effective January, 2010, the HIV test was removed from immigration screening. A diagnosis of HIV infection will not render a person traveling into the U.S. as inadmissible. HIV-positive travelers seeking entry to the U.S. no longer need a waiver of inadmissibility for entry purposes.

Quarantineable diseases currently defined by Executive Order are: Cholera, Diphtheria, Infectious tuberculosis, Plague, Smallpox, Yellow fever, Viral hemorrhagic fevers, SARS, new types of flu (influenza) that could cause a pandemic.

Some amendments are instructed in the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) in March.

Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010 (PPACA): Comprehensive health insurance reform.

Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010: Made a number of changes to provisions of PPACA .

Undocumented immigrants are banned from purchasing private health insurance through the state exchanges. They may still receive emergency care under the Emergency Medical **Treatment and Active Labor Act (EMTALA)** and Emergency Medicaid.

EMTALA requires hospitals to screen individuals (regardless of immigration status) for emergency medical conditions. A minimum requirement of stabilization or appropriately transfer is established. It does not place additional obligations on hospitals to provide care beyond screening and stabilization. Emergency Medicaid is available to all individuals (regardless of immigration status); the basic condition is to be so acutely ill that the failure to receive medical attention would place their life at risk or their health in serious jeopardy.

2007-11 Period characterized by a peak in deportations across the country which affect even groups whose countries enjoy TPS designation such as Nicaragua, Honduras and El Salvador since many individuals do not meet the criteria for protection because of considerations that range from criminal activities to cut-off dates.

2012 U.S. President Barack Obama announces in June that his administration would stop deporting “young illegal aliens” who match certain criteria based on the previously proposed **DREAM ACT** (year 2001). Several states had already enacted legislations that amounted to a version of the Dream Act.

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. In August, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) begins accepting applications under DACA for individuals who met the requirements (under the age of 31 as of June 15, 2012, came to the U.S. before reaching their 16th birthday, have continuously resided in the U.S. since June 15, 2007, among other criteria).¹⁸

ICE terminates the 287(g) program (actively enforced between 1996 and 2012) by not renewing cooperation agreement with local law enforcement agencies. The program allowed participating police departments to check immigration status while performing regular stops on the streets.

2013 **The Border Security, Economic Opportunity and Immigration Modernization Act of 2013** The bill proposes the Registered Provisional Immigrants document for eligibly individuals who are currently undocumented. They are supposed to wait for at least 10 years before they can become permanent residents while they will be authorized to work and travel. The pathway toward permanent residency would also involve individual expenses: \$500 to apply for the first six years of legal status, \$500 to renew the status and a \$1,000 fine. On border enforcement, it proposes “\$6.5 billion over 10 years at the southern border, and envisions the creation of a commission border governors telling the Homeland Security Department how to spend more billions on “manpower, technology and infrastructure.”¹⁹

The Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2013 authorizes the Secretary of State to: “(1) limit the validity of a passport issued to a sex offender to one year or such time period as appropriate, and (2) revoke the passport or passport card of

an individual who has been convicted of a sex offense by a foreign court of competent jurisdiction.”²⁰ It enforces other aspects such as changing the name of an existing agency to the Bureau to Monitor and Combat Modern Slavery and Other Forms of Human Trafficking; issues mechanisms to prevent child marriage expanding protection of girls in less developed countries, it also includes public-private partnerships to generate youth employment opportunities among the economic initiatives to prevent trafficking in persons. It also establishes mechanisms to coordinate assistance for vulnerable populations at risk of trafficking, to monitor and combat forced labor and child labor in the United States as well as foreign countries, including listing goods that the Bureau believes are produced by forced labor or child labor in violation of international standards. Amends the Wilberforce Act to establish procedures relating to the handling of unaccompanied children. Amends the Social Security Act relating to the above issues.²¹

National Defense Authorization Act of Fiscal Year 2008: Law of October 4, 2013. The law refers to funding authorization for national defense and security-related programs and actions abroad, including military contracting and energy funds. It granted the extension of special immigration status to Iraqis who were employed by the U.S. government as translators, guides, drivers, and other contractors for more than one year between March 20, 2003 and September 30, 2013. The law, which was signed by President George W. Bush, had a controversial signing statements.

A series of bills are introduced either in Congress or the Senate and the debate on an imminent immigration reform gains momentum in Congress. Samples of bills:

Immigration Reform that Works for America’s Future Act.

Electronic Employment Eligibility Verification and Illegal Immigration Control Act.

Violence Against Immigrant Women Act of 2013.

Immigration Oversight and Fairness Act.

Border Security Results Act of 2013 proposes the creation of a comprehensive strategy to secure U.S. borders and the use of metrics for assessment purposes.

“Provisional Unlawful Waiver Presence Waiver: “Since March 4, 2013, certain immigrant visa applicants who are immediate relatives (spouses, children and parents) of U.S. citizens can apply for provisional unlawful presence waivers before they leave the United States for their consular interview.”²² On August 29, 2016, the provisional unlawful presence waiver process would be expanded “to all individuals statutorily eligible for an immigrant visa and a waiver of inadmissibility for unlawful presence in the United States.”²³

The "Gang of Eight" is formed as a bipartisan group of Senators whose main goal was to advance immigration reform. There were four members for the Republican Party (Senator Marco Rubio, Senator Jeff Flake, Senator John McCain and Senator Lindsey Graham) and four members for the Democratic Party (Dick Durbin, Senator Robert Menendez, Senator Chuck Schumer, Michael Bennet). In January, the group created new immigration legislation that would provide a path to citizenship for millions of undocumented immigrants in the U.S., increase border security along the Mexican border, increase work eligibility verification standards, and strengthen entry-exit regulations. The group did not achieve its main goal.

Part II (from 2014 to 2018)

Authors: Margarita Rodriguez and Aki Hirotani

2014

Accuracy for Adoptees Act. Enacted on January 16, 2014, it requires that a certificate of citizenship or any other federal document issued to a minor, reflects the child's name and date of birth, after the child has been adopted.

USCIS extends H-2A and H-2B Visa Programs to 63 countries effective January 18, 2014.²⁴

A Senate bill calls for the denial of admission to the United States “to any representative to the United Nations who has been found to have been engaged in espionage activities or a terrorist activity against the United States and poses a threat to United States national security interests.”²⁵

Senate bill authorizes the President to deny admission of any United States representative to the United Nations who has been guilty of espionage or terrorist activity against the United States and is found poses a threat to the United States national security interests.

Executive Actions: Fixing the Broken Immigration System (November 21, 2014): a series of executive actions signed by President Barack Obama. Their goal was to improve the immigration system in the following eight areas: (1) Border Security; (2) Removal Proceedings; (3) End Secure Communities program and replace it with New Priority Enforcement Program; (4) Personnel Reform for ICE Officers; (5) Support DACA; (6) Shield millions of parents of U.S. citizens and others from deportation; (6) Expand Provisional Waivers to Spouses and Children of Lawful Permanent Residents (7) Revise Parole Rules (entrepreneurs/high-skilled business and workers, parole-in-place and deferred action, and advance parole) (8) Promote the naturalization process.²⁶

Deferred Action for Parents of America. Bill introduced during President Obama's administration to grant deferred action and work authorization to parents who lived in United States since 2010 and had children born in the U.S. or were brought to the U.S. illegally. The bill did not pass as 26 states challenged it in court; the U.S. Supreme Court upheld an injunction.

Unaccompanied minors- immigration crisis. Unprecedented surge in unaccompanied children and other minors from Central America, mostly from El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras.

2015

AB 60 driver's license (California State Legislature): Effective January 1, 2015, any applicant able to provide documents to prove his or her identity and residency in the State of California would be eligible for an AB 60 driver's license, regardless of their immigration status.

Adoptive Family Review Act: The bill authorizes the Department of State to waive renewal or replacement fees for immigrant visas for lawfully adopted children or children coming to the U.S. to be lawfully adopted, under specified conditions.

Immigration Innovation Act of 2015: The bill proposes to amend the following sections of the Immigration and Nationality Act: (1) Increase the HB-1 Visa Cap (2) Increase the per-country cap for family-based visas and (3) Reform existing employment-sponsored permanent residency requirements.

Preventing Illegal Immigrants from Abusing Tax Welfare Act of 2015. The House Bill amends two sections of the Internal Revenue Code by (1) denying “the earned income tax credit to any individual who is not a citizen or lawful permanent resident of the United States, and (2) by requiring “any taxpayer who is claiming the refundable portion of the child tax credit to provide the social security number of such taxpayer and of each qualifying child to whom a credit is allowed.”²⁷

On June 16, 2015. Donald Trump announces his candidacy for the presidency of the United States. He makes derogatory statements about Mexicans who cross the border to reach U.S. soil and blames the Mexican government for “sending” them.

2016 **United States Jordan Defense Cooperation Act of 2015:** Effective February 18, 2016, The United States supported Jordan in its response to the Syrian refugee crisis with the intent to “provide necessary assistance to support the assimilation of Syrian refugees, cooperate with Jordan to combat the terrorist threat from ISIL/other terrorist organizations, and help secure the border between Jordan, Syria, and Iraq.”²⁸

2017 **Executive Order on Border Security and Immigration Enforcement Improvements:** On January 25, 2017, President Donald Trump issued the executive order that includes the following topics: (1) Securing the border with a physical wall on the southern border; (2) Allocating necessary resources for detention facilities to efficiently conduct proceedings; (3) Ensure the detention of aliens who have violated immigration law and end “Catch-and-Release”; (4) Increase the number of Border Patrol Agents; (5) Annual Foreign Aid Reports to the Government of Mexico should be created for the past 5 years; (6) Federal and State authorities are to cooperate with each other to enhance the investigations, apprehensions, and detentions of alien in the U.S.; (7) Parole, Asylum, and Removal procedures are to abide by the provisions of immigration law; (8) Grants authority to the Attorney General to oversee prosecution guidelines and necessary resources to conduct federal prosecutions related to the southern border.²⁹

The President also signs the “Enhancing Public Safety in the Interior of the United States” executive order. It terminates the Priority Enforcement Program” created in 2014 for the protection of certain groups of undocumented immigrants from deportation. The executive order also reinstates 287(g) and the “Secure Communities” programs and authorizes new hires for Border Patrol and ICE.²⁹

Northern Mariana Islands Expansion Act of 2017: Increases the supplemental fee of Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (Only Transitional Worker) employers, limit permits to CNMI workers that had permits before October 1, 2015 and established a new cap of 15,000 nonimmigrant work permits to be issued in 2017.

Announcement of the Phase-out of DACA: On September 5, 2017 the Department of Homeland Security announces the rescission of DACA and an orderly 6-month phase out of the DACA program, in which USCIS will be adjudicating by an individual and case

by case basis. The case by case options were listed on the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services webpage: “ (1) If you currently have DACA, then you will retain both your period of deferred action and your employment; (2) If USCIS received properly filed initial or renewal DACA request and associated application for an EAD on or before September 5, 2017, then USCIS will continue adjudicating the request; (3) If the recipient’s DACA expires between September 5, 2017, and March 5, 2018, and he/she wishes to renew it, then USCIS must have received properly filed renewal request on or before October 5, 2017; (4) If applicants did not request initial DACA on or before September 5, 2017, then the DACA process is no longer available to her/him; (5) If recipient’s DACA expired on or before September 4, 2017, and he/she did not properly file renewal request on or before September 5, 2017, then the DACA process is no longer available to him/her; (6) If the recipient’s DACA and still-valid EAD is lost, stolen, or destroyed, he/she may submit Form I-765 to request a replacement EAD at any time during the validity period”³⁰

Women, Peace, and Security Act of 2017. This bill is enacted on October 6, 2017, which requires the President to create a strategy in which the U.S. will “promote and strengthen women’s participation in peace negotiations and conflict prevention overseas.”³¹

December 2017: The United States withdraws from the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants. President Trump’s administration withdraws from the declaration, which focuses on protecting the rights and resettlement of refugees and migrants.

Bar Removals of Individuals Who Dream and Grow Our Economy Act (BRIDGE Act) Senate and House of Representative bill introduced on January, 2017. The objective was to allow individuals who were eligible for work authorization or who had received it and temporary relief from deportation through DACA to continue living in the U.S.

Reforming American Immigration for Strong Employment Act (RAISE Act). Senate bill (February, 2017). It focuses on documented immigration. It proposes a reduction of the number of immigrants and aims to impacting aspects of their incorporation. It eliminates the Diversity Visa Lottery; sets the refugee admission to 50,000; gives authority to the President to calculate the number of asylees in the country yearly; family-sponsored immigrants is reduced; the bill defines "immediate relative" and "family-sponsored immigrant"; it establishes a nonimmigrant alien (W-visa) for the parent(s) of an adult U.S. citizen which is a renewable temporary visa for parents in need of caretaking, the conditions are that parents are not allowed to work, cannot access public benefits and are guaranteed health insurance and support by their sponsoring children.

No Sanctuary for Criminal Act. House of Representative’s bill (June 29, 2017). It intends to defund sanctuary cities that do not cooperate with federal immigration authorities. It also provides compensation for local enforcement officials who detain immigrants on behalf of federal immigration authority from lawsuits.

Kate’s Law. The bill proposal passed in the House on June 29, 2017 and is currently waiting to be sent to the Senate. It was created after the death of Kathryn Steinle, who died after being shot by an immigrant who had been deported multiple times for various reasons, including illegal reentry into the country. It intends to stiffen penalties for convicted or deported immigrant criminals that reenter into the United States.

reauthorized by President Trump's administration for these groups. They were granted until specific dates in 2019 to leave the United States to avoid facing deportation.

USCIS injunction on DACA. Filed on February 13, 2018, it indicates that it will no longer be granting deferred action under the DACA program to individuals who had never been recipients of DACA. It also establishes the requisites for renewals for individuals whose DACA protection had expired by a cut-off date (September 2016).

Securing America's Future Act: House bill that revises immigrant visa allocation provisions, including annual immigration levels and increases the worldwide level of employment-based immigrant levels. It also proposes to eliminate the Diversity Visa program or the Visa Lottery. A trust fund is established for workers under the H2-C visa temporary agricultural worker program to provide incentives for them to return to their countries of origin. Further adjustments to the E-Verify are established and DNA testing is established to establish a family link. It also revises provisions of detention of individuals in removal proceedings, illegal entry and reentry, the inadvisability and deportability of criminal aliens, repatriation, asylum and asylum fraud, unaccompanied children, foreign students, and visa fraud. And revises border security and border security activities, including the establishment of Operation Stone Garden.³²

Uniting and Securing America Act (USA Act): House bill (January 16, 2018), with 3 main points: (1) Provide a solution for DREAMERS by granting the Department of Homeland Security the authority to cancel and adjust status unless the individual is disqualified for improper conduct; (2) Homeland Security is to establish Smart Border Security with new technology and strategies; (3) Homeland Security shall receive resources, such as new immigration judges and immigration appeals staff attorneys, to be able to eradicate backlog issues. It also entails DHS' establishment of "a two-year grant program to improve emergency communications in the southern border region for individuals who are at risk of violence and lack cellular and LTE network service."³³ In addition, "the President shall designate a senior official to coordinate federal and international efforts to strengthen citizen security, the rule of law, and economic prosperity in Central America."³⁴

Immigration Innovation Act of 2018: Senate bill that "proposes increasing the H-1B statutory cap, authorizing employment for spouses of H-1B visa holders, increasing H-1B worker mobility, recapturing green card numbers that were approved by Congress in previous years but not used, eliminating per country limits for employment-based green cards, and allowing dual intent for student visa holders."³⁵

The Secure and Succeed Act: Senate bill (February, 2018) that establishes a \$25 trust fund for border security; it proposes to end "catch and release" approach; relocates diversity visas (55,000) to eliminate or reduce backlogs in work-related and family-related visas; offers an earned pathway to citizenship for DACA beneficiaries over a period of 12 years (1.8 million DACA recipients are estimated to benefit), increases penalties for human smuggling and provisions to end fentanyl smuggling; grants DHS resources to manage unaccompanied children cases; updates inadmissibility or removal grounds for criminals; expedites removals for visa overstays; ends the release of thousands of criminal aliens per year, and permanently authorizes the E-Verify System.³⁶ The bill also "reforms extended family chain migration by limiting family-based immigrant visas to spouses and unmarried children (nuclear family), grandfathering in pending family-petitions, permitting the parents of current U.S. citizens to obtain non-immigrants visas (do

not provide work authorization), and placing remaining family-based immigration reforms on hold until the existing petitions and requests are cleared.”³⁷

It is announced that the Department of Justice will require judges to make quota for immigration cases

A caravan of migrants originated in Central America crossed the Mexican border and seemingly headed toward the U.S.-Mexican borders (late March and early April). It generated bilateral tensions and talks with Mexico. The U.S. government deploys immigration enforcement officials and the National Guard throughout sensitive border areas as the caravan moves across Mexico heading north. The caravan was controlled by the Mexican government.

President Trump’s administration had set March 5 as the deadline for Congress to pass permanent protections for undocumented youth. The main plan of the administration was to phase out the DACA program and rescind work permits for DACA recipients beginning March 5. But federal district judges in at least two states have blocked the plan by issuing injunctions. No law has been enacted yet on DACA. As of April, the Department of Homeland Security continues to renew existing DACA permits but it is not accepting new DACA applications. The future of DACA recipients remains in a limbo.

Endnotes

¹ As customary in extended chronologies and for the purposes of preserving accuracy, some descriptions of law contents or actions have been taken ad verbatim from original Acts and other sources. Quotation marks and/or full citations are used mainly, but not only, when the laws and rules are not widely known or when they can be subject to various interpretations. I appreciate Melanie Goergmaier for her cooperation in this project during the elaboration of an early draft and Hannah C. Roming for copy-editing assistance.

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