

# NEWS ARTICLES ON KEY ISSUES - FEBRUARY 11, 2021

## LATEST NEWS

### Biden Administration Executive Actions On Immigration

- ❖ The Biden administration issued the following Executive Actions relating to Immigration:
  - Issued a Presidential Memorandum to Preserve DACA
  - Rescinded the travel bans
  - Reversing the order excluding undocumented immigrants from the Census Count
  - Halted construction of the Border Wall
  - Reinstated Enforcement priorities for enforcement of immigration laws
  - Cease adding asylum seekers into the Migrant Protection Protocols (Remain in Mexico) program
- ❖ To learn more about these Executive Actions, visit: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/>
- ❖ The Biden Administration also ordered a freeze on deportations for 100 days (with some exceptions), and review of immigration enforcement priorities. For more information, visit: [https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/21\\_0120\\_enforcement-memo\\_signed.pdf?mc\\_cid=cc1d1d0f4b&mc\\_eid=bfaf3871ae](https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/21_0120_enforcement-memo_signed.pdf?mc_cid=cc1d1d0f4b&mc_eid=bfaf3871ae)
- ❖ The pause on deportations was halted by a Federal Court Order from the Southern District Court of Texas based on a lawsuit filed by the Attorney General of Texas. To learn more, go to: [https://www.texastribune.org/2021/01/26/texas-joe-biden-deportation-moratorium-ken-paxton/?mc\\_cid=cc1d1d0f4b&mc\\_eid=bfaf3871ae](https://www.texastribune.org/2021/01/26/texas-joe-biden-deportation-moratorium-ken-paxton/?mc_cid=cc1d1d0f4b&mc_eid=bfaf3871ae)

### Border Agents In Texas Have Started Releasing Some Immigrant Families After Mexico Refused To Take Them Back

By Adolfo Flores and Hamed Aleaziz – BuzzFeed News – February 6, 2021

- ❖ Border Patrol agents in parts of Texas have started to release some undocumented immigrant families after Mexican authorities refused to take them back under a Trump-era policy that has expelled thousands of people who have illegally crossed into the U.S. Since March 2020, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) has immediately expelled 382,552 immigrants back into Mexico. Citing a section of the public health code known as Title 42, the Trump administration said it was necessary to deport immigrants in order to halt the spread of the coronavirus. CBP said the families were recently released due to COVID-19 restrictions that have caused some of its facilities to reach capacity. Mexico also recently passed a law prohibiting authorities from keeping undocumented immigrant children in detention centers. With no space to hold the families in U.S. detention centers and Mexico refusing to take them, CBP started last week to release them in Texas border cities like McAllen and Brownsville.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/adolfoflores/border-agents-in-texas-have-started-releasing-some>

### Revealed: U.S. Citizen Newborns Sent To Mexico Under Trump-Era Border Ban

By Tanvi Misra – The Guardian – February 5, 2021

- ❖ At least 11 migrant women were dropped off in Mexican border towns without birth certificates for their days-old U.S. citizen newborns since March of last year, an investigation by the Fuller Project and the Guardian has found. Based on multiple conversations with lawyers who work with asylum seekers at the border and a review of hospital records and legal documents, multiple U.S. citizen newborns were removed to Mexico. Advocates suspect the actual number of such cases could be higher because the vast majority of these fast-track “expulsions”, as the administration calls them, have occurred away from the public eye and without the involvement of lawyers. Former president Donald Trump’s administration’s “zero tolerance” policy, which resulted in more than 5,000 children being separated from parents, and the rise in prolonged detention of children were the most visible policies, but represented only the tip of the iceberg. Homeland security agencies also detained 4,600 pregnant women between 2016 and 2018, with the number increasing by 52% between those two years. Several detained women have also complained of miscarriages and intrusive medical procedures.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/feb/05/us-citizen-newborns-mexico-migrant-women-border-ban>



Migrants stand together before crossing the Rio Bravo to get to El Paso, Texas, from Ciudad Juarez on Feb. 5.

Photo Credit: Herika Martinez/AFP/Getty Images

## Biden Signs 3 Immigration Executive Orders. Activists Want More

By Franco Ordoñez and Joel Rose – NPR – February 2, 2021

- ❖ President Biden signed three executive orders on Tuesday [Feb. 2] that he said would lead to a more "fair, orderly, humane" immigration system, including one that would begin the difficult process of reuniting migrant children separated from their parents after crossing the U.S.-Mexico border. One of the orders creates a task force to find ways to reunite children in the U.S. with their parents, who were deported without them. The task force will issue a report on its progress in 120 days and every 60 days thereafter, White House press secretary Jen Psaki told reporters. A second order looks at how to address the surge of migrants seeking asylum in the U.S. in recent years and will look at how to replace the Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP) program. Biden suspended that program on his first day in office. He has vowed to help countries in Central America address the underlying causes of migration. But the administration wants to restore the asylum system, officials said — and do something to help people stuck in camps at the border. The third order requires agencies to do a "top-to-bottom review of recent regulations, policies and guidance that have set up barriers to our legal immigration system." The first one to go: Trump's "public charge" rule, which prevented immigrants from getting permanent resident, or green card, status if they had or were likely to require public benefits such as housing subsidies.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.npr.org/sections/president-biden-takes-office/2021/02/02/962995562/here-are-the-immigration-actions-president-biden-plans-to-sign>
- ❖ For more information, visit: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/02/02/fact-sheet-president-biden-outlines-steps-to-reform-our-immigration-system-by-keeping-families-together-addressing-the-root-causes-of-irregular-migration-and-streamlining-the-legal-immigration-syst/>

## Mayorkas Confirmed As Secretary Of Homeland Security

By Sabrina Rodriguez – Politico – February 2, 2021

- ❖ Alejandro Mayorkas was confirmed on Tuesday [Feb. 2] to serve as secretary of Homeland Security, putting him in charge of carrying out the Biden administration's immigration agenda and tackling national security concerns. The Senate backed Mayorkas in a 56-43 vote, the tightest confirmation vote for a Biden nominee so far. The new DHS secretary is entering the role with a long to-do list. He will play a key role in carrying out Biden's immigration agenda, protecting the U.S. from domestic terrorism threats and helping coordinate coronavirus vaccine distribution. DHS, the nation's third-largest federal department, also oversees emergency management and cybersecurity and infrastructure security. On Tuesday [Feb. 2] afternoon, Biden announced that Mayorkas would be the head of a task force to reunite families separated at the southern border under the Trump administration. As part of his new duties, Mayorkas will also review the Trump-era Migrant Protection Protocols program that has forced tens of thousands people to remain in Mexico while their asylum cases are processed. Mayorkas is the first Latino and first immigrant to lead the department. He's a Cuban-born lawyer and one of the chief architects of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program. He served as DHS deputy secretary and director of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services under President Barack Obama.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.politico.com/news/2021/02/02/mayorkas-confirmed-homeland-security-465036?cid=apn>



Honduran migrants display identification at a police checkpoint while traveling to the Guatemalan border near La Entrada, Honduras, on Jan. 15.  
Photo Credit: Nicolo Filippo Rosso/Bloomberg

## Biden Asks U.S. Supreme Court To Cancel Asylum, Border Wall Arguments

By Lawrence Hurley, Andrew Chung – Reuters – February 1, 2021

- ❖ President Joe Biden's administration on Monday [Feb. 1] asked the U.S. Supreme Court to cancel upcoming oral arguments and delay further action in two pending appeals that were filed by his Republican predecessor Donald Trump over U.S.-Mexico border wall funding and the so-called "remain in Mexico" asylum policy. The court is scheduled to hear arguments in the two cases on Feb. 22 and March 1, respectively. The Biden administration has already announced plans to discontinue construction of the border wall and suspend the asylum program, potentially making the cases moot. Acting U.S. Solicitor General Elizabeth Prelogar asked the justices to postpone further legal filings in the cases and to remove them from their oral argument calendar in light of the actions taken by the administration relating to the two policies. Biden issued a proclamation on Jan. 20, his first day in office, ordering a freeze on border wall projects and directing a review of the legality of its funding and contracting methods. That same day, the Department of Homeland Security said it would suspend new enrollments in the asylum program, pending further review.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-court-immigration-idUSKBN2A13LU>

## Trump Official Reportedly Cut Deal To Keep ICE Policies Going Under Biden

By Matt Stieb – New York Magazine – February 1, 2021

- ❖ According to a whistleblower complaint revealed by the New York Times on Monday [Feb. 1], an agreement between DHS official Ken Cuccinelli and the union that represents Immigration and Customs Enforcement would give ICE something like veto power over any policy changes. The contract signed by the immigration hardliner states that “no modifications whatsoever concerning the policies, hours, functions, alternate work schedules, resources, tools, compensation and the like of or afforded employees or contractors shall be implemented or occur without the prior affirmative consent” of the union. With this blanket authority, ICE appears able to argue any policy changes that affect nearly everything within its purview. The Times also notes that the contract may allow “the ICE union to argue that it can reject changes such as Mr. Biden’s recent order to focus on violent criminals and not prioritize other undocumented immigrants.” Though federal law states that agency heads have 30 days to cancel union agreements once they are signed, Cuccinelli’s deal could allow the ICE union to appeal to the Federal Labor Relations Authority. Once that window closes on February 19, any such agreement would be locked into the ICE union contract for the next eight years. On January 8, he [Cuccinelli] signed an agreement with Texas to block DHS from altering deportation policy unless the agency gives the state six months’ notice. In a lawsuit citing that agreement, Texas attorney general Ken Paxton sued the administration to block Biden’s 100-day ban on most deportations.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://nymag.com/intelligencer/2021/02/cuccinelli-cut-deal-with-ice-union-to-prevent-biden-changes.html>

## Biden Administration Says It Won’t Conduct Immigration Arrests Near Vaccination Sites

By Joe Walsh – Forbes – February 1, 2021

- ❖ The Department of Homeland Security promised Monday [Feb. 1] to keep immigration agents away from coronavirus vaccination clinics, aiming to relieve some undocumented immigrants’ fears that getting vaccinated could put them in legal jeopardy, a notable shift from former President Donald Trump’s approach to enforcing immigration laws. In a statement, DHS said undocumented immigrants should have equal access to coronavirus vaccines, calling it a “moral and public health imperative.” The agency promised U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) will not carry out any enforcement activity near vaccine sites, including clinics the Federal Emergency Management Agency is expected to set up under President Joe Biden’s administration.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/joewalsh/2021/02/01/biden-administration-says-it-wont-conduct-immigration-arrests-near-vaccination-sites/?sh=368de2e13864>

## 2020 Was Deadliest Year For Migrants Crossing Unlawfully Into US Via Arizona

By Samuel Gilbert – The Guardian – January 30, 2021

- ❖ Last year was the deadliest on record for migrants crossing unlawfully into the U.S. via Arizona, with the remains of 227 migrants found on the border according to Humane Borders. Since 1998, at least 7,000 migrants are believed to have died along the U.S.-Mexico border, maybe many more, as record-keeping is patchy. Crossing into any of the four U.S. states of Texas, Arizona, New Mexico and California along the 1,954-mile US-Mexico border can be dangerous. Norma Herrera is community organizer at the Rio Grande Valley Equal Voice Network advocacy group in Texas, another deadly migrant corridor where at least an estimated 3,000 people have lost their lives since 1998. The surge in border deaths in Arizona last year – up from 144 in 2019 and 128 in 2018 – coincided with a flurry of construction there.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/jan/30/us-mexico-border-crossings-arizona-2020-deadliest-year>

## LATEST STATISTICS

### Number Of Confirmed COVID-19 Cases Among ICE Staff And Detained Immigrants

By U.S. Immigration And Customs Enforcement – February 9, 2021

- ❖ As of **February 5, 2021**, the total detained population is: **13,860**. *There have been 524 confirmed cases of COVID-19 among those in ICE custody as of February 7, 2021. To date, there have been 95,967 total detainees tested.*
- ❖ Data Source: <https://www.ice.gov/coronavirus>

### Witness At The Border Report: ICE Air Flights January 2021 And Last 12 Months

By Thomas Cartwright – Witness at the Border – February 7, 2021

- ❖ For the 12 months ending January 2021, ICE Air completed an incredible 998 likely removal flights within the massive total of 4,766 likely total ICE Air flights. Of these ICE Air flights, 839 removal flights amongst 4,025 total flights were operated deep into the pandemic after 13 March. Over the last 12 months, ICE Air deported people to at least 33 countries in Latin America, the Caribbean, and Africa.
- ❖ To read the report, go to: <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5e221cacff87ba2d2833cf54/t/6020ad24e50635707d01667b/1612754212730/ICE+Air+Jan+2021+THCv.1PDF.pdf>

## ASYLUM SEEKERS

### Biden Administration To Propose Significant Increase In Refugees Admitted To U.S.

By Priscilla Alvarez – CNN – February 6, 2021

- ❖ The Biden administration is proposing to revise the number of refugees that can be admitted to the U.S. in fiscal year 2021 to 62,500, a significant increase from the 15,000 cap put in place under former President Donald Trump. The refugee cap, which dictates how many refugees may be admitted to the U.S. annually, must be approved by the president after consultation with Congress. Biden signed an executive order intended to rebuild and enhance the programs in place to pave the way for more arrivals to the U.S. That includes 22,000 slots for Africa, 6,000 for East Asia, 4,000 for Europe and Central Asia, 5,000 for Latin America/Caribbean, and 13,000 for the region near East/South Asia. There's also a reserve of 12,500 slots. Since October, only around 11,800 refugees have been admitted to the U.S.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.cnn.com/2021/02/05/politics/refugee-cap-biden/index.html>



Migrants who crossed the U.S.-Mexico border in El Paso, Texas, in a photo dated May 29, 2019.  
Photo Credit: 2019 US Customs and Border Protection via AP, File

### Surge Of Unaccompanied Minors At Border Poses Challenge For Biden Administration

By Rick Jervis – USA TODAY – February 6, 2021

- ❖ The number of unaccompanied minors referred to the U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), the agency tasked with caring for them once they cross the border, climbed from 1,530 in October to 3,364 in December – a 120% jump, according to agency statistics. January's numbers were not yet available. The agency usually has 13,764 beds for the minors but only 7,971 are currently available because of COVID-19 social distancing restrictions. Of those, around 5,200 are occupied, leaving 2,700 open beds, according to the resettlement agency. The numbers are still well below the steep influx witnessed in 2019, when Border Patrol agents apprehended 11,475 minors in just one month.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2021/02/06/unaccompanied-minors-immigrant-biden-border-rise/4400666001/>

### Biden Administration Suspends Trump Asylum Deals With El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras

By Reuters Staff – Reuters – February 6, 2021

- ❖ The Biden administration said on Saturday [Feb. 6] it was immediately suspending Trump-era asylum agreements with El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. In a statement, State Department Secretary Antony Blinken said the United States had “suspended and initiated the process to terminate the Asylum Cooperative Agreements with the Governments of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras as the first concrete steps on the path to greater partnership and collaboration in the region laid out by President Biden.”
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-immigration-centralamerica-idUSKBN2A702Q>

### Biden Is Dropping Trump's Policy Of Immediately Expelling Unaccompanied Immigrant Children At The Border

By Hamed Aleaziz – BuzzFeed News – February 2, 2021

- ❖ Between March 2020 and fall, the Department of Homeland Security expelled unaccompanied immigrant children from the U.S. border more than 13,000 times at former president Donald Trump's direction, according to internal documents obtained by BuzzFeed News. Previously, unaccompanied children were sent to government-run shelters as they attempted to pursue their asylum cases. But the Trump administration argued that the policy was necessary to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. On Tuesday [Feb. 2], a White House spokesperson told BuzzFeed News that the new administration's policy “is not to expel unaccompanied children who arrive at our borders.” “The president's approach is to deal with immigration comprehensively, fairly and humanely,” the spokesperson added, noting that the administration has already been refusing to quickly turn back the unaccompanied children. Biden signed an order Tuesday [Feb. 2] directing officials to review whether termination of the entire policy, which has also led to thousands of adults being expelled, is necessary.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/hamedaleaziz/biden-unaccompanied-immigrant-children-border>

## Hundreds Deported Under Biden, Including Witness To Massacre

By Nomaan Merchant – Associated Press – February 1, 2021

- ❖ President Joe Biden's administration has deported hundreds of immigrants in its early days despite his campaign pledge to stop removing most people in the U.S. illegally at the beginning of his term. A federal judge last week [Jan. 25-31] ordered the Biden administration not to enforce a 100-day moratorium on deportations, but the ruling did not require the government to schedule them. In recent days, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement has deported immigrants to at least three countries: 15 people to Jamaica on Thursday [Jan. 28] and 269 people to Guatemala and Honduras on Friday [Jan. 29]. More deportation flights were scheduled Monday [Feb. 1]. It's unclear how many of those people are considered national security or public safety threats or had recently crossed the border illegally, the priority under new guidance that the Department of Homeland Security issued to enforcement agencies and that took effect Monday [Feb. 1]. In the border city of El Paso, Texas, immigration authorities on Friday [Jan. 29] deported a woman who witnessed the 2019 massacre at a Walmart that left 22 people dead. She had agreed to be a witness against the gunman and has met with the local district attorney's office, according to her lawyers. Officials in Honduras confirmed that 131 people were on a deportation flight that landed Friday [Jan. 29]. Another flight that landed in Guatemala on Friday [Jan. 29] had 138 people, with an additional 30 people expected to arrive Monday [Feb. 1], officials there said. U.S. District Judge Drew Tipton granted a temporary restraining order sought by Texas that bars enforcement of a 100-day deportation moratorium that had gone into effect Jan. 22.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/wireStory/hundreds-deported-biden-including-witness-massacre-75621031>

## The Last Amnesty: How To Finally Get Immigration Reform Done (And Do It The Right Way)

By Robert Robb – Arizona Republic – January 30, 2021

- ❖ First, Congress should pass a standalone bill that provides permanent legal status for those known as “Dreamers,” people brought here illegally while children. That certainty shouldn't be held up for the resolution of other issues, such as immigration enforcement, a broader amnesty or a path to citizenship. Beyond the DACA population, Biden proposes a general amnesty for those currently in the country illegally and a pathway to citizenship. According to the Migration Policy Institute, there are around 280,000 illegal immigrants residing in Arizona. Nearly 70% have lived in this country for longer than 10 years. However, to gain broader acceptance of an amnesty, and have immigration recede as a divisive political issue, there needs to be reason to believe that this will be the last amnesty. That from this point forward our immigration laws will be fully enforced and illegal immigration will become negligible. The best, and probably only, way to achieve that is by an immediate, national requirement that businesses use the E-Verify system for all new hires. That is a federal program that electronically confirms legal eligibility to work in this country. The mandatory use of E-Verify, and a commitment by the federal government to take identity theft to defeat the system seriously, would effectively lock illegal immigrants out of the formal U.S. economy. That would reduce illegal immigration to a trickle, even without other enforcement measures.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2021/01/30/immigration-reform-can-happen-how-do-right-joe-biden-column/4304042001/>

## FAMILY SEPARATIONS

### Biden To Set Up Task Force To Reunite Families Separated At The Border

By Michelle Hackman – Wall Street Journal – February 2, 2021

- ❖ President Biden plans to form a task force to reunite immigrant families separated at the southern border under the Trump administration's zero-tolerance policy, one of several executive orders on immigration Mr. Biden is expected to sign Tuesday [Feb. 2]. The orders will set in motion a process that the new administration hopes will reverse a number of border policies and restrictions on legal immigration. The reunification task force, which Mr. Biden pledged to create during his campaign, will charge the government with identifying all of the children who remain separated from their parents and locating those parents across Latin America, where they were likely deported. The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) has said in court filings it has identified more than 600 children who remain separated from their parents. The task force will be headed by Alejandro Mayorkas, Mr. Biden's pick to be the next secretary of Homeland Security. Mr. Mayorkas is expected to be confirmed to his post by the Senate later on Tuesday [Feb. 2]. A second order will direct a review of policies the Trump administration put in place to restrict access to the asylum system for migrants crossing the border. It is expected to ask the Department of Homeland Security to review the Trump administration's “Remain in Mexico” policy, which Mr. Biden's administration has indicated it hopes to scrap. A third order is expected to direct DHS to revisit a Trump administration policy known as the public-charge rule, which imposes a wealth test on applicants for permanent residency, along with a series of other policy changes that have made it tougher to become a U.S. citizen, including a planned application-fee increase.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.wsj.com/articles/biden-to-set-up-task-force-to-reunite-families-separated-at-the-border-11612260003>

## DEFERRED ACTION FOR CHILDHOOD ARRIVALS (DACA)

### Thousands Of Dreamers Have Applied For DACA Since December As Texas Court Ruling Looms

By Daniel Gonzalez – Arizona Republic – February 1, 2021

- ❖ More than 2,500 young undocumented Dreamers have applied for DACA in recent months. Trump said the program was unlawful. But in December, a federal judge in Brooklyn ordered the government to fully restore the program, including accepting and processing new applications. The order by Judge Nicholas Garaufis of the U.S. District Court in Brooklyn followed the Supreme Court's June ruling that the Trump administration improperly tried to rescind the program, without considering whether the program was lawful. Through the end of December, 2,713 Dreamers have applied for DACA for the first time, according to a Department of Homeland Security status report filed in federal court on Jan. 4 at the request of Garaufis. On Jan. 13, Google announced that it will grant \$250,000 to United We Dream, a nonprofit organization that advocates for Dreamers, which will cover the costs of about 500 Dreamers to apply for DACA. The fate of DACA recipients, however, remains uncertain. A separate lawsuit challenging the legality of the DACA program is still in a federal court in Texas. A ruling by Judge Andrew Hanen of the U.S. District Court in Houston could come any day. Texas and eight other states have asked Hanen to end the program, arguing it is unlawful.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2021/02/01/thousands-dreamers-have-applied-daca-texas-court-ruling-looms/4347023001/>

## DETENTION CENTERS

### Border Agents Release Migrants Into U.S. In Shift From Trump

By Michael O'Boyle and Maya Averbuch – Bloomberg – February 7, 2021

- ❖ Some migrant families with children who've crossed illegally into the U.S. are being released in Texas by border patrol officials. At least 1,000 migrants have been allowed to remain in Texas in recent days and hundreds more in California, the New York Times reported. The U.S. has recorded more than 380,000 expulsions on the southern border since March, though some of those could be the same people multiple times, U.S. figures show. U.S. Customs and Border Protection said in a statement that some facilities were at maximum capacity. "When long-term holding solutions aren't possible, some migrants will be processed for removal, provided a Notice to Appear, and released into the U.S. to await a future immigration hearing," CBP said in a statement to Bloomberg News. Word that migrants were being released into the U.S. spread quickly to the camp in Matamoros. In the past week the camp swelled to as many as 1,000 people amid rumors they would all be allowed into the U.S. when Biden issued his executive order on migration.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-02-07/yellen-summers-spar-about-overheating-risk-in-stimulus-debate>

### Biden Administration To House Migrant Teens At Overflow Facility In Texas Closed Under Trump

By Courtney Subramanian, Rick Jervis and Rebecca Morin – USA TODAY – February 3, 2021

- ❖ The Biden administration plans to reopen a controversial overflow facility to house unaccompanied migrant teenagers as the government grapples with the possibility of a surge in apprehensions at the U.S.-Mexico border amid the COVID-19 pandemic. The facility in Carrizo Springs, Texas, will house up to 700 migrant children within the next two weeks, according to a statement Tuesday [Feb. 2] from the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), the agency within the Department of Health and Human Services that is responsible for migrant children. The temporary Influx Care Facility will be used for children ages 13 and older who have been medically cleared of COVID-19, the statement said.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2021/02/03/biden-house-migrant-children-texas-facility-closed-under-trump/4378699001/>

### Long-Detained Immigrant Families Could Soon Face Deportation

By Nomaan Merchant – Associated Press – February 2, 2021

- ❖ Lawyers working with immigrant families detained by the U.S. government for more than a year say they're worried the families could be deported. Six parents and six children could be placed on deportation flights as early as Wednesday [Feb. 3], even though they continue to fight to win asylum, the lawyers said. Hundreds of people have been deported in the early days of President Joe Biden's administration. While a federal judge barred Biden from enforcing a 100-day moratorium on deporting most people in the U.S. without authorization, the judge's order did not require the U.S. government to resume deportations as before. Legal experts say ICE generally has the discretion to delay deportation flights, keep immigrants detained, or release people on bond even if they have final deportation orders. Since the judge's order, ICE has deported people to at least five countries, according to the agency and advocates for people deported. The families facing deportation have been held at the family detention center at Dilley, Texas. ICE said last week that 230 people were detained at the Dilley facility.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/long-detained-immigrant-families-face-deportation-75645517>

## New Claims Of Migrant Abuse As ICE Defies Biden To Continue Deportations

By Julian Borger – *The Guardian* – February 2, 2021

- ❖ US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has been denounced as a “rogue agency” after new allegations of assaults on asylum seekers emerged, and deportations of African and Caribbean migrants continued in defiance of the Biden administration’s orders. A coalition of immigrant rights groups published affidavits from Cameroonian asylum seekers who they said were tortured by being forced to approve their own deportations. The asylum seekers described being forced to the floor and having their fingers inked and pressed on to deportation documents they had refused to sign. An ICE plane deporting Cameroonian, Angolan, Congolese and other African migrants is expected to leave Louisiana on Wednesday [Feb. 3], despite an order from the incoming Biden administration for a 100-day suspension of deportation flights. A Trump-appointed judge in Texas blocked the Biden moratorium last week, approving a challenge from the state’s attorney general, Ken Paxton, who played a leading role in the attempt to overturn the election result. However, the judge did not block guidelines laid down by the then acting secretary of homeland security David Pekoske, which came into effect on Monday [Feb. 1] and stipulated that deportations should be limited to suspected terrorists, convicted felons deemed a “threat to public safety”, and migrants who arrived after 1 November last year.
- ❖ News Article Source: [https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/feb/02/ice-immigration-migrants-asylum-seekers-abuse-allegations?CMP=oth\\_b-aplnews\\_d-1](https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/feb/02/ice-immigration-migrants-asylum-seekers-abuse-allegations?CMP=oth_b-aplnews_d-1)

## Can Immigrant Rights Advocates Get Biden To End For-Profit ICE Detention?

By Suzanne Gamboa – *NBC News* – January 29, 2021

- ❖ Biden recently signed an executive order phasing out the Justice Department’s use of private federal prisons. During the presidential campaign, his position was that private companies should not be used for immigration detention, but his executive order did not cover detention centers. By last January, 81 percent of people in ICE custody were held in centers owned or managed by private prison corporations, according to a report by the ACLU, Human Rights Watch and the National Immigrant Justice Center. In addition, private prison companies housed 91 percent of all people held in detention centers that opened under the Trump administration, the report said. ICE spent \$1.8 billion on detention in 2009, USA Today reported, while the agency’s fiscal year 2020 budget for detention was \$3.11 billion, according to DHS data provided by American Immigration Council. In fiscal year 2020, the detainee population totaled 182,869, Department of Homeland Security data shows. The Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse (TRAC) reported that 14,195 people remained in detention as of Jan. 22.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/latino/can-immigrant-rights-advocates-get-biden-end-profit-ice-detention-n1256073>



Photo Credit: Lucy Nicholson/Reuters

## Opinion: Biden Is Ending The Justice Department’s Contracts With Private Prisons. Now End ICE’s.

By Eunice Cho – *The Washington Post* – January 28, 2021

- ❖ President Biden signed an executive order directing the attorney general to phase out the Justice Department’s use of private prisons. The executive order instructed the Justice Department not to renew contracts “with privately operated criminal detention facilities,” noting the “significant costs and hardships on our society” imposed by mass incarceration. The order cited a 2016 report by the Justice Department’s Office of Inspector General, which condemned the failure of private prison companies to meet basic standards to provide for the health and safety of people in their custody. But the order fails to account for one of the most significant areas of the federal government’s use of private prison companies: immigration detention. In four years, the Trump administration opened more than 40 new detention facilities and expanded the number of people in the system by approximately 50 percent. At this time last year, more than 81 percent of immigrants in detention were held in facilities owned or operated by private prison companies, a record high. The Biden administration is reportedly considering an executive order to phase out federal contracts with private immigration detention facilities.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2021/01/28/biden-is-ending-justice-departments-contracts-with-private-prisons-now-end-ices/>

## **COURT RULINGS**

### **Supreme Court Cancels Arguments On Trump's Border Wall, 'Remain In Mexico' Policy**

*By Pete Williams – NBC News - February 3, 2021*

- ❖ The Supreme Court on Wednesday [Feb. 3] canceled courtroom arguments scheduled for the next few weeks over two aspects of former President Donald Trump's immigration policy — a reflection of the new administration's reversal on both issues. The court granted the Justice Department's request to remove two Trump administration appeals of lower court rulings from the argument calendar, one being against the use of Pentagon money to build the southern border wall and the other against making immigrants wait in Mexico [Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP) / Remain in Mexico] instead of the U.S. The Department of Homeland Security under Biden stopped enforcing the Trump administration's policy of sending asylum seekers from Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala back across the border to Mexico instead of allowing them to wait in the U.S. for their cases to be heard. From late January 2019 until MPP was suspended because of the coronavirus pandemic, more than 68,700 people were shuttled back to Mexico.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/supreme-court/supreme-court-cancels-arguments-trump-s-border-wall-remain-mexico-n1256593>

### **AP Exclusive: DOJ Rescinds 'Zero Tolerance' Immigration Rule**

*By Michael Balsamo and Colleen Long – Associated Press – January 26, 2021*

- ❖ The Justice Department rescinded a Trump-era memo that established a “zero tolerance” enforcement policy for migrants crossing the U.S.-Mexico border illegally, which resulted in thousands of family separations. Acting Attorney General Monty Wilkinson issued the new memo to federal prosecutors across the nation, saying the department would return to its longstanding previous policy and instructing prosecutors to act on the merits of individual cases. “Consistent with this longstanding principle of making individualized assessments in criminal cases, I am rescinding — effective immediately — the policy directive,” Wilkinson wrote. The “zero tolerance” policy meant that any adult caught crossing the border illegally would be prosecuted for illegal entry. Because children cannot be jailed with their family members, families were separated and children were taken into custody by Health and Human Services, which manages unaccompanied children at the border. While the rescinding of “zero tolerance” is in part symbolic, it undoes the Trump administration’s massively unpopular policy responsible for the separation of more than 5,500 children from their parents at the U.S-Mexico border.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://apnews.com/article/politics-immigration-only-on-ap-mexico-b04e63264cd13f248c94f1e90200460a>

## **DEVELOPING STORIES**

### **Maryland Senators See Joe Biden's Immigration Policy As Key To Grant Citizenship To TPS Holders**

*By Daniel Villarreal – NewsWeek – February 8, 2021*

- ❖ Maryland's Democratic Senators Chris Van Hollen and Ben Cardin have introduced the SECURE Act which would provide a pathway to permanent resident status for over 400,000 immigrants who have Temporary Protected Status (TPS) after fleeing natural disasters and civil unrest in their home countries and relocating in the United States. Van Hollen and Cardin's bill would provide a path to residency for TPS recipients who had come from El Salvador, Haiti, Honduras, Nepal, Nicaragua, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, Syria and Yemen, according to The Hill. Although The SECURE Act was introduced and died in Congress last year, its re-introduction this year comes as newly elected President Joe Biden and a Democrat-led Congress considered sweeping change on immigration.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.newsweek.com/maryland-senators-see-joe-bidens-immigration-policy-key-grant-citizenship-tps-holders-1567754>

### **Mexico: Migrants In U.S. To Open Accounts At Consulates**

*By the Associated Press – February 9, 2021*

- ❖ Mexico will set up a system allowing migrants living in the United States to open accounts with its Bank of Welfare so they can more easily and cheaply send money back to their families. The bank is Mexico's main distributor of money for the federal government's social welfare programs. Migrants living in the U.S. would be able to open accounts through Mexico's consulates. Remittances amount to more than Mexico earns from oil exports or tourism and are second only to manufacturing exports. In 2020, despite the pandemic, Mexicans in the U.S. set a new record, sending \$40.6 billion back to Mexico. The Bank of Welfare would buy dollars from migrants and their families who hold accounts. Relatives in Mexico would be able to access the money through more than 2,300 points in Mexico between the bank's branches and other outlets and receive a better exchange rate than the currency exchange houses.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://apnews.com/article/mexico-e4e65b956aaa5afdced1682180929f5a>

## New Biden Rules For ICE Point To Fewer Arrests And Deportations, And A More Restrained Agency

By Nick Miroff and Maria Sacchetti – *Washington Post* – February 7, 2021

- ❖ U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is preparing to issue new guidelines to agents that could sharply curb arrests and deportations, according to internal memos and emails obtained by The Washington Post. Agents will no longer seek to deport immigrants for crimes such as driving under the influence and assault, and will focus instead on national security threats, recent border crossers and people completing prison and jail terms for aggravated felony convictions. “Generally, these convictions would not include drug based crimes (less serious offenses), simple assault, DUI, money laundering, property crimes, fraud, tax crimes, solicitation, or charges without convictions,” acting director Tae Johnson told senior officials in an email advising them on how to operate while new guidelines are finalized. Agents seeking to arrest fugitives outside of jails and prisons will need prior approval from the agency’s director in Washington justifying the decision while explaining how the enforcement action “constitutes an appropriate allocation of limited resources,” according to a draft memo circulating at the agency. The draft guidelines are awaiting approval by Department of Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas.
- ❖ News Article Source: [https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/new-biden-rules-for-ice-point-to-fewer-arrests-and-deportations-and-a-more-restrained-agency/2021/02/07/faccb854-68c6-11eb-bf81-c618c88ed605\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/new-biden-rules-for-ice-point-to-fewer-arrests-and-deportations-and-a-more-restrained-agency/2021/02/07/faccb854-68c6-11eb-bf81-c618c88ed605_story.html)



Migrants seeking asylum in the United States lined up for food in Matamoros, Mexico, last year. Some border camps have become increasingly crowded in recent weeks.

Photo Credit: Daniel Becerril/Reuters

## Migrant Families Force Biden To Confront New Border Crisis

By Miriam Jordan and Max Rivlin-Nadler – *The New York Times* – February 6, 2021

- ❖ More than 1,000 people who had been detained after crossing have been released into the country in recent days in a swift reversal from the Trump administration’s near shutdown of the border. Many more people are gathering on the Mexican side, aggravating conditions there and testing America’s ability and willingness to admit migrants during a pandemic. New families every day have been collecting in Mexican border towns, sleeping in the streets, under bridges and in dry ditches, according to lawyers and aid groups working along the border. A migrant camp in Matamoros, Mexico, just across a bridge from Texas, has boomed to 1,000 people over the past few weeks. At least 1,000 migrants have been allowed to cross into Texas in recent days, border activists said, though the Border Patrol has not released any official estimates.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/06/us/migrants-border-coronavirus-san-diego.html>

## Biden's Immigration Reforms Could Put 11 Million People On The Path To US Citizenship.

By Shelby Brown – *CNET* – February 2, 2021

- ❖ President Joe Biden unveiled hefty immigration reforms -- formally named the U.S. Citizenship Act of 2021 -- that would include providing an eight-year path to citizenship for over 11 million undocumented immigrants if it becomes law, as well as preserving and fortifying the DACA program. The citizenship timeline is pretty easy to understand. Those living in the U.S. without legal status as of Jan. 1, 2021 could gain temporary legal status, or a green card, in five years. To do so, they'd need to pass a background check, pay taxes and meet other requirements. After that, Biden's plan outlines a three-year path to naturalization if the person pursues citizenship. About 10.5 million of the immigrants in the U.S. are unauthorized according to the Pew Research Center based on augmented U.S. Census Bureau data from 2017. Pew also reported about 35 million immigrants who were naturalized citizens, 12.3 million lawful permanent residents and 2.2 million temporary lawful residents. More than 60% of unauthorized immigrants have lived in the country for over 10 years, and they have over 4 million U.S.-born citizen children and account for 5% of the workforce, according to The New York Times.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.cnet.com/how-to/bidens-immigration-reforms-could-put-11-million-people-on-the-path-to-us-citizenship-what-to-know/>

## DHS Says Undocumented Immigrants Should Get Coronavirus Vaccines

By Catherine E. Shoichet and Priscilla Alvarez – *CNN* – February 1, 2021

- ❖ Undocumented immigrants should get coronavirus vaccines, the Biden administration said Monday [Feb. 1], adding that federal authorities won't conduct immigration enforcement operations at vaccine distribution sites or clinics. "It is a moral and public health imperative to ensure that all individuals residing in the United States have access to the vaccine. DHS encourages all individuals, regardless of immigration status, to receive the COVID-19 vaccine once eligible under local distribution guidelines," the Department of Homeland Security said.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.cnn.com/2021/02/01/politics/covid-vaccines-undocumented-immigrants/index.html>

## How Biden Can Undo The Divisions Trump Deepened In Immigrant Communities

By Kimmy Yam – NBC News – February 1, 2021

- ❖ Donald Trump, whose presidency officially came to a close last month, deepened divisions across communities with high foreign-born populations by perpetuating a narrative of "good" and "bad" immigrants, critics say. Now, immigration advocates say President Joe Biden will have to act to implement policies to undo that rift. "I implore the Biden administration to live up to its call for unity by precisely not using this trick of dividing us into accepting seats at the table for some and scraps for others," Thi Bui, a Vietnamese American author and activist told NBC Asian America. Bui said that for Biden to repair some of the divisions within communities, the administration should begin by devising policies with the lowest income, undocumented, and incarcerated populations in mind. Within the first 100 days, she said the president should review economic relief plans and to review immigration enforcement "with the knowledge that there are people watching for that divisive narrative, and to not use it as a way to cut corners, save money or appease the anti-immigrant agenda of the other side." Phi Nguyen, director of litigation at Asian Americans Advancing Justice-Atlanta, similarly recommended that the Biden administration should implement policies that do not treat immigrants differently based on whether they are perceived as "good" or "bad." "Any immigration relief or policy that carves out individuals because of criminal convictions helps to perpetuate the false narrative about who belongs here and who doesn't," she said.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/asian-america/how-biden-can-undo-divisions-trump-deepened-immigrant-communities-n1256228>

## Commentary: Biden's Sensible Immigration Reform Puts People First

By Laura Collins – San Antonio Express-News – January 30, 2021

- ❖ Comprehensive immigration reform has its best chance of passing in more than a decade under a recently unveiled plan from the Biden administration. Immigration reform is always an uphill battle, and this legislative fight won't be any different. But will the bill even have a chance, particularly in an evenly divided Senate? Yes - but only if Democrats and Republicans are willing to work together while drafting the bill. And it must be amended to win enough Republican votes to pass the Senate. In its current form, the proposal recenters our immigration conversation around values and human dignity. This dovetails with the George W. Bush Institute's extensive recommendations to modernize our immigration system to one that is pro-growth and humane. True security cannot be achieved with only deterrence. We must pursue a regional strategy focused on both trade and immigration, working with our neighbors to reduce corruption, increase economic opportunity and protect vulnerable populations so that people don't need to flee their homes to experience the security Americans take for granted. An earned pathway to citizenship for the undocumented is the rational middle solution between mass deportation and amnesty. America should be a beacon of hope and opportunity for refugees and asylum-seekers.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.expressnews.com/opinion/commentary/article/Commentary-Biden-s-sensible-immigration-reform-15908977.php#>

## Commentary: U.S. Must Restore Refugees' Right To Entry

By Claudia Donoso – San Antonio Express-News – January 30, 2021

- ❖ The closure of borders was not the only restrictive measure adopted by the previous administration to contain the COVID-19 pandemic: The immigration system has been severely impacted in a way that violates international and U.S. law, and must be addressed by the new administration. The first steps should include resuming asylum-seekers' and migrants' access to their rights through a safe and legal process, and acknowledging the rights of asylum-seekers across the Americas. In the previous administration, visa processing overseas by the Department of State came to a near halt. U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services suspended in-person services at its offices for several months during the pandemic, postponing or rescheduling interviews for immigration applications. This delayed the ability of tens of thousands of immigrants to become green card holders or U.S. citizens. Entry into the U.S. along the Mexican and Canadian borders — including by asylum-seekers and unaccompanied children — has been restricted. Immigration court hearings have been suspended and the few courts still open have limited services. Tens of thousands of people remain in immigration detention despite the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Suspending the processing of asylum-seekers and migrants violates international and domestic law. Although countries have the sovereign power to regulate the entry of non-nationals, international law emphasizes that these measures may not prevent those seeking asylum from persecution. Thus, a state cannot return asylum-seekers to an unsafe foreign territory. The Biden administration faces several challenges regarding the protection of these rights during the pandemic. However, with sufficient political will, these challenges can be overcome. To respect the nonrefoulement principle, the administration must prohibit the removal of a migrant, asylum-seeker or refugee to a country with poor and limited health care as it creates threats to life and health. Refugees and asylum-seekers must be exempted from border closures and entry limitations. Health measures, such as screening, testing and quarantine, can enable the safe management of arrivals while respecting humanitarian principles.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.expressnews.com/opinion/commentary/article/Commentary-U-S-must-restore-refugees-right-15909022.php>

## Editorial: Biden's Humane Immigration Plan Worthy Of Support

By the San Antonio Express-News Editorial Board – January 29, 2021

- ❖ President Joe Biden has offered a comprehensive immigration plan worthy of bipartisan support. Will it receive the bipartisan backing it deserves? If past is prologue, Congress will fail to seize the opportunity. This is not about building walls and demonizing people but building economic and humane solutions for the betterment of the United States and the Americas. Rolling back Trump-era initiatives, including the construction of a border wall, the plan is bold and ambitious, proposing nothing less than a legislative overhaul of the U.S. immigration system. The U.S. Citizenship Act would fortify the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, which protects “Dreamers,” and institute an eight-year path to citizenship for nearly 11 million undocumented immigrants living in the U.S. The plan also seeks to address root causes in Central America to limit the flow of migrants from these countries. We’ve long argued the Northern Triangle of Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador is desperately in need of a modern Marshall Plan. For comprehensive immigration reform to succeed under a Democratic president and in a divided Senate, there must be room for Republican input, particularly around security.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.expressnews.com/opinion/editorials/article/Editorial-Biden-s-humane-immigration-plan-15908982.php>

## Biden To Rescind Trump's Pandemic-Era Limits On Immigrant And Work Visas, Top Adviser Says

By Camilo Montoya-Galvez – CBS News – January 29, 2021

- ❖ President Biden plans to rescind strict limits on legal immigration that former President Donald Trump said were necessary to protect U.S. workers during the coronavirus-induced economic recession, according to a top White House official. Mr. Biden plans to sign an executive order rescinding the proclamation that suspended certain immigrant and work visas, Esther Olavarria told U.S. mayors, according to a recording of the virtual meeting shared with CBS News. Olavarria is deputy director of the White House Domestic Policy Council and one of the president's top immigration advisers. It is unclear when Mr. Biden intends to sign the proclamation, but his plans to issue several immigration actions on Friday [Jan. 29] have been delayed. The White House did not provide any comment.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/biden-immigration-work-visa-limits-rescind/?tag=CNM-00-10aac3a>

## Biden Administration Faces Backlog Of 380,000 Waiting To Immigrate

By Caleb Hampton – The New York Times – February 3, 2021

- ❖ U.S. consulates issue about half a million immigrant visas per year, most of them to the spouses, children and parents of U.S. citizens and permanent residents. In April, former President Donald J. Trump signed a proclamation suspending most legal immigration — with exceptions for a few privileged categories — under the guise of protecting American jobs. A State Department official said in federal court last month that, as of Dec. 31, more than 380,000 immigrant visa applicants were awaiting a consular interview. Immigration experts said it would take up to a year under normal circumstances to work through that many applications.
- ❖ News Article Source: <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/03/us/immigrant-visas-consulates-backlog.html?action=click&module=Spotlight&pgtype=Homepage>

## Eroded U.S. Asylum Protections For Gender Based Violence Survivors

By MADRE, Human Rights and Gender Justice Clinic and the Florence Immigrant and Refugee Rights Project

- ❖ Violence against women and girls for reasons of their gender is a recognized push factor for migration and a well-known risk in transit. In the last decade, increasing numbers of people, particularly women and children from Mexico and Northern Central America, have sought asylum at the U.S.-Mexico border, fleeing uncontrolled violence, including severe domestic violence and other forms of gender-based persecution. Like other asylum applicants, gender-based violence (GBV) survivors face extreme hardship applying for asylum in the U.S. due to longstanding unfair policies and practices, as well as the Trump administration's anti-immigrant policies. Many remain in prolonged detention during the asylum application process where they experience re-traumatization so severe they consider abandoning their asylum claims despite their fear. They would face serious danger of physical and sexual assault and even death if deported to their home countries.
- ❖ To read the report, go to: [https://www.madre.org/sites/default/files/PDFs/Updated.MADRE\\_GBV\\_Asylum.US\\_UPR%20Brief%202010.13.20.pdf](https://www.madre.org/sites/default/files/PDFs/Updated.MADRE_GBV_Asylum.US_UPR%20Brief%202010.13.20.pdf)



Undocumented families at a bus station in McAllen, Texas.

Photo Credit: Ilana Panich-Linsman for The New York Times