
The US DACA Immigration Reform

Abstract

The research paper examines USA's immigration reform before and during Donald Trump and makes emphasis on comparison between different approaches by four presidents: Ronald Reagan, George W Bush, Barack Obama and Donald Trump. The contrast demonstrates clear distinction between liberal and conservative policies implemented by the presidents towards immigration. The paper also provides statistical data for determining the flow of immigrants in numbers before and during Trump and makes conclusion based upon the results attained from different point of views on immigration policy.

Introduction

Immigration is a part of the history of the United States. People used to choose to leave their own countries to move and settle in the USA for numerous reasons. Seeking economic gain was one of the major reasons why people were so attracted by the USA. Besides, it was widely considered that this country granted freedom of choice whatever political orientation or religious believes one may bear. The examples are pilgrims who traveled to the US at the end of fifteenth century to practice their religion without any interference. Besides, much bigger waves of immigration started during the colonial time especially in the beginning of the nineteenth century and from 1880-1920. Even today immigrants keep flowing within the states notwithstanding the difficulties that might arise. Therefore, in order to control the flow of migrants into the country, the government deemed it essential to implement the immigration reforms.

Immigration Reforms before Trump

The first major immigration reform started when Ronald Reagan was in office in 1986. Immigration Reform and Control Act was adopted in 1986 that abolished hiring illegal immigrants and set penalties for the violation of this act. At the same time, amnesty was granted by the president approximately for 3 million unauthorized immigrants (Massey, 2012). The immigrants who arrived before January 1, 1982 were announced as legal status bearers. Consequently, the act had a positive impact on immigrants since the number increased from 5 million to more than 15 million 2020 (Massey, 2012).

In contrast to Trump's view, George W Bush almost reached the agreement with Mexican president Vicente Fox in 2001 to sign immigration reform that would benefit Mexican emigration to the USA (Edwards, 2012). Reform was not implemented, regardless. The reason was terrorist attack of September 11, 2001.

Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act of 2006 was crucial however it was only seriously taken into consideration during Barack Obama. This plan, consisted of 6 major sections, also had support of "Gang of Eight" (Jr., 2008-9). The sections include tackling border issues, dealing with visa violations, disallowing people to work without employment authorization, determining number of visas issued yearly, assistance for getting legal status, and programs to

help immigrants adapt life in the USA (Nevins, 2016). These provisions seemed so liberal, in fact, former president Barack Obama efforted to make decisions in favor of illegal immigrants. This approach led to the great increase in the number of immigrants. It is estimated that during Obama, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) was issuing social security card, work permit and travel parole much quicker than today (Zug, 2014-2015), while Trump is in the White House. Barack Obama's program was called "Deferred Action" that helped almost half of the unauthorized immigrants to stay legally in the US. This is the period when the immigrants were positively impacted, especially when Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) was enforced (Cisneros J. D., 2015). Obama's endeavor to expand this program was explicitly denied by the Supreme Court. Later, President Trump altered the entire program.

Immigration Under President Donald Trump

In contrast to his predecessors, president Donald Trump changed the federal policy towards immigration. He took explicitly conservative view. Since majority of the immigrants come from Mexico and Latin America, Donald Trump initiated to build the wall to prevent illegal entries to the USA from the Mexico border (Reich, 2018). He declared national emergency in order to put military capital to build the wall. This caused controversy between the president, democrats and Pentagon. Thus, Implementation of Trump's wall has not come into effect. However, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) figures pointed out that at least 93 miles of new wall was constructed. Besides, Donald Trump suggested replacement of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) (Aldana, 2016) ensuring the way to become a citizen nearly for 1.8 million people. "Buy American, Hire American (Pierce, 2018)" is the slogan of Trump's policy. The main distinctive points between the previous presidents and Donald Trump's policy are following:

1. Trump took strict conservative policy towards immigration in contrast to liberal approach of his predecessors.
2. Trump intended to reduce legal immigration together with illegal one by setting limits to grant green cards, also called Diversity Immigrant Visa or Green Card Lottery supervised by the Department of State under the Immigration and Nationality Act (1965) (Tichenor, 2016).
3. Trump made it complicated to get guest H1B working visa.
4. Trump increased USCIS service fees for the purpose to increase in funds for immigration procedures (Johnson, 2019).
5. Donald Trump restricted family-based immigration (Sullivan, 2018).

In order to visually demonstrate all discourse discussed above and make conclusions about consequences of his predecessor's and Donald Trump's immigration policy, Figure analysis is supposed to help. Figure 1. (Studies, 2018) suggests that during Ronald Reagan immigrants increased by 5.7 million that is supposed to be high in that time. When George W. Bush was in office, number of immigrants rose by 8.9 million. During Barack Obama's presidency immigrants increased by 4.5 million. It is important to emphasize that immigrants that were granted official documents and were legalized, no longer considered as immigrants. This might be the reason why increase occurred by 4.5 million and not more indicated in the figure (Cisneros J. D., 2013). Finally, the figure points out that while Donald Trump stays in the White House, the number of immigrants is estimated to increase by 2.2 million, suggested by the projection. Consequently, the figure demonstrated how the USA presidents' immigration

policies were reflected in statistics. Based on this Census Bureau information, the least increase of immigrants after Federal Immigration Reform triggered in the USA, is going to occur during Trump's presidency.

Summary

Federal Immigration Reform was significant for the multinational country such as the USA. Federal reform considered encouraging legal immigration that would reduce number of undocumented immigrants. The reforms started during President Ronald Reagan who granted amnesty to millions of immigrants. During his presidency, number of immigrants increased. George W Bush similarly had even more liberal policy suggesting guest-worker opportunity, also allowing big scope of Mexican immigration as well within the country. Barack Obama has the most liberal approach to migration policy, implemented DACA program that benefited many immigrants residing in the US. In comparison to his former colleagues, Donald Trump's policy is the strictest and as projection analysis demonstrated, is going to be the most effective in terms of illegal and legal immigration reduction in numbers.

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