



## **A Commonsense Approach: Immigration Policy Solutions *Border Enforcement***

Many Americans are frustrated with our immigration policies. But research and experience show that it's not enough to focus only on the problems with our current policies. We also need to paint a picture of what the country would look like with workable, commonsense policies in place. This document identifies solutions across a spectrum of issues relating to immigrants and immigration, reflecting the importance of addressing the problems with our immigration policies as broadly as possible.

### **Topline Message:**

Citizens and immigrants alike want to live in safe communities. Our immigration policies must uphold our values by protecting communities and respecting rights. To do that, we don't need more enforcement measures or triggers. We have reached a high-water mark in spending on enforcement: militarizing the border, raiding workplaces, and deporting people who have lived and worked here—posing no threat—for years. Current realities on the ground do not justify continued build-up and only divert attention and resources from the smart policies we must implement to create a reasonable immigration process that upholds our values and protects the rights of everyone here.

### **Solutions:**

#### **Develop humane border enforcement strategies as part of commonsense immigration policy reform**

- What Congress should do:**
- ✓ Enact legislation that will invest resources for creating accountability for our current border enforcement strategies without creating insurmountable barriers as prerequisites, such as additional border enforcement benchmarks.
  - ✓ Provide adequate staffing and funding for U.S. ports of entry.
  - ✓ Implement mechanisms to improve accountability and oversight of the Border Patrol for the protection of residents of border communities against harassment, racial profiling, and other misconduct by Border Patrol agents.

#### **Demilitarize the U.S.-Mexico border to protect the quality of life of border communities**

- What DHS should do:**
- ✓ Implement a new border policy that would reflect a concern for quality of life and environmental degradation.
  - ✓ Take serious measures to disband border paramilitary vigilante organizations.
  - ✓ Scale back military-type training and tactics of ICE agents and the Border Patrol to reflect the human dimension of border enforcement.

## Renew our commitment to international human rights norms

- What DHS should do:**
- ✓ Provide training and certification for local and federal agents on human rights compliance.
  - ✓ Establish an independent review commission.
  - ✓ Provide oversight of the complaint review process.

### Talking Points

- ▶ A roadmap to citizenship is imperative but must not be done at the expense of border communities, who have endured years of security “enhancements.” Any immigration policy reform bill must recognize that the past 10 years have seen unprecedented and overwhelming increases in the number of border patrol agents, border wall construction, unmanned aerial vehicles, and border militarization.
- ▶ We need commonsense immigration policies—not an escalation of border militarization, more detention and arrests, and policies that promote racial profiling, a harmful and ineffective practice based on stereotypes. We need border security that involves and enlists border communities in providing for safe borders in ways that respect their human rights and constitutional rights and treat everyone fairly.
- ▶ We are throwing money and resources at the border but not evaluating how well programs are working. We should strive for quality—not quantity—of border enforcement.

### Examples of Social Media



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20 Mar

Border security must enlist border communities in providing safe [#borders](#) in ways that respect [#humanrights](#) and treats everyone fairly.



**The Opportunity Agenda** shared a link.

March 20

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The research cited in this document is current as of February 2013.

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