

COMING TO AMERICA

Should illegal immigrants be allowed to become citizens?

Over the last year a great debate over immigration has polarized the nation, sparking huge rallies and marches, prompting a series of congressional hearings and generating competing bills in Congress for immigration reform. Most Americans believe that something should be done to regulate the estimated 12 million undocumented immigrants currently living and working in the U.S. But so far little has been accomplished.

Congress is at an impasse. A bill passed by the House of Representatives takes a hard-line approach, making illegal entry into the U.S. a felony and increasing penalties for those who assist or hire illegal immigrants. A Senate measure takes a more lenient approach, creating a guest-worker program, increasing the number of visas issued annually and allowing illegal immigrants

who have been in the country for five or more years to apply for legal residency and citizenship.

Those who favor the tougher stance say that illegal immigrants weaken the country, taking away jobs from U.S. citizens and contributing to such social problems as rising crime rates and overcrowding in schools. They say the nation's top immigration priority should be to improve border security. Those who support more lenient reform say vast numbers of illegal immigrants are law-abiding, hardworking people who pay income and Social Security taxes and can make the country stronger.

They say illegal immigrants deserve a path to citizenship. With the election of a new Congress, talk has turned to compromise.



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YES

- Those who have jobs and pay their taxes should have a chance to apply for citizenship; besides, it would be impossible to identify and deport 12 million undocumented immigrants.
- Undocumented immigrants contribute to economic growth and perform low-skill jobs that many American workers do not want.
- New immigration has added to the continual growth and prosperity of our nation and should be encouraged.

NO

- Unlike those who enter this country legally, illegal immigrants have broken the law and should not be rewarded with amnesty and a chance for citizenship.
- Hardworking Americans suffer economically when wages for low-skill jobs are driven down and their tax dollars go to pay for social services for illegal immigrants.
- The U.S. needs to secure its borders; offering amnesty encourages more illegal immigration and threatens national security.