

National Foundation for American Policy

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New Analysis: Immigration Bill Would Increase Average Annual Labor Force Growth By 23%, Providing A Boost to Economic Growth

Bill Would Increase Legal Immigration By 28% a Year and Provide One-Time Increase For Legalization and Backlog Reduction in Family and Employment Categories

Arlington, Va. – The annual number of legal immigrants admitted to the United States would rise to about 1.5 million starting in the first year under a new bill backed by the Biden administration, but during the 2020s the level would be higher at times as the family-sponsored and employment-based immigrant backlog is eliminated and people who are legalized under the bill are counted as lawful permanent residents, according to a [new analysis](#) by the National Foundation for American Policy (NFAP), a nonpartisan policy research organization. The analysis finds that with FY 2016 as a baseline, the annual number of legal immigrants admitted will be an estimated 28% or 330,063 higher if the bill were to become law.

The study, “An Analysis of the U.S. Citizenship Act,” can be found at <https://nfap.com/>.

Increasing legal immigration by 28% a year would increase the average annual labor force growth in the United States by 23% over current U.S. projections, which would help economic growth and address a slower-growing U.S. workforce. The average annual labor force growth could be even more than 23% compared to a scenario of no immigration increases because the Bureau of Labor Statistics currently projects the U.S. labor force will grow by 800,000 a year, and that baseline growth may be lower after 2029 without the increase in immigration contained in the bill.

In contrast, if the United States continued the Trump administration’s policies that administratively reduced legal immigration by approximately 49%, average annual labor force growth would be approximately 59% lower than compared to a policy of no immigration reductions, according to a NFAP [analysis](#). Under policies that reduced legal immigration by half, in 40 years the United States would have only about 6 million more people in the labor force than it has today. Admitting fewer immigrants results in lower economic growth because labor force growth is an important element of economic growth and immigrants play a major part in both current and future labor force growth.

The U.S. Citizenship Act’s provisions on legalization and backlog reduction in family and employment categories would provide a one-time increase in legal immigration of approximately 11.5 million between FY 2022 and FY 2031. In doing so, it addresses what many consider to be significant policy shortcomings in the current U.S. immigration system, including decades-long waits for many employment-based immigrants, long waits for family-sponsored immigrants and the lack of a legislative solution for Dreamers.

The projection on labor force growth does not include the one-time increase in legal immigration from backlog reduction and legalization. It also does not take into account future growth from the children of immigrants who would receive permanent residence under the bill.

If this analysis underestimates the amount the bill increases legal immigration, the positive impact of the legislation on average annual labor force growth and the U.S. economy could be greater.

About the National Foundation for American Policy

Established in 2003, the National Foundation for American Policy (NFAP) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, non-partisan public policy research organization based in Arlington, Virginia focusing on trade, immigration and related issues. The Advisory Board members include Columbia University economist Jagdish Bhagwati, Ohio University economist Richard Vedder, Cornell Law School professor Stephen W. Yale-Loehr and former INS Commissioner James W. Ziglar. Over the past 24 months, NFAP's research has been written about in the *Wall Street Journal*, the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post* and other major media outlets. The organization's reports can be found at www.nfap.com. Twitter: [@NFAPResearch](https://twitter.com/NFAPResearch)

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