

Immigration Weekly Round-Up: Expulsion Policy Faces Political Heat; ICE Arrests Fall Under Biden; Chamber of Commerce Supports Increase in Immigration

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Democrats Urge President to End Expulsion Policy

Congressional Democrats are pressuring President Biden to end the use of a policy by which immigrants stopped at the U.S. southern border can be quickly sent back to Mexico or their home countries without being allowed to request asylum at the time they are apprehended by Border Patrol Officers. The Biden administration has said the policy, which was utilized frequently by the Trump administration, was deemed necessary, pursuant to [CDC](#) guidelines, to minimize the risk of COVID-19 outbreaks inside border detention facilities. Among those pushing to end the policy are Senate Majority Leader Charles Schumer (D-NY) and New Jersey Senator Bob Menendez (D-NJ). Both have claimed the expulsions are “not who we are as a nation.”

The issue has been complicated by two recent federal court rulings – both relating to the treatment of immigrant children – that appear at odds with each other. A Washington, D.C., appeals court has issued an order barring U.S. officials from expelling families with children to countries in which they faced persecution. At the same time, a federal judge in Texas has ruled that the Biden administration could not continue to exempt unaccompanied children from expulsion.

Public attention to the issue, as well as these court rulings, has put pressure on the CDC to review its policy guidance. The NM Immigration Blog will continue to cover this story as it develops.

Total ICE Arrests Down, Emphasis on Noncitizens with Serious Convictions

Arrests by [U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement \(“ICE”\)](#) dramatically decreased over the past year following a change in enforcement priorities. The Biden Administration has chosen to focus on the arrest and removal of undocumented immigrants who have committed serious crimes and reduce enforcement efforts on other individuals. In a recently released annual report, ICE indicated that immigration arrests dropped nearly 40% from the previous year, while the number of people apprehended who had committed offenses deemed serious under immigration law (“aggravated felonies”) almost doubled. Additionally, ICE has limited enforcement actions at hospitals and schools, as well as other sites deemed “sensitive locations.”

ICE further reported that close to half of immigrant arrests and deportations involved those with serious criminal convictions, including a 250% increase in arrests of sex offenders.

U.S. Chamber of Commerce Supports More Legal Immigration

The [U.S. Chamber of Commerce](#) has noted in a statement that the only way to address low employment in America is to improve the immigration system and facilitate legal immigration. The statement was prompted by the recent report from the [Bureau of Labor Statistics \("BLS"\)](#) revealing there were 11.3 million job openings across the United States as of January 2022. Chamber Executive Vice President and Chief Policy Officer Neil Bradley stated that "there are 4.75 million more open jobs today than there are people looking for work. One reason for the shortfall is decreased legal immigration. It is past time for Congress to act to modernize our broken immigration system."

Recently, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce joined a new coalition, the Alliance for a New Immigration Consensus, comprising many groups representing several industries. The coalition is working to forge bipartisan legislative support for solutions that provide permanent legal protections and other reforms for many immigrants, including DACA recipients ("Dreamers"), those with Temporary Protected Status, and agricultural workers.

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