

New Bipartisan Immigration Bill Introduced

Article By:

Laura Foote Reiff

Reps. Maria Elvira Salazar (R-Fla.) and Veronica Escobar (D-Tex.) introduced a bipartisan immigration bill in the House of Representatives May 23. The bill, called the Dignity Act of 2023, would provide a path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants, update the legal immigration process, and establish “humanitarian campuses” on the U.S. border that would process asylum claims in 60 days.

The bill is one of a few bipartisan immigration proposals to be introduced in Congress since the Comprehensive Immigration Reform efforts of 2013. It is also the first bill to include a path to citizenship for adult undocumented immigrants and changes legal immigration pathways that have prevented many from acquiring visas.

This immigration bill, like other immigration legislation, will face challenges to passage. House Republican leaders have said that they will not consider any immigration legislation until a border security plan has passed both chambers.

Some of the Dignity Act’s key provisions aim to:

- **End illegal immigration:** The bill would provide \$25 billion to secure the border, expedite asylum processing, and implement mandatory E-Verify. This provision seeks to reduce the number of undocumented immigrants in the United States, thus reducing the strain on social services and increasing tax revenue.
- **Give dignity to undocumented immigrants:** The bill would create a seven-year temporary legal status for undocumented immigrants who pass a background check and pay a fine. This would allow undocumented immigrants to work legally, travel freely, and access government services.
- **Protect American workers:** The bill would create a fund to train and upskill American workers and would require immigrants to train or retrain at least one American worker, aiming to ensure that American workers have the skills they need to compete in the global economy.
- **Grow the economy:** The bill would increase high-skilled visa opportunities, improve ports of entry, and support American agriculture, seeking to attract talented immigrants to the United States, boost trade, and create jobs.

- Address legal immigration: The bill would change the legal immigration system, aiming to make it easier for businesses to hire the workers they need. It would add additional immigrant visa numbers and change the world-wide quota system, add a returning worker exception to increase H-2B numbers, and make changes to high-skilled immigration.

Reactions to the Dignity Act

The Dignity Act has received mixed reactions. Some immigration advocates have praised the bill as a major step forward, while others have criticized it for not going far enough. Immigration advocates who support the bill say that it is a comprehensive and fair proposal that would finally provide a path to citizenship for millions of undocumented immigrants. They also say that the bill would improve the legal immigration process and make it more efficient and fairer. Immigration advocates who criticize the bill say it is insufficient, noting it does not include enough protections for asylum-seekers and it does not do enough to address the root causes of migration.

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