

### Spotlight on Immigration

**Democratic candidates support safe, efficient pathways to citizenship that protect children and families.** Sen. Elizabeth Warren's (D-MA) plan would "reverse this president's discriminatory policies" by simplifying naturalization and reunifying families.<sup>1</sup> Former VP Joe Biden finds "no rationale...to separate families," and supports speedier handling of asylum cases and Dreamer protections.<sup>2</sup> According to Sen. Bernie Sanders (D-VT), "we need...comprehensive immigration reform," because "if you open the borders...there's a lot of poverty in this world...and I don't think that's something we can do."<sup>3</sup> If elected, Sen. Kamala Harris (D-CA) will "take action to lift barriers Dreamers face" and allow separated families to claim "extreme hardship" to remain in the country while applying for legal status.<sup>4</sup> Mayor Pete Buttigieg (D-IN) supports new Community Renewal Visas that would allow communities to open opportunities for immigrants in specific fields, because "immigrants can and should be essential players in our...economy."<sup>5</sup> Former HUD Secretary Julian Castro finds "the volume of requests to enter this country...are not a danger," and supports decriminalizing border crossing as the country prepares for "climate refugees."<sup>6</sup> When pressed, former Rep. Beto O'Rourke (D-TX) supports programs "to keep families together and [that] push immigrants...to pursue legal...[and] safe" entry into the country.<sup>7</sup> Activist Tom Steyer donated \$1 million for immigrant legal services at the border, and urges the government to do the same until it finds "a comprehensive and humane way...to citizenship."<sup>8</sup> Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) opposes "horrendous decisions like separating kids from their parents," but comprehensive immigration reform is necessary since "we are a major country with major borders."<sup>9</sup> Protecting Dreamers and revising immigrant detention policies reflects "our values, not one that strips dignity...from people fleeing danger,"<sup>10</sup> believes Sen. Cory Booker (D-NJ). Entrepreneur Andrew Yang believes "12 million undocumented immigrants...is a major problem" and supports a new tiered citizenship program that would discourage actions "to circumvent legal immigration channels."<sup>11</sup> Rep. Tulsi Gabbard (D-HI) equates immigration reform with "secure borders."<sup>12</sup> Candidates who support decriminalizing crossing the border include Mayor Wayne Messam (D-FL), former Rep. Joe Sestak (D-PA), and best-selling author Marianne Williamson.<sup>13</sup> Although some candidates may not support decriminalizing border crossing, they do support comprehensive reforms that keep families intact and provide smoother pathways to citizenship; they include Sen. Michael Bennet (D-CO), Gov. Steve Bullock (D-MT), former Rep. John Delaney (D-MD), and Rep. Tim Ryan (D-OH).<sup>14</sup>

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**Republican nominees side with hardline anti-immigrant policies that call for a border wall, imprisonment of children, and racist entry requirements.** As he calls immigrants "rapists,"<sup>15</sup> "animals,"<sup>16</sup> and separates families,<sup>17</sup> President Donald Trump's administration will also block visas for immigrants without health insurance because "immigrants...should not...saddle our healthcare system." Former Rep. Joe Walsh (R-IL) supports "tougher" treatment of illegal entry, but admits that "the situation at our border is a bigger mess than when [Trump] got elected."<sup>18</sup> Instead of stoking "racial tensions," former Gov. Bill Weld (R-MA) proposes expanding work visas and providing "more people...agents...drones" at the border.<sup>19</sup> Former Rep. Mark Sanford (R-SC) supports employers using E-Verify, and claims that he originally backed construction of a border wall "before Trump...elevated the issue."<sup>20</sup>

### NEA Believes

The broken immigration system is causing distress for our students, families, and communities, and educators believe the country needs commonsense immigration reform that protects the family unit, ensures access to public education and vital services, and provides a realistic path to citizenship, including for DREAMers—students and young adults who were brought to this country as children. The United States is a nation of immigrants, and how we treat aspiring citizens reflects our commitment to the values that define us.

<sup>1</sup> "Elizabeth Warren pledges to decriminalize border crossings, reverse Trump administration policies in new immigration plan," [CNN](#), 7/11/2019

<sup>2</sup> "Biden jumps into damage control after upsetting Latino leaders," [Politico](#), 8/14/2019

<sup>3</sup> "Bernie Sanders call immigration surge at the border a 'serious problem' but says there are more pressing issues at hand," [Business Insider](#), 6/9/2019

<sup>4</sup> "Kamala Harris unveils immigration plan to expand deferred action, use executive action to provide pathway to citizenship," [CNN](#), 6/12/2019

<sup>5</sup> "A Commitment to America's Heartland: Unleashing the Potential of Rural America," [Pete 2020](#), accessed 10/15/2019

<sup>6</sup> "Julian Castro's quiet moral radicalism," [Vox](#), 9/12/2019

<sup>7</sup> "Beto O'Rourke in 'Around the Table' talks guns, racism, and immigration with Texas voters," [ABC News](#), 9/10/2019

<sup>8</sup> "What does Tom Steyer believe? Where the candidate stands on 6 issues," [PBS News Hour](#), 7/10/2019

<sup>9</sup> "Amy Klobuchar Is Running for President in 2020. Here's Where She Stands on 9 Important Issues," [Elle](#), 6/25/2019

<sup>10</sup> "Cory Booker Proposes Drastic Changes to Immigration Detention System," [New York Times](#), 7/2/2019

<sup>11</sup> "Andrew Yang on Immigration," [On the Issues](#), accessed 10/15/2019

<sup>12</sup> "Tulsi Gabbard: 'It's fair' to say 2020 Democrats advocate for 'open borders,'" [Washington Examiner](#), 9/10/2019

<sup>13</sup> "Immigration: Where 2020 Democratic Candidates Stand on Border Crossings and More," [NPR](#), 9/12/2019

<sup>14</sup> "Where 2020 Democrats stand on Immigration," [The Washington Post](#), accessed 10/15/2019

<sup>15</sup> "Donald Trump's false comments connecting Mexican immigrants and crime," [The Washington Post](#), 7/18/2015

<sup>16</sup> "Trump ramps up rhetoric on undocumented immigrants: 'These aren't people. These are animals.'" [USA Today](#), 5/17/2018

<sup>17</sup> "Trump's family separation policy amplified children's trauma," [Roll Call](#), 9/5/2019

<sup>18</sup> "What Joe Walsh thinks about immigration, climate change, and Trump," [PBS News Hour](#), 8/27/2019

<sup>19</sup> "The 2020 Twenty—Bill Weld," [Independent Journal Review](#), 6/18/2019

<sup>20</sup> "What does Mark Sanford believe? Where the candidate stands on 6 issues," [PBS News Hour](#), 9/11/2019