

Topics / Immigration in America / Immigration in America: Timeline

2013 - On October 3, California governor Jerry Brown signs a bill allowing unauthorized immigrants to obtain state drivers' licenses. The new licenses will be marked to distinguish them from drivers' licenses for legal residents.

2013 - The U.S. Supreme Court refuses to hear an appeal over Alabama's immigration law. The decision leaves in place a lower court ruling that had stopped officials from enforcing a controversial provision that made it a crime to transport or harbor anyone who is in the country illegally.

2012 - On June 25 the Supreme Court rules that while certain aspects of Arizona's strict 2010 immigration law, SB 1070, are unconstitutional, the controversial provision requiring state law enforcement personnel to check the immigration status of people they have stopped, detained, or arrested may go into effect.

2012 - On June 15, President Barack Obama announces that his administration will no longer deport certain undocumented immigrants who came to the country as children. As a result of the decision as many as 800,000 immigrants under age 30 will be eligible for work permits.

2012 - Louisiana, Tennessee, South Carolina, and Georgia require employers to use the federal E-Verify program to confirm that employees are authorized to work in the United States. Meanwhile, California prohibits state or local governments from requiring employers to use E-Verify.

2011 - California governor Jerry Brown signs the first part of the California Dream Act into law. The act allows undocumented students at the state's universities to apply for private sector financial aid.

2011 - Alabama passes what is billed as the nation's toughest legislation against undocumented immigrants. In addition to requiring police officers to detain anyone they suspect of being in the country illegally, the law requires public schools to verify the residency status of students and makes it a crime to knowingly harbor or transport someone who does not have legal residency status.

2011 - In a speech at the University of Texas at El Paso, Department of Homeland Security secretary Janet Napolitano reports that the federal government deported a record number of illegal aliens in 2009 and 2010, numbering over 779,000. More than 195,000 of those deported were convicted criminals.

2010 - In Arizona, Senate Bill 1070 is approved by the state legislature and signed into law by the governor. The law allows the police to detain individuals suspected of being in the country illegally and allows foreign nationals to be charged with a misdemeanor for not carrying proof of residency papers.

2007 - In Taylor, Texas, the T. Don Hutto Residential Center—the country's main family center for suspected illegal immigrants—agrees to improve conditions at its facilities. The reforms are part of a settlement reached after the American Civil Liberties Union and the immigration clinic at the University of Texas Law School filed a lawsuit on behalf of immigrant children, charging that they were underfed, confined in cells with their families for 12 hours a day, and forced to wear institutional uniforms.

2007 - Census results demonstrate that nonwhites are the majority population in one-third of the United States' most populated counties. The data reveals a shift in immigration patterns from major metropolitan areas to suburban areas.

2007 - In August, local lawmakers in Culpeper County, Virginia, unanimously approve a resolution declaring English as its official language.

2007 - The National Conference of State Legislatures reports that state legislatures have responded to Congress's failure to pass a comprehensive immigration bill by adopting immigration measures of their own. According to the report, 41 states have enacted new immigration laws, and the number of immigration bills introduced by state lawmakers this year has double in comparison to those introduced in 2006.

2007 - In May and June, the U.S. Senate fails to pass comprehensive immigration bills that has received support from a group of bipartisan senators and the White House. The bills emphasized border security measures, including construction of barriers and fences along the border, and would have provided a pathway to citizenship to illegal immigrants, who met certain requirements.

2007 - A U.S. District Court bars the city of Hazelton, Pennsylvania, from enacting ordinances that would fine landlords who rent to illegal immigrants, revoke business licenses to those who employ them, and declare English as the official language.

2007 - In spite of support from President George W. Bush and many Democratic leaders, Congress fails to pass legislation that called for strengthening border security, establishing a guest worker program, and providing a pathway for illegal immigrants to become citizens. Critics denounce the bill as providing "amnesty" to illegal immigrants.

2007 - In Farmers Branch, Texas, a city ordinance prohibits landlords from renting apartments from illegal immigrants. Apartment managers must verify that potential renters are legal residents or U.S. citizens or face a fine up to \$500. It is the first ban to be enacted by a public vote.

2006 - In December, Immigration and Customs agents raid Swift meat packing plants in Colorado, Texas, Utah, Nebraska, Iowa, and Minnesota. The government claims that many of the illegal immigrants working there have stolen the social security numbers of U.S. citizens and falsified papers to gain employment.

2006 - In November, Arizona voters pass Proposition 100, denying bail to illegal immigrants charged with serious felony offenses; Proposition 102, prohibiting illegal immigrants from receiving punitive damages in civil lawsuits; and Proposition 103, declaring English as the official language in Arizona.

2006 - On May 1, on what is dubbed "A Day Without an Immigrant," over one million people in cities across the United States leave work, walk out of school, join marches, and participate in a boycott of American businesses to demand the opportunity for illegal immigrants living in the U.S. to earn citizenship.

2005 - On December 16, the House of Representatives passes a controversial immigration bill which would criminalize illegal immigrants and raise new walls on almost half of the 2,000-mile long U.S.-Mexico border.

1996 - In an effort to reduce illegal immigration, Congress passes the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act.

- 1990** - The Immigration Act increases the immigration ceiling to 700,000, and the McCarran-Walter Act is amended so individuals can no longer be denied entry on the basis of their beliefs or political affiliations.
- 1986** - Congress passes the Immigration Control and Reform Act, which provides amnesty to illegal immigrants living in the U.S. since 1982 and penalizes employers who hire illegal immigrants.
- 1980** - Congress passes the Refugee Act, which allows the President to admit any number of refugees in cases of emergency.
- 1968** - The Bilingual Education Act is passed to help schools establish educational programs for students with limited English-speaking ability.
- 1965** - Quotas based on national origin are removed from U.S. immigration laws.
- 1952** - The McCarran-Walter Act removes race as a factor for exclusion in U.S. immigration laws, but adds political beliefs and affiliations as a basis for denial of entry.
- 1921** - The first quota act, established to decrease the flow of immigrants coming from eastern and southern Europe, sets an immigration limit according to the size of the foreign-born population for a particular country.
- 1917** - Congress passes a law which requires immigrants 16 years of age or older to pass a literacy test.
- 1907** - The United States enters into a "gentleman's agreement" with Japan, which restricts Japanese immigration into the United States.
- 1898** - The United States gains control of the Phillipines, Guam, Puerto Rico, and Cuba as a result of the Spanish-American War.
- 1896** - In *Plessy v. Ferguson*, the Supreme Court creates a legal basis for racial segregation by establishing the doctrine of "separate but equal."
- 1892** - Ellis Island opens and becomes the leading port of entry for immigrants coming to the United States in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.
- 1882** - The Chinese Exclusion Act prohibits Chinese laborers from immigrating to the United States for 10 years.
- 1868** - The Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution guarantees due process and equal protection of the law to all individuals born or naturalized in the United States, regardless of race.
- 1848** - The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ends the Mexican-American War and guarantees U.S. citizenship to Mexicans still residing in Mexican territory ceded to the United States.
- 1819** - Congress passes an act requiring ship captains to keep manifests of immigrants entering the United States.
- 1790** - Congress passes the Naturalization Act, which establishes a two-year residency requirement for immigrants wishing to become U.S. citizens.

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[back to top](#) **Entry ID: 914136**