# Fair Laws. Effective Enforcement. Stronger Communities.

A legislative agenda for a fair and functional immigration system: legalization for long-term undocumented residents, expanded lawful pathways, effective enforcement and secure borders.

## The Case for Action

The United States does not have to choose between a functional and fair immigration system. **Congress can — and must — deliver both.**

For decades, outdated laws, persistent backlogs and shifting approaches based on executive action have left families, communities and enforcement agencies navigating an increasingly unstable immigration system. Recent administrations have demonstrated the limits of relying primarily on executive action: Unprecedented migration flows exposed weaknesses in the asylum and border system, but unconstrained mass enforcement and weakened institutional guardrails illustrate the grave costs of treating maximal enforcement as the answer. **The solution? A legislative agenda for a functional and fair immigration system.**

***Four pillars for a fair and functional immigration system:***

| Congressional Priority | Congressional Action |
|---|---|
| **Create pathways to earned legal status** | Establish earned pathway to permanent residence and citizenship for long-term undocumented residents — recognizing their contributions, family ties and roots in American communities. |
| **Modernize legal immigration** | Expand lawful pathways, reduce visa backlogs, reunite families, and align immigration policy with America's economic and workforce needs. |
| **Target enforcement** | Modernize immigration courts, expand legal access, protect sensitive locations, and ensure enforcement is lawful, humane and transparent. |
| **Ensure targeted and accountable enforcement** | Establish targeted and proportionate interior enforcement priorities, strengthen independent oversight and enforceable safeguards, protect due process, end family detention and ensure humane conditions in immigration detention. |
| **Strengthen border management and asylum processing** | Modernize infrastructure and staffing; invest in technology that maintains civil rights, civil liberties and privacy safeguards; and streamline timely and fair asylum processing and adjudications. |

These four pillars reinforce one another:

- Earned legalization reduces the undocumented population, strengthens compliance, expands the tax base and allows enforcement agencies to focus on public safety.
- Modern legal immigration reduces incentives for irregular migration and strengthens the economy.
- Credible enforcement focuses resources on genuine threats rather than indiscriminate removals.
- Strong borders are more sustainable when lawful migration pathways exist.

**Congress has the opportunity to replace recurring crisis and administrative instability with durable rules, predictable processes and broad public legitimacy.**

Immigration and the rule of law are not competing agendas; **with reform, they can be complementary.**

## About the Report

*"Fair Laws, Effective Enforcement, Stronger Communities: A Balanced Vision for Immigration Reform"* presents a framework for modernizing the U.S. immigration system around four mutually reinforcing pillars: earned pathways to citizenship, modern legal immigration channels, targeted and accountable enforcement, and effective border management. The report supports a practical, durable legislative approach that strengthens security, opportunity, accountability and fairness.

### About UnidosUS

UnidosUS is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that serves as the nation's largest Hispanic civil rights and advocacy organization. Since 1968, we have built a stronger America by creating opportunities for Latinos and breaking down barriers to expand economic and social progress for all. UnidosUS partners with an Affiliate Network of nearly 300 community-based organizations across the United States and Puerto Rico.

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