

Trump Introduces Outlines of Immigration Reform in Advance of 2020 Campaign

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President Donald Trump has introduced the broad outlines of his proposal for immigration reform. The “merit and heart system” [focuses on security and establishing a more fully merit-based system](#) for permanent residence (“green card”) status.

What do we know about the proposal so far?

In terms of security, it includes:

- Construction of parts of the Southern Border Wall at 33 key areas to thwart drug and human trafficking
- Further restrictions on asylum claims
- Allowing longer detentions of immigrant families at the border

In terms of legal immigration, it includes:

- No reduction in overall numbers of immigrants, but a change in priorities
- Family based immigration will be reduced – only spouses and children will go to the “front of the line”
- Merit-based immigration will be increased
- Similar to naturalization requirements, merit-based immigration would include an English-language requirement and a civics test

According to the President, the new criteria will be “crystal clear.” The merit-based system will focus on younger workers who can contribute to the economy for a longer period time who also possess:

- Valuable skills
- Job offers
- Advanced education
- Ability to create jobs for U.S. workers
- Higher wages
- Financial self-sufficiency

The security proposals are not apt to gain much Democratic support. Moreover, the proposal does not include some items key to bi-partisan support. There is no mention of the over 11 million undocumented individuals currently in the U.S. and there is no mention of the “Dreamers.”

Jared Kushner, White House Advisor, has worked on this proposal for months. Whether it will morph into a bill or simply be used by Congress as it works to come to some sort agreement is yet to be seen. Regardless of its prospects of ever becoming law, the [expectation is that this proposal will be a key part](#) of President Trump’s 2020 campaign messaging.

Jackson Lewis P.C. © 2019

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jackson lewis.

Article By [Jackson Lewis P.C.](#)
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