



# US Immigration Newsletter

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## UCIS Policy Updates to Watch Out For



In a Fox New taped earlier this month, President Trump formally voiced long-simmering frustrations about the state of the UCIS. During the interview, the President calls current immigration system at turns *corrupt* and *ridiculous*, while going on to state that wide-ranging policy changes would be required for *the good of the country*.

It certainly seems as if Attorney General Jeff Sessions has been paying attention to the President's complaints. Over the past year, we've seen the DHS make full use of his department's delegated powers to reshape how the judiciary, UCIS officers, and law enforcement officials deal with immigration issues.

Here are some key changes that immigrants should be aware of:

- In October 2017, the UCIS issued new guidance for non-immigrant visa extension petitions. Under previous rulings, most of these applications were treated with deference to prior court determinations.

According to the new policy, these extension petitions would now be treated with the same scrutiny as an initial application, and the petitioner would have to prove that they fulfilled the criteria for extension.

- In August of last year, the UCIS expanded in-person interview requirements for immigrants that were seeking a change of status. Previously, immigrants that had lodged applications for permanent residency based on prior employment or to join a principal asylee had been exempted from additional interviews.

- Many of these “*change of status*” requests are now also being met with RFE (request for evidence orders) wherein immigrants are asked to produce a wealth of supporting documentation to back up their applications.
- Under the new *Buy American, Hire American* policy all non-immigrant work visa applications will require clear arguments and evidence in favor of hiring foreign workers over local job seekers.

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## The Looming US Labor Crisis

While the Trump administration works to roll back many long-established protections for immigrant workers, business owners in many cities across the country are struggling with a deepening shortage of skilled and non-skilled labor.

Pew Research Center data shows that immigrants currently make up 17% of the US working population, if these individuals were to be removed from the workforce then many of the country’s key industries would find it impossible to keep up with increasing demand.

According to Ali Noorani, a researcher at the National Immigration Forum, if birthrates in the United States continue at their current rate without further immigration then the US would see a shortfall of 7.5 million workers by 2020.

These statistics show just how important a thriving immigration system is to the economic health of the country.





In the latest of a long line of back and forth arguments over California's so-called sanctuary city laws. President Trump stated that the State's decision not to investigate or detain immigrants for federal law enforcement purposes was directly responsible for his family separation policy.

In response to these claims, California governor Jerry Brown tweeted out a statement in which he called out the President for "*lying about immigration.*"

Under the California Values Act or SB54, local law enforcement authorities are restricted from assisting federal authorities in the arrest of deportable immigrants in the State. In this case, assistance extends to detaining immigrants, providing office space for federal authorities, and providing on-ground investigative support.

The only exception to this rule is in cases where the immigrant is convicted of serious felonies or felony misdemeanors.