



# US Immigration Newsletter

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## A Closer Look at Family Separation



Since Attorney General Jeff Sessions first announced the government's new "zero-tolerance" illegal immigration policy back in March, we have seen more than 2000 children separated from their families at the Southwest border.

With many sections of the country in uproar, President Trump has attempted to pin this highly controversial move on Democratic obstruction in the House and Senate, while assorted statements from other members of the administration, have claimed that family separation is merely a natural extension of existing laws. However, legal experts such as the ACLU's Lee Gerent describe the policy as "*the most horrific immigration policy*" that they have ever seen.

This border crackdown seems especially futile in light of the fact that the vast majority of criminal prosecutions filed against immigrant parents have involved extremely minor sentences that usually entailed [no additional jail time and fines of less than \\$10](#). In most of these cases, the immigrants in question were immediately sent back to the border for deportation after sentencing.

Unfortunately, most of these proceedings take a substantial amount of time to conclude, which means that children are being held in detention facilities away from their parents for weeks at a time. According to existing precedent established through the Flores consent decree and other rulings, children detained during these circumstances must be released within 20 days.

These legal issues are compounded by the lack of planning and infrastructure

in place to reunite parents with their children. According to observers that are close to the matter, there is currently no mechanism to facilitate communication between immigrant parents and their children. This lack of oversight could make it extremely difficult to bring together many of the separated families that have been impacted by the border crackdown.

As of two days ago, a California Federal Judge has finally stepped in to order the reunification of all separated families within a 30 day period (14 days for children under 5), but whether the authorities even have the capability to follow through on this order remains to be seen.

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## Competing Immigration Bills Go To House Vote

After long weeks of negotiation between hard-line *Freedom Caucus* members and moderate elements, comprising GOP leaders and White House staffers, came to an impasse the House will vote on competing immigration bills to determine how the government will deal with several key immigration issues.

Amongst the issues under consideration are:

- New protections for DACA recipients who have recently lost their legal status.
- Funding for the Trump Administration's Border Wall
- A new E-verify program for foreign workers.
- A move to a merit-based visa system.
- A new guest-worker program that would make it easier for farmer's to hire migrant laborers during key harvesting seasons.



## Most Americans Are In Favor Of Immigration

As Americans young and old take to the streets across major cities to protest the Trump Administration's "zero-tolerance" policy, it's worth keeping in mind that the vast majority of US citizens are squarely behind immigration.

A recent [Gallup poll](#) shows that a staggering 75% of Americans agree that immigration is beneficial for the country, with more than 84% offering their support for legal immigration in particular.

According to the findings, a further 28% of respondents think that immigration should be increased in the future while 39% believe that present levels of immigration are adequate.

These results prove that regardless of political affiliations, most US citizens are firmly in opposition to increasingly restrictive policies regarding DACA recipients and foreign migrants attempting to enter the country through prescribed channels.

