

## Immigrant Rights – Scope, Limits, and Implications

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“Immigrant-rights” is a term commonly used by immigrant advocates – including service providers, community organizers, leftists, lawyers, foundation program officers, labor organizers, and policy reformers.

But the term *immigrant-rights* is seldom defined by those who refer to the rights of immigrants when campaigning for immigration reform. This is especially true for immigrant-rights advocates and organizations that aren’t directly involved in the defense of the legal rights of immigrants.

Over the past few decades, most of the organizations and coalitions involved in grassroots efforts and policy advocacy for liberal immigration reform have identified themselves as “immigrant-rights” groups. At the same time, since the early 1980s many organizations and campaigns have emerged to serve immigrant communities and to fight discrimination against immigrants.

In the aftermath of the defeat of the Comprehensive Immigration Reform (CIR) campaign over the past decade— routinely described as an “immigrant-rights” struggle and movement – the value of the term as a framework for reform efforts and as a messaging tool needs review.

Immigrant-rights is a term that is still widely used by groups and activists who call for an immigration reform that would legalize the status of unauthorized immigrants. But there are indications that at least some sectors of the pro-immigrant movement have become more circumspect about what they contend are immigrant rights.

The National Immigration Forum (NIF), which was founded in 1982 and has been at the center of all immigration reform struggles over the past three decades, described itself as the “nation’s premier immigrant rights organization.” Two years ago, the Forum began eliminating the term from its website and literature, and its executive director Ali Noorani currently describes NIF “as one of the nation’s premier pro-immigrant advocacy and policy organizations.”

Because the organizations seldom attempt to define what they mean by immigrant-rights – which was the case of the National Immigration Forum for nearly three decades – immigrants, activists, the media, the policy community, and the public have been largely left to find their own meaning and to draw lessons accordingly. In the context of the immigration reform debate, the common implication of immigrant-rights was the right of unauthorized immigrants to remain in the country and the right of all immigrants to have family members join them in the United States.

For many activists, particularly leftists and those associated with immigrant labor organizing, immigrant-rights also meant the right of immigrants to collectively organize, to seek work across borders, and to provide for their livelihood and that of their families.

## Immigrant Rights and Human Rights

When asked about the meaning of the term, immigrant-rights activists generally cite the various human rights declarations and conventions of the United Nations (UN), primarily the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Other UN documents mentioned include the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of Migrant Workers and their Families (which the U.S. government has not signed) and the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work of the International Labor Organization.

For many immigrant-rights activists, human rights have been very broadly defined to include the “freedom of movement” to seek the freedoms and rights described in the UN Declaration of Human Rights. Other immigrant-rights activists refer to their own internationalist ideals as the foundation for expansive interpretations of immigrant rights.

In the most common formulation, immigrant-rights are human rights.

Human rights are universal, not delimited by national borders and laws, as the 1948 UN Human Rights Declaration states: “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.” And everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in the declaration without distinction of race, sex, language, religion, and political or other opinion, national or social origin.

The Human Rights Declaration does stipulate “freedom of movement” as a human right. But that right, contrary to many references, is a limited right: “Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state. Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.”

Immigrant rights are also constitutional rights. Universal human rights defined by the United States are reflected in U.S. constitutional law and appear in the U.S. Constitution as fundamental rights for all persons, with only a few distinctions allowed between citizens and noncitizens (including right to vote and right to bear arms).

The Bill of Rights and the U.S. Constitution prohibit, for example, discrimination based on race and national origin against citizens and noncitizens alike. Citizenship status does not affect the right to due process. U.S. immigration law includes other rights that could be described as immigrant rights, such as the right to have an attorney at a deportation hearing and the right to request release from immigration detention if a bond is paid.

The term immigrant-rights is helpful in upholding the civil and human rights of immigrants in the face of local and state laws and practices that ignore the principles of equality and nondiscrimination, such as discriminatory treatment in denying immigrant children access to public education, blocking immigrant access to housing, or differential treatment by law enforcement officials.

However, neither the U.S. Constitution nor the relevant UN conventions consider it a human right or a right of immigrants to enter other nations or to remain in those nations – except in the case of refugees or immigrants seeking political asylum.

Numerous legal organizations are dedicated to upholding and protecting immigrant rights. The Immigrants’ Rights Project of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), for example, “works to defend the civil and constitutional rights of immigrants through a comprehensive program of impact litigation and public education.” This work is mostly focused on “protecting this historic guarantee of judicial review,

enforcing fair employment practices, and maintaining constitutional safeguards against detention practices and biased asylum adjudication.”

The human rights, civil rights, and constitutional rights of immigrants are routinely violated in the United States, and these violations have increased as the U.S. government has increased its interior enforcement and border control programs. The deepening anti-immigrant backlash and the increased involvement of state and local governments in immigration enforcement also has led to increased rights violations.

Certainly a liberal immigration reform that legalized the status of the estimated 11-million population of unauthorized immigrants in the United States would greatly alleviate this problem of widespread rights violations. Understandably, then, those individuals and organizations involved in upholding and protecting the rights of immigrants would also support such a reform of immigration policy. Immigration restrictionists, social conservatives, and anti-immigrant activists also support immigration reform, but a conservative reform that stresses enforcement, border security, and an end to what they term the “mass immigration” of legal and illegal immigrants.

### **Mixing Rights and Reform**

To describe the campaign for immigration reform, however, as an immigrant-rights movement, as the key nongovernmental players in this campaign consistently did, may have had detrimental effects.

The post-9/11 security environment and the intensifying anti-immigration backlash have manifestly been the main obstructions for the advancement of liberal immigration reform in the past eleven years. But any evaluation of the failure of CIR should also review the strategy and tactics, the messaging and outreach, and the networking plans of the movement supporting CIR.

Never in the buildup to the CIR votes (2005-2007) or in the renewed campaign for CIR during the first two years of the Obama administration was there any focused review of the immigrant-rights focus. Indeed, after the 2007 defeat, the CIR coalition maintained the same leadership and the same immigrant-rights framework for organizing. The same liberal foundations that since 2003 had funded and help shape the pro-CIR coalitions and organizations continued large-scale funding to these same groups under the same “immigrant-rights” logic and strategic focus.

The immediate and even the medium-term prospects for comprehensive immigration reform or even for incremental reform are dismal. This is all the more reason to begin laying intellectual and practical foundations for a renewed campaign to pass pro-immigrant and pro-immigration reforms of immigration policy.

### **Problems with Immigrant-Rights Framework for Immigration Reform**

Using immigrant-rights as a framework for the immigration reform movement has been problematic for various reasons, including the following:

#### *Immigrant-Centered*

Perhaps the main problem with this framework and the associated messaging has been that it is immigrant-centered – meaning that it assumed the perspective of immigrants rather than that of the larger American society. This was especially problematic because if immigration reform were to succeed the pro-CIR campaign needed to count primarily on U.S. voters and legal U.S. residents along with their

political representatives. The essential case that had to be made was that immigration reform was necessary because it corresponded to the interests and values of U.S. citizens. A U.S. citizen-centered immigration reform could also be the right thing for immigrants.

Most policy advocacy, educational outreach, networking, and activism remain immigrant-centered, meaning that the strategies and programs are generally directed by those who are clearly based in the immigrant community.

The funding for immigration reform has gone primarily, although no longer exclusively, to immigrant-centered organizations and networks – as a way to empower the powerless and give voice to the voiceless, and out of a belief that immigrants and their own networks best understand the problems of immigrants and can therefore best chart effective solutions. Other related foundation funding has been directed to “getting out the vote” campaigns and to programs designed to integrate immigrants into American society and politics.

### Confusing and Misleading

The use of “immigrant-rights” as a rallying cry and educational tool was eminently confusing in the context of the pro-CIR campaign. When organizing and lobbying for policy reform, the term implied that unauthorized immigrants had a right to legal residency in the country -- and that the CIR proposal was merely a recognition of immigrant rights to live and work in the United States even if they had entered illegally or no longer had legal visas.

What is more, by so closely linking immigrant rights with immigration reform, the actual rights of immigrants became obscured. The many Americans who weren't inclined to accept the notion that immigrants have a right to residency and citizenship, regardless of their legal status, may have become more inclined to dismiss valid claims of human and civil rights for immigrants. Apart from the legal service organizations that supported CIR, the pro-CIR coalition made little or no effort to explain the many rights that immigrants do have.

### False Metaphors

The facile likening of the immigrant-rights movement to the civil rights movement gave its supporters and immigrants themselves a false sense of historical empowerment. While problems of discrimination and unequal treatment of immigrants, particularly those without legal status, abounded, the main thrust of immigrant mobilization since 2001 was not to end discrimination and unequal treatment but to regularize the illegal status of millions of immigrants.

The subjects and the objects of the civil rights movement were African Americans, who traditionally had been treated as second-class citizens. But they were citizens and they had the right to vote – and vote they did to support their civil rights organizing. The difference is obvious but seldom mentioned – namely that these immigrants were neither citizens nor voters. Yes, the objective was the full integration of immigrants into American society, but that was entirely different conceptually from ending the segregation and voter discrimination suffered by U.S. citizens who had the right to vote.

### False Consensus Building

For the pro-CIR coalition leaders (and their foundation supporters), immigrant-rights served as a highly successful consensus-building concept among diverse pro-immigrant groups. Different types of immigrants with different types of immigration status could interpret the term immigrant-rights as they

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thought best – particularly since there was never an attempt by the coalition leaders and the supporting foundations to define the term.

However, while there was almost total acceptance of the term immigrant-rights, the interpretations of these purported rights included concepts that were more ideological constructs or optimistic visions that were at best only loosely tied to international or constitutional statements of human rights.

For many labor, immigrant, and leftist groups, centered largely in the West, immigrant-rights implied radical social change, requiring, as one immigrant-rights coalition stated, “social upheaval and a fundamental realignment of power.” For many who oppose the policy paradigms within which the “Beltway lobbyists” work, a true immigrant-rights position means the repeal of free trade (which purportedly drives most migration), the end of temporary and guest-worker programs, the right of migrants to cross borders to seek work, and the right to jobs.

Although such constructions of immigrant-rights were postulated by groups on the margins of the immigrant-rights movement, many pro-immigrant groups and activists conceive – encouraged by such ideological and revolutionary platforms -- of immigrant rights in similarly broad terms, thereby making compromises, pragmatic reform positions, and outreach beyond the immigrant-rights community increasingly difficult.

In the end, the rather broad, undefined framework of immigrant-rights may have created a shallow consensus but it has also led to diverse, divisive interpretations that not only worked against reaching out beyond the largely self-contained pro-immigrant forces but also created divisions within the ranks.

#### *Underscored Populist Resentment of Surge in Immigrant Presence*

Immigrants certainly aren't responsible for breeding the type of supremacism (white and cultural) and retrograde nationalism that courses through the grassroots backlash against immigration and immigrants. But the challenge facing pro-immigrant forces is to deflect and delegitimize these mean-spirited and resentful reactions while bringing the American majority on their side.

There is little evidence that appeals to universal human rights are effective when considering the scope and limits of immigration policy – which fundamentally concerns national sovereignty and decisions about how many and what type of immigrants the country agrees to accept and integrate. In the context of a campaign for immigration reform, the core import of the message of immigrant-rights was that ‘we immigrants, whether legally or illegally in the country, have a right to be here.’

Such messaging – communicated by the slogans of the 2006 marches (including “We are America,” “Human Rights are Immigrant Rights,” etc.) – did underscore persistent trends in the history of immigration in America and about the pattern of violation of the human rights of immigrants.

But when coupled with the demand for legalization and more visas for family members, such messaging fed a mounting resentment of many Americans. With good reason, they believed that immigration was out of control. As evident in the backlash commentary that flooded the Internet, many insisted that they, as citizens and voters, were the ones whose rights were being sidelined by the wave of illegal immigration. In other words, the immigrant-rights message raised the hackles of many Americans and likely fed the mounting backlash.

Messages about justice, the value of immigrants to U.S. society and economy, and humanitarianism may have been more effective. Such concepts were certainly found as part of the pro-immigrant, pro-

CIR discourse. Yet the immigrant-rights message was central to the popular organizing and networking efforts on behalf of CIR.

Following the lead of the organizations themselves, such as the National Immigration Forum, America's Voice, and many others, the media routinely described the pro-CIR groups as immigrant-rights organizations. In marked contrast, the restrictionist institutes, often quoted in the same media reports, presented themselves as organizations deeply concerned with the well-being of U.S. citizens – their job opportunities, their tax burden, and their increasingly congested and threatened environment.

One may dismiss such concerns as a disguise for immigrant hate, racism, and retrograde nationalism. But the public statements of the leading restrictionist institutes – FAIR, Center for Immigration Studies, and NumbersUSA – consistently stressed their concerns about the impact of mass immigration on the welfare of Americans, thereby effectively pitting the rights and concerns of American citizens against the diffuse and dubious rights of nonvoting immigrants, many of whom had no legal standing to remain in the country.

### Limiting Strategy and Outreach

In the aftermath of the 2007 defeat, the CIR coalition reconstituted itself with a new name but with the same immigrant-rights framework and with much the same organizing strategy – with the guidance and generous support of the liberal foundations that had for decades supported the immigrant-centered immigration reform movement.

For the CIR coalition, the main lesson of the 2007 defeat was that the anti-CIR forces had done a better job in organizing their constituencies and in getting their message out to the media. Instead of evaluating their immigrant-rights framework and their immigrant-centered organizing, the post-2007 CIR movement resolved to strengthen their networking among immigrant-rights organizations.

With the close involvement and generous support of the large liberal foundations, they increased their media outreach component and communications capabilities. The coalition also launched an unprincipled smear (and largely unsuccessful) campaign to delegitimize the three leading restrictionist institutes as racists, nativists, and un-American in their values – all with the increased support of the foundations that had funded their previous failed campaigns and strategies. A better strategy may have been to emulate the restrictionist institutes and propose an immigration policy with the same degree of specificity and a similar focus (albeit different interpretation) on the likely impact on U.S. voters.

### **Special Interests for Immigration Reform**

As it is, the immigration reform institutes have not only been immigrant-centered with diffuse immigrant-rights platforms. They have also been closely tied with groups that have special interests in the issue – labor unions with large immigrant workforces, immigrant lawyers, and business organizations whose members would benefit from increased immigration flows.

These immigrant-advocacy organizations such as National Immigration Forum, Center for Community Change, National Council of La Raza, and America's Voice are also closely associated with the Democratic Party through groups such as the Center for American Progress and NDN. These organizations explicitly link immigration reform with the objective of establishing what they have variously described as the “new Democratic majority” and the “permanent Democratic majority.” Hard then for these same groups to make a persuasive argument that immigration reform is nonpartisan.

Having self-interests – whether business, emotional, or political – in furthering liberal immigration reform doesn't necessarily discredit the validity of the types of reforms they propose. But it does make these coalitions and the immigrant-advocacy organizations that have represented them less than credible as objective voices.

### **Central Role of Liberal Foundations**

The foundations that were so fundamental to the creation and the sustenance of the pro-CIR movement – mainly Carnegie Corporation, Ford Foundation, and Atlantic Philanthropies – have steadfastly stood by their institutional missions to empower the disadvantaged and give voice to the voiceless. They have also remained committed to sustaining the organizations that created and shaped over three decades.

The problem wasn't the laudable missions of these foundations but rather the mixing of their rights focus programming with policy advocacy for a reform that was only indirectly related to civil liberties and human rights. Like the immigrant-rights movement itself, the foundations that sustained and encouraged them conceived of immigration reform as a rights issue.

Thus, the foundations failed to consider other more pragmatic and politics-grounded strategies to advance immigration reform. Instead, even after repeated setbacks and reverses, the liberal foundations remained committed to their decades-long immigrant-centered, immigrant-rights strategies for immigration reform – and to the very same leadership that had failed time and again to broaden the constituency for liberal immigration reform.

Sad and ironic, the immigrant-rights framing of immigration reform along with the appropriation of the tactics and history of the civil rights movement engendered advocacy and networking campaigns that kept the movement on the margins of U.S. society.

### **Nation of Immigrants – Past and Future?**

Although only briefly examined here, the “nation of immigrants” framework, an alternative to the immigrant-rights messaging, has reduced resonance as an argument for immigration reform.

The problems with this framing include but are not limited to the following:

- 1) Post-9/11 association of immigrants with possible security threats.
- 2) Increased concern with unsustainable population growth and resource use, along with the growing sense that cities and suburbs are crowded and unlivable, thus increased questions of how many and what type of immigrants are best for the nation.
- 3) Deepening sense among citizens of their declining living standards and the reversal of the historic trends of generational progress, along with increased unemployment, falling wage rates, and a widespread belief that immigrants are competing with Americans for scarce jobs.
- 4) Understanding that recent immigration has been driven by the illegal entry of largely unskilled and poorly educated immigrants primarily from Mexico and secondarily from Central America, in contrast to previous eras of major largely legal immigration flows, sparking new questions about the degree to which we can or should remain a nation of immigrants.

An August 2011 report on regional immigration flows by the Migration Policy Institute and the Woodrow

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Wilson Center for Scholars observed:

These changes contribute to the current controversy over US immigration policy. As in previous periods of US history, rapid immigration inflows of relatively new immigrant groups have sparked an anti-immigrant backlash among some segments of the US population. At a time of economic uncertainty, low-educated, low-wage LEP immigrants are a lightning rod for broader concerns about US fiscal problems and labor market restructuring. And while prior immigration waves preceded numeric limits, the backlash in the current period is more intense because a high proportion of recent migration has been illegal.

### **Resonance of Restrictionist Frameworks**

Proponents face yet another obstacle – the success of the anti-immigration organizations and activists in imprinting U.S. immigration policy and the policy debate with their own clear and persuasive frameworks and messaging.

The restrictionists, social conservatives, and security hardliners on the right have long charged that immigrants, especially unauthorized ones, represent a security threat to the United States. The 9/11 terrorist attacks reified and institutionalized this security framework for immigration policy.

But perhaps even more powerful has been the “rule of law” framework that the restrictionist institutes, along with right-wing think tanks, popularized after the counterterrorism alarm started fading.

While the new emphasis on “border security” became the dominant framework for addressing border control following 9/11, the dominant messaging about interior enforcement involved respect for the “rule of law” and enforcing existing laws. The “rule of law” framework advocated by the anti-immigration forces was adopted wholesale by the Bush administration and then by the Obama administration – even while acknowledging that immigration law was overdue for reform. It was also a framework that was wholeheartedly adopted by the anti-immigrant activists as the grassroots found more reason to redouble their emphasis on immigrants as “illegals.”

Taking the illegal rhetoric yet a step further, illegal aliens became criminal aliens in the common discourse of the restrictionists and anti-immigrant backlash movement.

### **Same Message, Same Networking, Same Funding after CIR Defeat**

At least in the first couple of years after the defeat of CIR in mid-2007, there remained a strong, perhaps even stronger commitment to the immigrant-rights framework – fueled in part by the continuing immigrant crackdown. No other framework was seriously considered. Although there was a new attempt to rebrand the immigrant-rights movement as part of the American tradition and as a voice of all Americans – hence the creation in 2008 of America’s Voice under the direction of Frank Sharry (long-time director of the National Immigration Forum) – the rights framework and immigrant-center messaging remained core to the new outreach and communications initiative.

While there were new efforts to reach out to nonimmigrant organizations and communities, especially African-Americans, the primary networking strategy focused on local and state pro-immigrant and immigrant organizations. The new CIR coalition aimed to energize their natural allies in the same way that the anti-immigrant and anti-immigration organizations had mobilized their own grassroots constituencies – but in the process leaving most Americans subject mainly to the propaganda of the restrictionists.



Clearly a strong contingent of immigrant-rights organizations is needed to protect immigrants in the face of the national and local crackdowns. But, with respect to policy reform, the immigrant-rights framework based on an appeal to broadly conceived human rights had clearly failed.

Except among church, solidarity, and progressive communities, and to some extent among nonimmigrant Latinos, there was little buy-in to the notion that legal residency is a human right. That should have been clear in the aftermath of the massive immigrant-rights marches of 2006, when the human rights messaging proved to have little resonance among onlookers and voters.

Patently, there is a need for a new vision of immigration reform based less on the self-interests and concerns of immigrants themselves, particularly unauthorized Latino immigrants, and more on the convictions of U.S. voters and nonimmigrant Americans. It is necessary to project pro-reform voices that can make a strong social, ethical, and economic case – to the U.S. public, to the media, and to Congress.

## Looking Forward

Today, the prospects for liberal immigration reform remain grim – even in the likely event of a second Obama administration. No bipartisan consensus for immigration reform exists. Even within the Democratic Party there is no strong leadership or commitment to advance comprehensive immigration reform. Incremental reform is a dim possibility. Yet the same lack of political will is likely to block any more narrowly focused reform measures, whether they be liberal reforms like the Dream Act or business-oriented reforms that would increase skilled-worker and temporary/guestworker visas.

Clearly, the immigration system remains broken. Even with persistent strong interior enforcement and border controls, the country will continue to face the crisis of having millions of its workers and residents living in the shadows of the law and will continue to need a supply of skilled and unskilled immigrant workers.

There are some hopeful signs that a counter backlash against the wave of anti-immigrant laws, operations, and political posturing is constraining and eroding the power and gains of the anti-immigrant forces. An array of immigrant-rights groups focused on protecting the human and constitutional rights deserve credit for their legal and public education campaigns.

Moving forward toward a sensible, just, and sustainable immigration won't be easy. It will certainly be a long-term effort – unlikely even in a second Obama administration.

It's possible that the anti-immigrant backlash will erode, and that state and local governments will cease unconstitutional programs to enforce federal immigration laws.

But the pro-liberal immigration activists and policy advocates face major obstacles -- not the least of which is the failure to articulate a persuasive framework or messaging around a sustainable immigration policy.

To tell the story of the abuse of immigrant rights, bringing the lives, travails, and hopes of immigrants to the attention of America is vital. But another strategy that is less immigrant-centered may be more successful – in countering the backlash and in reaching out to Americans with another vision of immigration as beneficial to the entire society.

The restrictionists and their grassroots constituencies and allies in the policy community claimed they

were speaking for Americans and for their social, economic, and political interests.

Rather than contesting those claims with organizations and networks of American citizens who could offer another, less mean-spirited vision of immigration in America, the main voices for immigration reform were those from the immigrant community. On the one hand, then, Americans speaking for American interests, while on the other hand, immigrant-rights organizations speaking primarily for immigrants.

The most recent iteration of the pro-CIR coalition, Reform Immigration for America (essentially an outreach instrument of the National Immigration Forum), has, in recognition of the less favorable political climate for immigration reform, toned down their immigrant-rights focus and instead stressed the need for common sense, pragmatic, and smart immigration reform.

While the shift in rhetoric indicates a degree of self-reflection and self-criticism by the leading organizations and the foundations that finance them, this more strategic language will likely prove insufficient to turn the tide.

In considering where to go from here to advance a sustainable immigration policy, more than tweaking of language by the same leaders who directed past strategies and networking campaign is needed.

It's past time for a total shake-up, overhaul, and reconstruction of the structure of the pro-immigration pressure groups in Washington.

Immigrant rights should be separated structurally and thematically from immigration policy reform. If liberal immigration is to move forward, a new constellation of organizations will need to be developed – a new grouping of national institutes and organizations dedicated to advancing immigration reform through networking, education, and policy advocacy.

Fortunately, there exist several immigration think tanks that through excellent research and analysis provide the data and assessments needed to counter the anti-immigration and anti-immigrant research and studies, notably the Migration Policy Institute.

What is sorely lacking, however, is a national organization that is a citizen-centered institute dedicated to policy advocacy – for sensible, just, and sustainable immigration reform.

Wherever you travel in this country, you will encounter strong proponents of both immigrant-rights and immigration reform. They are community leaders who have learned from their experience the value of immigrants to the nation and to their communities.

They are school principals, urban development specialists, police chiefs, social service providers, commerce chamber directors, coaches, community development specialists, and leading representatives of the institutions, businesses, and nongovernmental organizations that are the backbone of America. The faces and voices of such organizations are deeply connected with their communities. They also reflect the multicultural, multiethnic, multiracial, and multilingual composition of America today.

An immigration-reform coalition grounded in a vision of what's good for America – apart from special interests and political interests – would be better positioned to advance sensible reform. It could persuasively claim that it is truly the voice of America and Americans. Consequently, it would be well positioned to demand a halt to draconian immigration enforcement and to end wasteful border security programs.

Likely, such an organization would hail our history as a “nation of immigrants” but at the same time explaining that for the good of the nation immigration flows need to be limited and prioritized. Ideally, such a new pro-immigration coalition would insist that our government remain open and deeply committed to accepting refugees and granting political asylum.

Based on the experience of these community leaders and networks, it would surely also be a policy that was fair and just towards the millions of immigrants who have integrated into American society and economy but who now live in the shadows of immigration law. Surely, it would also be a policy that would pursue to ensure that new immigrant flows do not adversely affect the wage levels, working conditions, and job markets for resident and citizen workers.

The liberal foundations that have played such an important role in elevating immigrant-rights in this country and in shaping the grassroots and policy advocacy networks for immigration reform would likely advance their goals of poverty alleviation, social justice, and civic integration by adopting such a strategy.

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