

# CNSI Policy Recommendations for Senate Border Negotiations



Council on National Security and Immigration (CNSI) is a group of American national security leaders who believe immigration reforms are imperative to address the unprecedented levels of migration and asylum claims at the southern border and to bolster and maintain the United States' global leadership in the 21st century.

We have dedicated our professional lives to working on immigration policy – both inside the government and out – and understand the need to modernize and humanize our immigration system. As a group of CNSI leaders, we support a comprehensive overhaul of our immigration system. However, in the absence of broader consensus, a smaller set of reforms is also worth enacting. That is why we are encouraged by reports of Republican and Democratic Senators attempting to reach an agreement to provide sensible immigration reforms that work toward our border becoming safe and secure.

CNSI has identified four policy areas that should be prioritized during the negotiation process.

## **Asylum**

A large majority of asylum claims that meet the current 'credible fear' initial screening standard are eventually denied, mostly on the grounds that the migrant is seeking economic benefit, not fleeing government persecution. Currently, those final decisions take years to be finalized in the immigration courts, by which time migrants have been living in the U.S., often had American-born children, and lost ties to their home country.

**CNSI supports raising the initial screening standard to weed out a higher percentage of unmeritorious cases earlier in the process, as well as making significant investments to assist orderly and controlled asylum screening and adjudication to make final decisions on applicants in months, not years.**

## **Parole**

The executive branch has long had the power to parole an individual or even large groups of individuals to meet our foreign policy objectives. This power was used to deal with large migration events stemming from political and military conflicts in Vietnam, Afghanistan, and Ukraine. However, using parole to establish large migration programs from Central and South America not tied primarily to ongoing conflicts rightly raises concerns that the executive branch is using this tool to create an economic migration program not intended by Congress. The current parole programs established for residents of Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua, and Venezuela will allow over one million parole applicants on an annual basis.

**CNSI supports legislation to require the executive branch to make a national security designation before initiating a large-scale parole program and giving Congress a new right of disapproval for such a designation akin to the current Congressional Review Act, while maintaining traditional executive branch discretion for case-specific parole authority.**



## **DACA Recipients**

There is overwhelming consensus that those brought to the U.S. as children should receive permanent status in this country. Over 600,000 individuals have relied upon the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, which is under legal review. Legislation related to DACA has been stalled for over a decade by an inability to find the right legislative balance that also includes enforcement provisions that would diminish the need for future legalizations.

**CNSI believes this negotiation is the right vehicle to finally have Congress define the legalization terms for DACA recipients and to provide legal certainty for those enrolled in the program.**

## **Afghan Adjustment Act**

For years, Afghan allies put their lives and their families' lives at risk to help the U.S. military in our efforts to defeat al Qaeda and the Taliban. By doing so they have earned the opportunity to stay in the country and obtain legal permanent resident status. The Afghan Adjustment Act would fulfill commitments made to our allies during one of the most important military campaigns in our nation's history and would represent an important policy at the intersection of immigration and foreign policy.

**CNSI supports allowing the estimated 100,000 Afghans brought to the U.S. during the turbulent military withdrawal in 2021 to receive permanent status after stringent vetting.**

There are many other issues deserving of Congressional action in the immigration arena, including workforce shortages, high-skilled workers, encouraging legal travel and tourism, and reducing delays in the legal immigration backlogs. However, the four areas above stand out as the right balance of reforms that belong on the pending supplemental funding bill to assist with the Ukraine response to Russian aggression, the Israeli-Hamas conflict in Gaza, and the threat of China military action against Taiwan. We urge Congress to reject the extremes of both sides of the immigration debate and come together on meaningful, balanced reform.