

Ken
Buck

★ for CONGRESS ★ ★

On the Issues:
Immigration

Paid for by Buck for Colorado

Immigration

America has a moral imperative to fix its broken immigration system. Too many die crossing the border illegally. Too many young girls experience the pain of cross-border human trafficking. Too many American citizens suffer from crimes committed by illegal immigrants. Too many people wait in line to become citizens while others break in illegally.

The problems associated with America's immigration policy shine a light on the exceptional nature of the nation. Freedom and prosperity calls the world to our shores. But those who immigrate illegally to the U.S. violate the principles that underlie freedom and prosperity. A fair immigration system must include effective border security, effective interior and workplace enforcement, and a finely tailored immigrant and non-immigrant visa program.



Unfortunately, Washington, D.C. has failed for decades to implement meaningful immigration reform. Any effort to change the immigration system would require a careful balancing act to enforce the law in fairness while also addressing the human side of the immigration debate. As a member of Congress, I will push for bold action on immigration reform.

Effective Border Security

Thousands cross the southern border illegally through remote areas without fences, or under fences. The GAO reported that in 2011, 16% of border crossers (85,000 people) made it through the border without apprehension.¹ With an improved U.S. economy, that number would likely be even higher.

Securing our southern border is a moral necessity, both for those who would cross and face death or injury in doing so, and for those in the United States negatively affected by illegal immigration. I will support legislation that makes securing the border the first priority. But increasing the security of the border is complex and requires extensive study. A proposal could include increased fencing in certain areas, improved federal assistance to local governments that

Freedom and prosperity calls the world to our shores.

the border.

Border security extends beyond just rural parts of the southern border. Ports of entry and U.S. coasts deserve focus as well. The federal government must do more to cooperate with Mexico in apprehending the criminals and terrorists who might cross the border. Ports of entry must have the proper tools and funding to track who comes into the country and who leaves. Securing borders and ports on all sides of the country will be a Herculean task that can be made easier if illegal immigration looks less alluring to those who would cross illegally.

Effective Interior and Workplace Enforcement

Fewer will cross the border illegally if they know finding employment in America will be nearly impossible. And the many illegal immigrants who enter the country legally and then overstay their visa will be less tempted to stay if they know companies will not hire them without up-to-date legal

status. Enforcing workplace and immigration laws will eliminate the incentive for illegal immigration in the first place.

er. To empower state and local government to assist in enforcing federal immigration laws, the Obama administration's changes in the Section 287(g) program must be reversed so that local authorities can act appropriately when they arrest an illegal immigrant. Local law enforcement must be partners with the federal government in the fight against illegal immigration and criminal activity that crosses the border.

Finely Tailored Immigrant and Non-immigrant Visa Programs

Legal immigrants can contribute to the economy, but they need more efficient ways



Increasing security along the southern border of the United States is the first step in reforming the immigration system.

to immigrate to America. The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services agency processes immigrant visas, but they do so very slowly. Reforming this process must be the first step in making the immigration system fairer. Then the legal immigrant visa

programs must be designed to primarily supply labor to companies that need it, but without hurting the U.S. economy.

Right now the the Gang of 8 immigration bill is being considered by Congress. Among many other problems, this bill decreases the effectiveness of the important H1-B visa system by implementing costly and limiting regulations on the firms that need to hire foreign, high-skilled workers.⁴ The H1-B visa program is important in filling jobs in the science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields. Additionally,

research indicates that H1-B hires contribute to higher total employment of skilled workers in the United States.⁵ Programs like this need to be expanded so that American companies can find the skilled labor they need.

Legal immigrants can contribute to the economy, but they need more efficient ways to immigrate to America.

Conclusion

America is unique in the world because it offers not only freedom and prosperity, but also a spirit of fairness. For those resid-

ing in the U.S. illegally, the U.S. offers a fair way of gaining citizenship: applying for immigrant visas through the regular process. Our immigration system must balance freedom and prosperity with laws and personal security. Only then will we fulfill our moral duty to those affected by the status quo.

-
1. Plumer, Brad. "Border Security Is the Key to Immigration Reform. So How Do We Measure It?" The Washington Post. N.p., 21 June 2013. Web. 28 Feb. 2014.
 2. Carafano, James J., Ph.D. Homeland Security Department Guts Workplace Enforcement. The Heritage Foundation, 10 July 2009. Web. 28 Feb. 2014.
 3. Mayer, Matt A. White House Takes Wrong Step with Immigration Enforcement. The Heritage Foundation, 24 Feb. 2012. Web. 28 Feb. 2014.
 4. Sherk, James. Immigration: Gang of Eight Would Make H-1B Program Unworkable. The Heritage Foundation. 20 May. 2013. Web. 28 Feb. 2014.
 5. Kerr, Sari Pekkal, William R. Kerr, and William F. Lincoln. Skilled Immigration and the Employment Structures of U.S. Firms. Working paper. Harvard Business School, n.d. Web. 28 Feb. 2014.

