

Thankful for a New Conversation on Immigration Reform

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Dear Friend:

Two weeks ago, many national leaders awoke to a new political and demographic reality—one that they had long suspected and been warned about, but couldn't quite believe until the election results were in. The unmistakable lessons of this political season are that national elections are won by uniting a diverse coalition of American voters and promoting positive solutions to the challenges that face our nation.

The good news for our political system is that neither party has a monopoly on the ability to meet this new demand. These lessons reflect a need and an opportunity to break through the partisan gridlock that has crippled the nation and to build broad coalitions in support of real solutions that are driven by messages that unite us rather than divide us. Nowhere is this clearer than in the immigration debate. Misguided and mean-spirited ideas like “self-deportation” no longer have credibility on the national stage. The strategy of ignoring the human and economic toll of “enforcement only” policies and refusing to reform an outdated and dysfunctional immigration system must be put to rest once and for all. The shrill voices of the nativist fringe must give way to the chorus of conservative and progressive voices that have long called for a path towards citizenship for the 11 million undocumented (including the courageous DREAMers who helped to shape this new political reality) and the creation of a 21st century immigration system that allows families and businesses to flourish and succeed.

Support for reform has never been stronger or more diverse. Day-after-election polls found that 57% of adults want to see the currently undocumented placed on a “path to citizenship,” with that number jumping to nearly [70%](#) [1] among respondents under 30. [African-American voters](#) [2] were key supporters of the referendum endorsing the Maryland DREAM Act, making it the first state where voters have gone on record to approve in-state tuition for undocumented students.

There is no doubt that the road to reform will be difficult and there will be many who will cling to the past and continue to resist the call for real reform. Overcoming these obstacles will require policies that take into account our national values as well as our economic needs.

We are firmly committed to this effort and will work to ensure it is driven by sound policy rather than the divisive rhetoric of the past.

On behalf of everyone at the American Immigration Council, I wish you a wonderful Thanksgiving Holiday.

Sincerely,

Benjamin Johnson
Executive Director
The American Immigration Council

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