

Position Statement: The Border Crisis and Immigration
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We have a border crisis and problems with our current immigration system – there’s no question about that. However, there are no easy answers for resolving these complex issues.

If we are to even begin to find a livable answer to border and immigration problems, we must be willing to listen to the people directly impacted – immigrants, the people who live and work on the border, and those who live in areas where immigrants are being transported. Legislatures must be willing to work together and make reasonable compromises.

Texas Gov. Abbott recently signed into law a provision that local law enforcement officers can arrest immigrants who have crossed into the state. Under this law, local judges can send these immigrants back to Mexico. Abbott’s action has made illegal entry at the Texas border a state crime. Gov. Abbott’s action goes against the United States Constitution.

Immigration is primarily a federal issue in the United States because the Constitution grants the federal government exclusive authority over matters related to immigration and naturalization. The U.S. Constitution, under Article I, Section 8, Clause 4, empowers Congress to establish a uniform rule of naturalization. This grants the federal government the *sole responsibility* for creating and enforcing immigration laws, ensuring consistency and coherence in the nation's approach to immigration. While states may have some role in implementing federal policies, they do not possess the authority to independently regulate immigration, emphasizing the federal government's central role in managing this complex and sensitive issue.

Rather than punishing migrants, we should be examining *why* so many people, especially families with minor children, want to leave their home countries and take a perilous journey to our borders. These human beings deserve our respect and compassion. Diplomatic efforts must be part of the solution, including appropriate foreign aid.

Being compassionate and respectful to the migrants’ plight does not negate the fact that we must have secure borders. More border agents as well as more immigration judges would help to strengthen border security.

Comprehensive immigration reform has been ignored long enough. We must stop treating it as a political talking point. Instead, we need a thoughtful, bipartisan approach to update and streamline the immigration system, providing legal pathways for individuals to enter the country, work, and contribute to society. A fair and efficient system will reduce the incentives for irregular migration and facilitate a more orderly and lawful immigration process.

Ultimately, the crisis at the Texas border requires a thorough and compassionate response that aligns with American values. By addressing the humanitarian needs of migrants, bolstering border security, tackling root causes, and enacting sensible immigration policies, we can work toward a more just and sustainable resolution to this complex challenge.