

PRESIDENT OBAMA'S NEXT FOUR YEARS: WHAT IS THE FUTURE OF IMMIGRATION?

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President Obama's re-election last Tuesday has been partly the result of, and will play a large role in, U.S. immigration law. Immigration is arguably what defines America as a nation in many ways. American is a nation whose foundation is comprised of the work and spirit of immigrants; it has always been a refuge and a place where one can pursue their dreams in a tangible way. In many cases, it is the only country where immigrants have ever been able to call home. This holds, particularly, for those brought to the U.S. as children and for whom President Obama's Deferred Action and Childhood Arrivals (DACA) is critical. With the re-election of President Obama, there is a possibility that immigration processes can be improved and for specific programs, such as the DACA and Comprehensive Immigration Reform (CIR), to be successfully implemented.

The DREAM (Development, Relief, and Education for Minors) Act, first introduced in the Senate on August 1, 2001 sought to provide conditional permanent residency to certain undocumented residents with good moral character who graduate from U.S. high schools, arrived in the U.S. as minors, and lived in the country continuously for at least five years prior to the Bill's enactment. The DREAM Act has since been re-introduced (in March 2009) and was considered by Congress (in 2010) under a modified version and was finally passed by The House of Representatives in December of 2010 after having been introduced into the House of Representatives by President Obama and by other top Democrats. In his next term, President Obama seems to be leaning in the direction of replacing the 'Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals' (DACA) program with a legislative or regulatory DREAM Act.

Young undocumented immigrants are one of many immigrant groups whose statuses in the U.S. will be affected by the reelection of President Barack Obama. Another prominent, and rapidly growing, immigrant population is the Latino population. This past election has proven the importance of having Latino voters on the side of a party's presidential campaign, something the Republican Party seemed to notice too late in the campaign. Shunning Comprehensive Immigration Reform and introducing 'self-deportation' policies, was clearly not an effective strategy by Governor Mitt Romney's campaign. Building a platform

that is inherently anti-immigrant was not only un-American, but also detrimental if a presidential candidate is seeking the popular vote in the U.S.

Although President Obama's stance on immigration is much more appealing to the Latino community than those of his counterparts, we must look closely at his policies to get a picture of how immigration will fare in the U.S. over the next four years. President Obama has apologized for his lack of success with immigration in his first term, admitting that his priority, as he first took office, was to stop the country from going into an economic depression.

In his acceptance speech last Tuesday, President Obama promised to fix the nation's immigration system. While he did not mention any specific "plan", one thing that can be taken away from the speech is that Comprehensive Immigration Reform (CIR) now has a higher chance of receiving congressional support.

First introduced during President George W. Bush's first term, CIR is comprised of four key components: (1) Enhancing border control with the goal of stopping the flow of illegal immigrants into the country; (2) Stricter penalties for employers who hire illegal immigrants; (3) the incorporation of a more reliable system which will allow businesses to check their workers' immigration status; (4) a guest worker program and visa policy that will allow U.S. businesses to bring skilled and unskilled workers they need.

The idea of CIR contemplates a path to permanent residency and citizenship for the estimated 13 million illegal immigrants already in the country who will be required to pass background checks, learn English and pay fees and taxes.

CIR places a strong focus on assimilation rather than exclusion via a pathway to citizenship along with a concentration on removing immigrants who actually pose a potential threat to society, as opposed to those who contribute to the economy and are productive members of society. Several of the proposed "plans" for CIR come across as a promising and efficient method of fixing the nation's immigration system.

What we have learned from the recent presidential election is the importance of evolving demographics. Demographics will clearly continue to bear a strong influence on the way we think about Democracy in America. With Obama winning this year's election (by winning women voters by 11 points, 71 percent of Latino voters, 73 percent of Asian voters, 93 percent of black voters, and 60 percent of voters under 30), it is clear that winning the white vote is no longer

enough. Immigration remains an inherent and valuable aspect of America as a country.

For additional information about the results of the recent election or for assistance with family or employment immigration law matters for you, your families or your friends, please feel free to contact the immigration law attorneys and lawyers at the NPZ Law Group at 201-670-0006 (x100) or by e-mail at info@visaserve.com You can also visit us on the world wide web at www.visaserve.com.