

ALL IN THE FAMILY: Preferences for Relatives Drive U.S. Immigration and Population Growth

**An NPG Forum Paper
By Jessica Vaughan**

INTRODUCTION AND KEY FINDINGS

The United States has just concluded the largest decade of immigration in its history. From 2000-2009 more than 10 million legal immigrants settled here.¹ This surpasses the levels of both the early 20th century, which for a long time was the high water mark of immigration to the United States, and the 1990s, which is now the second largest decade of immigration in U.S. history (see Figure 1).

Unlike earlier times, when immigration came in distinct waves, the last two decades are simply an accelerated continuation of a more than 70-year upward trend in annual immigration. Continuing high immigration has had a significant impact on U.S. population growth. Immigration, counting both new admissions and births to immigrant women, was responsible for three-fourths of the growth in our population growth in the last decade.² If current trends continue, immigration will add another 100 million people to the United States in the next 50 years, including children born to immigrants in the United States.³ This paper will explore the primary component of U.S. immigration – family-based immigration – and recommend ways to change the laws and regulations so as to help reverse the steep growth of recent decades.

The so-called Comprehensive Immigration Reform proposals endorsed by the Obama administration would result in an annual increase of more than one million immigrants per year, not counting the immediate surge in green cards due to the legalization of the initial 10 million illegal aliens. Based on our experience with past amnesties and immigration increases, such a policy change would greatly increase future family immigration well beyond the initial amnesty.

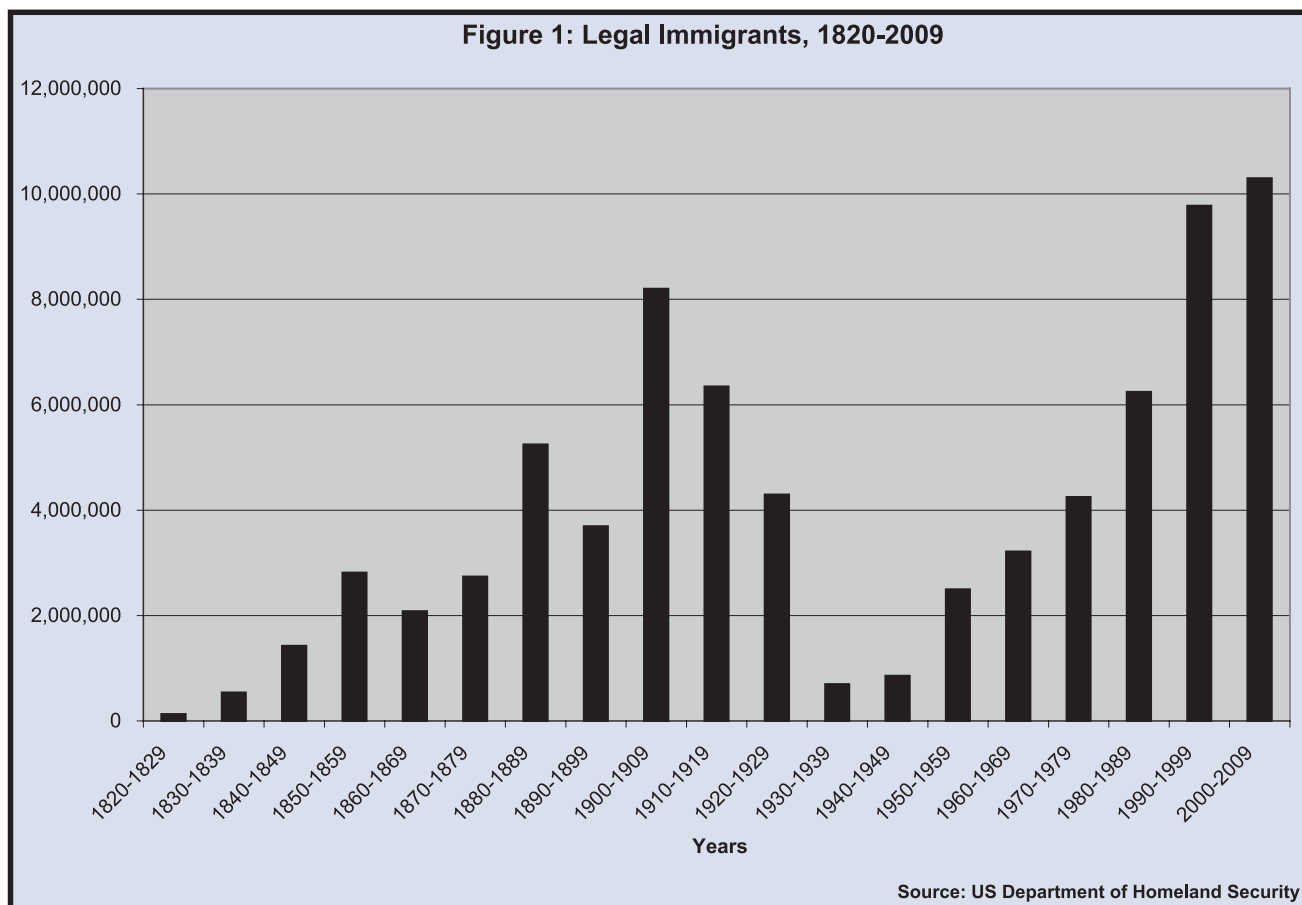
Instead, to accomplish immigration reduction that will lead to population stabilization, Congress must consider cuts and tighter regulation of the categories that are currently unlimited (Parents and Spouses) in addition to eliminating certain quota-limited family categories, as recommended by the Jordan Commission in 1995.

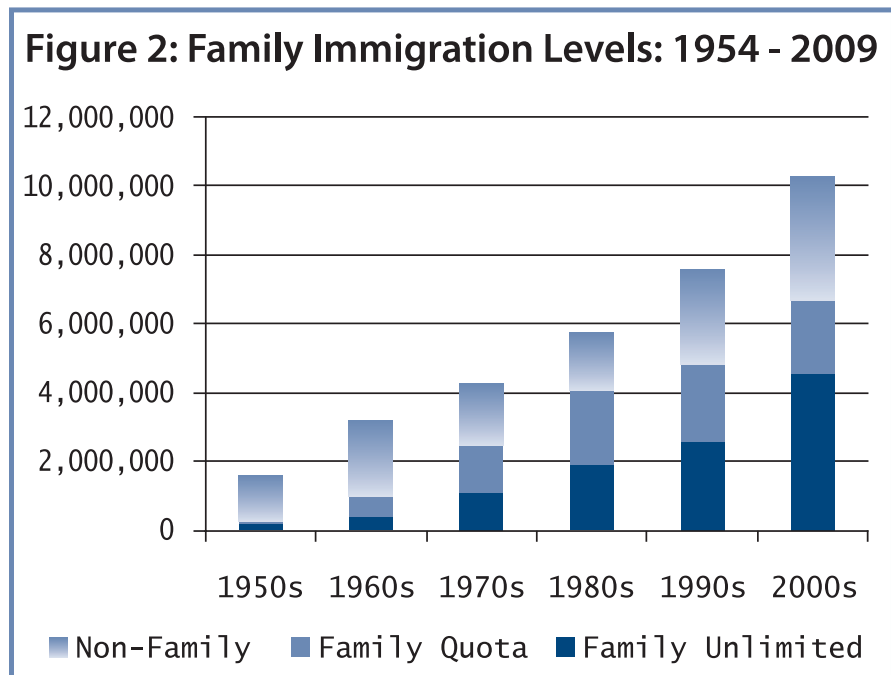
Other key findings:

- Since the 1970s, more than half of the legal immigrants admitted were in the family categories. In the last three decades, family immigration has accounted for more than 60 percent of total legal immigration.⁴
- Family-based immigration added more than two million people in the 1970s, more than four million in the 1980s and 1990s, and in the last decade topped six million people.
- Family-based immigration in the categories that are not limited by law (spouses, children

and parents of U.S. citizens) jumped 76 percent from the 1990s to the 2000s. In contrast, the number entering in the quota-limited categories has remained relatively constant since the 1980s.

- Family immigration is mainly a result of previous immigration and operates entirely independently of economic need, humanitarian considerations, or foreign policy goals. In recent years it has not been affected by economic conditions or unemployment in the United States.
- The admission of the parents of U.S. citizens has been the fastest growing category in recent years, rising from about 67,000 in 2000 to 120,000 in 2009. Because there are no limits on admissions in this category, and because it opens up an opportunity for sponsorship of more family members, the parents category is one of the key components of chain migration. Before 1966, the admission of parents was subject to numerical limits.
- The number of immigrants admitted as spouses of U.S. citizens has also increased dramatically, from 196,000 in 2000 to 317,000 in 2009. This category also can trigger chain migration, as the new spouses can qualify for citizenship and the right to sponsor their family members more quickly than other immigrants.
- U.S. immigration law reflects the tension between the sentimental appeal of allowing immigrants to sponsor family members for relocation and the recognition that numerical limits are needed to minimize the population and labor market effects. However, since the 1990s, admissions in the unlimited family categories have outnumbered those in quota-limited categories.
- The quota-limited family categories are chronically overbooked. The waiting list of people who have the qualifying family relationship now stands at about five million people, with the waits exceeding five years in most categories.





BACKGROUND

Legal immigration has hovered around one million admissions per year for most of the last 20 years. But unlike previous periods in American history, when immigration tended to come in spurts or waves followed by periods of low immigration, legal immigration has been trending consistently upward since 1945. Average immigration has risen from about 250,000 in the 1950s to about one million today (see Figure 2).

The United States accepts five types of immigrants: family, employment, humanitarian, diversity lottery, and amnesty. Family immigrants make up the largest share of legal immigration, by far. Since the 1970s, family immigration has accounted for more than half of total immigration, and since the 1980s it has accounted for more than 60 percent of total immigration (see Figure 2)⁵. In 2010, nearly 750,000

people were admitted in the family immigration categories (see Figure 3).

Family-based immigration has been an articulated priority in U.S. policy since immigration laws were first consolidated in the 1952 Immigration and Nationality Act. That law provided for nuclear family members of U.S. citizens and people from the Western Hemisphere to be admitted in unlimited numbers, while offering a limited number of slots for other applicants. In effect, chain migration was the established priority of U.S. immigration policy, and the open slots for those from Latin America created vast new family immigration chains.

In 1965, Congress ended unlimited Western Hemisphere immigration and re-organized the categories. It established new and increased quotas for visas to be issued in certain family (and skills) categories, and exempted certain other categories from the limits. This structure remains essentially the same today. Spouses of U.S. citizens, the spouses’ children⁶, the children of U.S. citizens, the parents of U.S. citizens, and orphans adopted overseas by citizens are all admitted in unlimited numbers. The other quota categories, or “preferences,” as they are known in immigration law, were established for other family members, as shown below.

Figure 3: Categories of Family Immigration

Category	Number Allowed	2000 Admissions	2009 Admissions
Spouses of Citizens & Children	Unlimited	279,043	415,399
Parents of Citizens	Unlimited	67,307	120,155
Unmarried Sons & Daughters of Citizens (and children)	23,400*	27,635	23,965
Spouses & Children, Sons & Daughters of Green Card Holders	114,200*	124,540	98,567
Married Sons & Daughters of Citizens	23,400*	22,804	25,930
Siblings of Citizens	65,000*	60,113	63,397
Total		581,442	747,413

*plus unused numbers from other categories

FAMILY IMMIGRATION IS THE BULK OF TOTAL IMMIGRATION

Shortly after the 1965 Act, family immigration quickly expanded to comprise the largest share of immigration, accounting for 60-70 percent of total legal immigration on a fairly consistent basis. The quota categories have remained fairly constant since the 1980s, running in the low 200,000s since about 1979.

But the number admitted in the unlimited immediate family categories have exploded, from 223,000 in 1986 to 535,000 in 2009. Most of this growth has occurred in the 2000s. In 1986, unlimited immediate relative immigration was only about half of total family immigration; today, it is about 70 percent, and has caused the overall level of family immigration to more than double over that time.

There are several factors behind this rapid growth. First, the more immigrants we admit over time, the more people who will apply to sponsor family members such as their parents. News media accounts on family immigration often include anecdotes of people who claim to have set off a chain reaction of sponsorship that results in dozens of family members re-settling here over the years. Congress gave family immigration a turbo boost in 1986 by passing an immigration reform bill that included an amnesty for about three million people who had been living in the country illegally, mostly from Mexico. This was the largest immigration amnesty ever in American history. By the early 1990s these former illegal aliens became eligible to sponsor their spouses and children, and eventually some earned citizenship and the right to apply for parents and siblings.

The immigration agency did detect a spike in naturalization rates (as well as numbers) in the 1990s, which also increases the number of people likely to sponsor family members. The

higher naturalization rates have been attributed to a) the surge in immigration resulting from the 1986 amnesty and b) action by Congress to cut off social services to non-citizens.

It is worth noting that immigration numbers in recent years have not been noticeably affected by changes in America's economic situation or by other developments, unlike other times in our history. For example, immigration dropped off sharply during the Great Depression and world wars in the 20th Century. Recent experience shows that immigration is no longer a phenomenon that will self-regulate according to economic cycles or unemployment rates; it is clearly a function of our admissions policies –the more people allowed to immigrate, the more who will do so, and the more who will sponsor their family members.

POLICIES PROMOTE “FAMILY RELOCATION”

Supporters of high immigration often describe the law and process as “family reunification,” evoking a sentimental image of the hardship of separation followed by a happy reunion. In truth, what often happens is really a process of “family relocation” to the United States that can start with one individual who comes as a spouse, student, guestworker, or illegal immigrant, and then eventually gains status and the ability to sponsor other family members. U.S. policy is set up to allow this. The combination of mass immigration in multiple forms – family, employment, humanitarian and lottery – together with provisions for the later admission of more family members, the majority of which are unlimited in number, means that immigration constantly builds on itself. This process occurs regardless of economic conditions and seemingly outside any consideration of the tremendous population, labor market, and fiscal consequences

that this immigration imposes on American society.

The green card category with the largest number of visas issued each year is for spouses of U.S. citizens and their children. In 2009, more than 317,000 immigrant spouses received green cards in this category, up from 196,000 in 2000. These individuals brought with them about 86,000 children in 2009 (up from about 70,000 in 2000). Others received green cards based on marriage to a permanent resident; along with their children, they numbered about 45,000 last year.

In principle, spousal immigration is uncontroversial. Mail order brides notwithstanding, most people accept that a U.S. citizen should be able to marry someone from another country and bring him or her here to live. This is common among members of the military, diplomatic service, and staff of multinational corporations. In addition, many foreigners who come here as students or workers end up marrying a U.S. citizen. Other recent immigrants will sponsor a spouse from their home country.

But most people would be surprised to learn that only a small share of the immigrant spouses arrive from overseas. About two-thirds have already been living in the United States, either as legal temporary visitors or as illegal aliens.⁷ Interestingly, about 70 percent of the children of sponsored spouses are admitted from overseas, meaning that the sponsored spouses originally came to the United States alone, and later applied for their children.

In contrast, most of the immigrants admitted in the other family categories (parents, sons & daughters and siblings) arrive from overseas.

The largest category of non-nuclear family immigration is parents of U.S. citizens. Admissions in this category, which are unlimited, have nearly doubled over the decade, from 67,000 in 2000 to

more than 120,000 in 2009. Table 1 shows the admissions in the other categories in 2000 and 2009.

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF FAMILY IMMIGRANTS

Family immigration is designed to serve the interests of the U.S. citizen and legal permanent resident sponsors, rather than the country's economic or labor market needs. Nevertheless, the inflow of these immigrants has a significant labor market and demographic impact. Of the 747,000 family immigrants admitted in 2009, 66 percent (or 495,000) are between the age of 20 and 60.⁸ Only a very small share (9,000) describe themselves as "retirees," even though about 50,000 are age 65 or older.

If they are employed, most list their occupation to be in less skilled jobs such as services, sales, farming, construction or factory work.

About 326,000, or 44 percent, are in the child-bearing years of age 20-39. A majority of these immigrants (58%) are female.

DEMAND FOR RATIONED FAMILY GREEN CARDS FAR EXCEEDS THE LIMITS

While admissions in the unlimited immediate relative categories have climbed steadily since they were established, slowed only by the immigration agency's capacity to process the applications, growth in the quota categories has been effectively prevented by the statutory limits. The 1965 Act established a limit of 170,000 for family preference immigration, which was expanded to 226,000 (plus any unused numbers in the employment category) in 1990. In addition to the quotas, Congress has imposed some limits on the total number of admissions from each country, so that the immigration flow would not be dominated by applicants from one place.

THE CHAIN MIGRATION SNOWBALL: FIVE MILLION WAITING FOR GREEN CARDS

Those applicants who exceed the ceiling or per-country limits are placed on a waiting list. As of May, 2009, there were nearly five million people on the waiting list for family-based green cards. The State Department reports that about 2.7 million people are waiting for their turn to be processed at a U.S. consulate overseas. Another 2.2 million are estimated to be waiting to be processed by USCIS here in the United States.⁹

As Figure 4 shows, the waiting lists have grown 43 percent since 1995. They are now more than 20 times larger than what the law allows in annual admissions. This is a strong indication of both the multiplier effect of chain migration and the tremendous world-wide demand for green cards. It also reveals a fundamental and chronic problem with our system – the current scheme of preferences and quotas is hopelessly overbooked. Our family immigration program offers the opportunity of immigration to far more people than possibly can be accommodated within a reasonable time period under current numerical limits.

Advocates for mass immigration cite the existence of the waiting list as an argument for raising or eliminating the limits or creating loopholes. For example, in 2000, they convinced Congress to create a temporary visa for spouses on the waiting list, enabling them to enter years before their number comes up, rendering the numerical limit in that category almost meaningless.

As of this writing, those who are entering as the spouses and children of green card holders have the shortest waits of all the quota family preference categories. Most of those entering today have waited about 18 months. The longest wait is in the category for siblings; applicants currently being admitted from most countries have waited about nine years, while those now entering from the Philippines have waited 23 years. The waits in other categories range from five to 18 years, depending on country of citizenship and category.

FRAUD SWELLS FAMILY IMMIGRATION NUMBERS

America could never have an immigration policy generous enough to satisfy the enormous world-wide demand for immigration. The most recent Gallup polling has indicated that more

Figure 4: Immigrant Visa Waiting List, 1995 and 2009

Category	1994	2009
F-1. Unmarried Sons & Daughters (21+) of Citizens	63,499	228,787
F-2A. Spouses & Children of LPRs	1,047,496	322,212
F-2B. Unmarried Sons & Daughters of LPRs	450,579	481,726
F3. Married Sons & Daughters of Citizens	257,110	484,230
F4. Brothers & Sisters of Adult Citizens	1,634,463	1,206,397
Unspecified categories on USCIS Waiting List (est)	Unknown	2,200,000
Total	3,453,147	4,923,352 43%

Source: U.S. Department of State

than 165 million adults worldwide would like to move permanently to the United States if allowed.¹⁰ As a result, of course, many people try to enter the United States illegally, and many try to obtain immigration benefits fraudulently. The family categories are especially susceptible to what immigration officials call “relationship fraud,” whereby people pretend to have a family relationship and try to substantiate it with fraudulent documents. For instance, someone might purchase a false birth certificate to establish ties to someone already in the United States and try to use it as the basis for a fraudulent petition for a green card or to piggyback onto a legitimate family green card application. It is also common for illegal aliens to try to launder their status by entering a marriage with a U.S. citizen or permanent resident. Sometimes the U.S. sponsor is duped into believing the love is real, as is common in mail order bride scenarios. Sometimes the U.S. sponsor is a willing participant in the fraud in order to make money.¹¹

Immigration officials at the State Department and USCIS are trained to look out for fraud, but in practice have little time or incentive to investigate applicants. Both agencies are overwhelmed by the sheer volume of applications that are submitted and the paperwork that needs to be reviewed. Making matters worse, the leaders of both agencies have adopted a “customer service first” approach that values swift processing over thorough review. According to whistle-blowing career USCIS staff, new agency director Alejandro Mayorkas has imposed what they describe as a “get to yes” and “zero complaints” policy that puts applicant satisfaction above strict application of the law and fraud detection.¹²

No one knows how many fraudulent cases succeed, and DHS does not tell how many it catches, but it is generally agreed that the fraud

rates are significant. A 2002 GAO report described the green card fraud problem as “pervasive and significant,” “out of control,” and “rampant,” and quoted one senior agency manager as estimating that 20 to 30 percent of all applications involved some fraud.¹³ A 2008 review found that the Department of Homeland Security has made little progress on this problem.¹⁴ According to the report, little fraud is reported by adjudicators, even less is investigated, few denials are issued for fraud reasons, and few cases are referred for criminal prosecution by ICE.

The State Department has similar problems with fraud in every visa category. For instance, it had to suspend refugee admissions from East Africa in 2008 after a pilot DNA testing program revealed that as many as 80 percent of applicants in one refugee family admission program turned out not to be related. The program has since been re-started, but on a greatly reduced scale.

Anecdotal reports gleaned from news media accounts confirm that fraud is undoubtedly swelling the family immigration numbers, particularly the marriage-based categories. The latest high profile example is the case of the two Pakistani men who were arrested as a result of their connection to the man who tried to bomb Times Square in May, 2010. One man, Aftab Ali Khan, age 27, had obtained a fiancée visa to marry a U.S. soldier he met working at an army base in Kuwait. He followed her back to Colorado, and when she backed out of the arrangement, he moved to Boston. There he worked as a cab driver, and eventually married a U.S. citizen in a courthouse ceremony on the last day of his authorized stay in the country. He resided with his uncle, Pir Khan, who had been living in the United States illegally after a failed asylum bid until he married an American woman 19 years his junior.

LEGALIZATION SCHEMES COULD BOOST LEGAL IMMIGRATION BY ONE MILLION ANNUALLY

Much of the recent immigration policy debate has centered on how to control illegal immigration and whether to provide any current illegal residents with legal status and a “path to citizenship.” The last two presidents and their immigration agency heads all have promoted the idea of a mass amnesty as a necessary component of what is known as Comprehensive Immigration Reform (CIR). CIR proposals also have typically included increasing the family immigration quotas enough to admit all those on the family waiting list within just a few years and to try to meet total worldwide demand. At this writing it seems unlikely that a comprehensive immigration expansion and mass amnesty bill could succeed in the 112th Congress, but advocates have pledged to continue to push for smaller amnesty proposals, such as the DREAM Act, a proposal to legalize illegal aliens brought here at a young age.

Most of the opposition to CIR/amnesty proposals has focused on the estimated fiscal costs of legalizing this population, the labor market effects that would result, and the discomfort most Americans have with rewarding those who have broken the law. Another lasting impact of CIR that has received less attention is the “echo” or “aftershock” increases in legal immigration that it would cause, as those who are legalized become permanent residents, sponsor their family members, and have children, further adding to the U.S. population. As mentioned above, the 1986 amnesty did have an effect on later immigration volume, particularly the unlimited immediate relative categories. After 1986, unlimited immediate relative immigration went from 50% of total family immigration to more than 70% today, and the absolute numbers doubled from 250,000 to more than 500,000 today.

Because CIR remains on the agenda of many lawmakers and the Obama administration, it is worth examining what its impact on future family immigration and population growth might be. CIR proposals have typically included the following elements¹⁵ that would have the potential to increase immigration, and thus eventually future family immigration:

1. Immediate legalization of all illegal aliens (except those convicted of felonies) – about 10 million people – and any spouses and children abroad – would receive legal status.
2. Green cards for all foreign students with graduate degrees in science, technology, engineering or mathematics. This could increase the number of green cards by about 150,000 each year.
3. Admit an unlimited number of new guestworkers who can convert to green cards – the effects are impossible to predict, but it easily could be hundreds of thousands each year.
4. Admit all those currently on the green card waiting list over an eight year time period – this would increase annual family immigration by 625,000 per year for eight years, and then future family immigration thereafter.
5. Eliminate numerical limits on spouses and children of LPRs – this would hasten the admission of those on the waiting list by an unknown number.
6. Extend immigration rights to same-sex partners – it is estimated that this would increase annual family immigration by about 36,000 per year.¹⁶

These measures would result in an annual increase of more than one million immigrants per year, not counting the immediate surge in green cards due to the legalization of the initial 10 million illegal aliens. Of course, the population

impact is larger when the number of future births to these immigrant women are included.

USCIS would be unlikely to be able to manage this vast increase in its workload without extensive rubber-stamping approval of applications. Currently, the agency processes about six million applications each year, and the process is backlogged to the point where the average time to process each form is three to nine months. Enactment of CIR would be sure to have an impact on all other immigration benefits processing, including employment immigration and the naturalization of new citizens.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO REDUCE FAMILY IMMIGRATION

Immigration-driven population growth, together with concerns about the effects of mass immigration on our labor markets and the fiscal costs of immigration, have led numerous lawmakers and bipartisan commissions to recommend making targeted cuts in the family immigration program. Public awareness of the population consequences of immigration is growing, particularly in the American southwest, where immigration is responsible for a large share of population growth, and where states are struggling with a severe shortage of water to sustain its growing population.¹⁷

Most observers agree that the power shift in the U.S. House of Representatives from Democratic to Republican control makes the prospect for CIR extremely unlikely in the next two years. Many of the lawmakers who previously supported immigration expansion or amnesty have been replaced by representatives who campaigned on the opposite position.¹⁸

After the visa lottery, which would likely be the first category of legal immigration to be cut if

Congress were so inclined (now bringing in 45,000 per year and establishing new chains of family migration where none existed before),¹⁹ the family immigration categories offer the most promising opportunity to reduce legal immigration.

JORDAN COMMISSION'S PROPOSALS TO CUT FAMILY IMMIGRATION

In 1995, the Jordan Commission on Immigration Reform, chaired by the late member of Congress and civil rights leader Barbara Jordan, included in its comprehensive package of reform recommendations a proposal to streamline the family immigration categories.²⁰ The Commission proposed to eliminate two family quota categories – adult sons and daughters of citizens and siblings of citizens (and their respective families) – and to reduce total quota admissions correspondingly.

The Clinton administration initially backed this idea, but subsequently dropped its support after intense lobbying from immigrant advocacy groups, especially those groups representing Asian immigrants, according to news media reports at the time. When Congressional lawmakers drafted a bill to implement the Commission's recommendations, these streamlining provisions were originally included, but later dropped as Republicans decided to focus on illegal immigration.

The comprehensive immigration reform proposal negotiated in 2007 by President George Bush, Senator Ted Kennedy, and Senator Jon Kyl also would have eliminated some of these categories (after accommodating all those on the waiting list).

The idea has surfaced again, in the form of a bill introduced by Rep. Phil Gingrey (R – Ga.).²¹ If passed, such a measure would achieve the first

reduction in legal immigration since the 1940s. It would reduce annual legal immigration by about 88,000 people per year, and reduce the overseas waiting list by two-thirds. Such a change would also help diminish future immigration demand by severing one of the key links in “chain migration,” as new citizens would no longer be able to sponsor siblings who are not part of their nuclear family, or grown sons and daughters with their families.

But to achieve population stabilization, lawmakers will have to do more cutting of family immigration. The two categories proposed for elimination represent about 40 percent of family preference immigration, but only about 12 percent of total family immigration.

To further lower immigration, lawmakers must look at bringing back the numerical limits on the category for parents of U.S. citizens, which every decade adds one million older people to an already aging U.S. population. After the spouses category, this is the second largest class of admission, and it has been one of the fastest growing. As noted earlier, admissions in this category have nearly doubled in the last decade, from 67,000 in 2000 to 120,000 in 2009. Establishing an annual limit at about half of current levels to, say, 60,000 per year, would not only reduce annual volume, but together with the elimination of adult sons and daughters, would also slow down the chain migration process.

Together, these two changes could reduce family immigration by 20 percent, or 150,000 per year, slowing population growth by about 1.5 million persons over a decade, not including any future offspring of these immigrants.

These cuts could be politically difficult to attain. The sponsors of the five million people on the waiting list will be upset if their family members cannot join them (especially considering

that they have paid a fee to be processed). But the ever-lengthening wait for quota visas is an indication that the system has been highly dysfunctional for many years. Many will claim that it is unfair to take away these applicants’ opportunity of a green card; but it is arguably even more unfair to continue to offer immigration benefits to people who literally may die waiting to realize them, not to mention the fundamental unfairness of imposing continued immigration-driven population growth on the American people.

REDUCTIONS TO OTHER CATEGORIES

Significant as they are, these cuts alone are not enough to restore immigration admissions to more traditional levels and to minimize the population growth and labor market distortion that they cause. The following measures would also help shrink family immigration:

1. Reduce illegal immigration – Continued high illegal immigration stokes family immigration in several ways. First, an unknown but significant number of illegal immigrants is able to acquire legal status each year through marriage or other ways to launder status (such as cancellation of removal, temporary protected status, or political asylum). Moreover, the presence of a large illegal alien population creates pressure on lawmakers to provide such relief. A recent study found that Congress has legalized hundreds of thousands of people through such measures in recent years.²² Any increase in green cards will play out in increased family immigration down the line.
2. Reduce opportunities for fraud in the marriage visa categories (and all immigration categories). As discussed, visas for spouses of U.S. citizens and their children are the largest

single line item in the annual immigration tally, numbering more than 400,000 in 2009. An estimated 25-30 percent of the cases are fraudulent, yet officials can only investigate and prosecute only a handful. If even one-third of these issuances could be prevented through more robust screening and anti-fraud efforts, that would be a significant number, potentially on the order of 40,000 fewer green cards per year.²³ Equally important, these agencies must be persuaded to reduce the emphasis on satisfying applicants and increase the emphasis on applying a strict interpretation of the law and detecting and deterring fraud.

3. Lawmakers should consider disallowing certain categories of immigrants to sponsor

relatives at all. For example, if Congress were to enact an amnesty, even a limited one, the beneficiaries need not be entitled to bring in family members. Similar rules could be added for immigrants who become permanent residents after temporary protected status, cancellation of removal, or other amnesty programs.

4. Reductions in other legal immigration categories will reduce the pool of people in the United States who are likely to sponsor relatives for family relocation. This includes employment-based green cards, humanitarian programs, student visas, and guestworker programs.



1. Unless otherwise noted, the immigration statistics in this paper do not include illegal immigration, which has added at least another 300,000 to 500,000 people per year over the last two decades, according to most experts.
2. Steven A. Camarota, "Census: Population Up 27 Million in Just 10 Years," Center for Immigration Studies, December, 2010, <http://cis.org/2010CensusPopulation>.
3. The Census Bureau's 2009 middle projection is that the U.S. population will grow from 310 million in 2010 to 439 million in 2050. The Bureau identifies immigration as the driving factor behind this growth. See <http://www.census.gov/population/www/projections/analytical-document09.pdf>.
4. All figures on immigration admissions since 1986 are from the Department of Homeland Security's Office of Immigration Statistics and can be accessed at <http://www.dhs.gov/files/statistics/publications/>. Statistics on years prior to 1996 were obtained through a special request to this Office.
5. Drawn from DHS statistics, these figures do not include the roughly three million immigrants legalized in the 1896 amnesty.
6. In immigration law, the term "child" refers to offspring who are under 21. Offspring who are older than 21 are referred to as "sons" or "daughters".
7. The Department of Homeland Security currently does not publish information on the status from which an individual is able to adjust to permanent residency. Therefore, it is impossible to determine just how many spousal applicants converted from legal or illegal status.
8. 2009 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics, Department of Homeland Security, Office of Immigration Statistics, http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/statistics/yearbook/2009/ois_yb_2009.pdf, Table 9.
9. Jessica Vaughan, "Five Million waiting on Family Visas," Center for Immigration Studies, May 19, 2009, at <http://cis.org/Vaughan/FamilyImmigrantWaitingList>.
10. Jon Clifton, "Roughly 6.2 Million Mexicans Express Desire to Move to U.S.," June 7, 2010, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/139391/Roughly-Million-Mexicans-Express-Desire-Move.aspx?version=print>.
11. For more on immigration marriage fraud, see David Seminara, Hello I Love You, Won't You Tell Me Your Name: Inside the Green Card Marriage Phenomenon, Center for Immigration Studies, November, 2008, <http://cis.org/marriagefraud>.
12. Jessica M. Vaughan, "Mayorkas to USCIS Staff: Just Say Yes, Or Else!", Center for Immigration Studies Blog, October 20, 2010, <http://cis.org/vaughan/just-say-yes>.
13. General Accounting Office, Immigration Benefits Fraud: Focused Approach Needed to Address Problems, GAO-02-66, January, 2002, <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d0266.pdf>
14. Office of the Inspector General of the Department of Homeland Security, Review of the USCIS Benefit Fraud Referral Process, OIG-08-09, April, 2008, <http://www.aila.org/content/default.aspx?docid=25895>.
15. These elements are drawn from the Gutierrez and Reid-Schumer-Menendez bills introduced in the 111th Congress. The Gutierrez bill can be found at <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/z?c111:H.R.4321> and the Reid-Schumer-Menendez proposal is summarized at <http://www.c-span.org/pdf/cd-100428-rsm-bill-outline-draft.pdf>.
16. "New Immigration Report Shows Bi-national Same-sex Couples Face Discrimination," May 3, 2006, <http://www.advocate.com/article.aspx?id=36646>.
17. Kathleene Parker, Population, Immigration and the Drying of the American Southwest, Center for Immigration Studies, November, 2010, <http://cis.org/southwest-water-population-growth>.
18. Roy Beck, "Nine Big Gains Make Senate Far More Pro-Enforcement & Anti-Amnesty," Numbers USA Blog, November 7, 2010, <http://www.numbersusa.com/content/nusablog/beckr/november-7-2010/9-big-gains-make-next-senate-far-more-pro-enforcement-anti-amnesty.ht>.
19. The U.S. House once passed such a measure in 2005 as part of an immigration enforcement bill.
20. U.S. Commission on Immigration Reform, Legal Immigration: Setting Priorities, 1995 Executive Summary, <http://www.utexas.edu/lbj/uscir/exesum95.html>.
21. See the Nuclear Family Priority Act, <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d110:h.r.00938>
22. Donald M. Kerwin, "More than IRCA: US Legalization Programs and the Current Policy Debate," Migration Policy Institute, December, 2010, <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/pubs/legalization-historical.pdf>.
23. For specific recommendations to reduce immigration marriage fraud, see Seminara at <http://www.cis.org/marriagefraud>.

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