

Options in Brief

Option 1: Open the United States to the World

From its earliest days, the United States has been a land of opportunity for people outside U.S. borders. Each wave of immigrants has contributed to the United States' greatness and has enriched society. Today, people, ideas, and goods travel the globe at a pace unseen before. Instead of relying on rigid notions of borders and old ideas about a singular "American" identity, the United States should embrace the opportunities that globalization and multiculturalism present. The borders should be open to new immigrants and refugees, whatever their religion, language, race, or ethnicity. By welcoming a diverse group of people to its shores, the United States both enriches its culture and benefits from the skills and experiences that immigrants bring. In the long term, the talents, drive, and dreams of immigrants and refugees will benefit everyone in the United States.

Option 2: Restrict Immigration

War, terrorism, hunger, and disease plague an ever-growing portion of humanity. Protecting the United States from the threats posed by outsiders must be the country's first priority. The United States must recognize that it can do little to end the misery that haunts much of the world. Meanwhile, the forces of economic change have left millions of U.S. citizens struggling to keep up, and the growing threat from Muslim terrorists must not be ignored. At a time when protecting the security, economy, and culture of the country is crucial, the United States cannot afford to keep the door open every year to roughly one million newcomers. The United States should drastically reduce the number of immigrants it accepts and commit the resources necessary to take control of U.S. borders and prevent terrorism. It is time to focus on what is best for the citizens of the United States.

Option 3: Admit the Talent We Need

Every country has the right to promote its national interests. U.S. immigration policy should be designed to serve the country's economic and social needs, not to solve the world's problems. The United States must ensure that U.S. immigration policy strengthens the economy and, by doing so, improves the livelihoods of U.S. citizens. The United States must implement an immigration policy that boosts its international competitiveness while also protecting the domestic economy. The United States should open its doors to scientists and engineers from abroad. To help U.S. factories, farms, and service industries hold down costs, we should allow a limited number of foreigners to work temporarily in low-wage jobs. The United States must discourage undocumented immigration. By forging ahead with a realistic, long-term strategy, immigration policy can work for the United States.

Option 4: Make Emigration Unnecessary

The people of the world are on the move. Population growth, the spread of war and violence, fears of persecution, and the age-old curses of hunger, poverty, and disease drive people from their homes. The United States is the destination of choice for many of these people. But opening the doors to large-scale immigration causes problems here and abroad. The United States must lead the international community in solving the problems that cause people to leave their countries and come to the United States. By improving living standards among the world's disadvantaged, the United States can reduce the forces that drive immigrants and refugees to its borders. This process will take time, and the United States must act accordingly by admitting refugees in the meantime. But, in the end, making emigration unnecessary will benefit all people.