



Ten Immigration Questions for Hillary Clinton

Presidential candidate Hillary Clinton has not been asked to detail her positions on a variety of immigration-related issues. The following questions raise some of the issues researchers in the immigration field would like to know more about in order to provide better analysis of the candidate's position.

1. Does Clinton still support construction of the 700 miles of double-border fencing required in the Secure Fence Act of 2006? What type of border security does she support, if any?

Last November, Clinton said the following: "I voted numerous times when I was a Senator to spend money to build a barrier to try to prevent illegal immigrants from coming in. And I do think you have to control your borders. We need to secure our borders, I'm for it, I voted for it, I believe in it."¹ The double-border fencing she voted for was never constructed, and more recently Clinton has spoken of building "bridges, not walls". Does she still support physical barriers that would "prevent illegal immigrants from coming in", and, if so, how does she define them?

2. Does Clinton support increases in immigration, decreases in immigration, or does she think the current level of approximately one million permanent residents every year is about right?

Gallup has released a new poll finding that America continues to be overwhelmingly opposed to increases in immigration.² Gallup finds that the "relatively small percentage of Americans who want immigration increased ... has edged down this year to 21%" and that only 18 percent of Hispanics want increases in immigration. This is important because a key component of any comprehensive immigration bill is likely to include massive increases in immigration, as was the case with the 2013 Senate bill (S.744) that Clinton voted for.

3. Does Clinton believe there is any limit to what a president can do unilaterally on immigration, and if so, where is that line drawn?

Prior to unilaterally decreeing his Deferred Action program into existence, President Obama declared that the Constitution prevented him from acting unilaterally.³ Clinton, however, said she would "go even further" and would "want to do more" if elected president.⁴ The Associated Press reported that the Obama administration has "deported fewer immigrants over the past 12 months than at any time since 2006" and that "total deportations dropped 42 percent since 2012."⁵ Since Clinton said she would be "less harsh and aggressive" than Obama in enforcing immigration laws, what's left of our immigration laws if Hillary Clinton becomes president?⁶

4. Does Clinton believe that sanctuary cities should continue to release illegal immigrants with felony records instead of handing them over to federal authorities?

There are over 300 jurisdictions in the country that operate as sanctuaries for illegal immigrants and shield them from the law.⁷ This has resulted in local authorities releasing thousands of criminal aliens into our neighborhoods. According to government data, those who were released went on to commit thousands of new crimes. Despite a UC Berkeley poll finding that 74 percent of Californians oppose sanctuary policies, Clinton came out against a measure in North Carolina aimed at ending sanctuary cities.⁸

5. Does Clinton believe the State Department should deny visas to foreigners who believe homosexuals should be punished with death? What about foreigners who believe apostates should be executed? What about foreigners who support the practice of female genital mutilation?

A big topic of discussion is whether the United States should use ideological exclusion laws to block the immigration of foreigners who support beliefs and practices that most Americans find abhorrent. Clinton has responded to Donald Trump's support for such measures by calling them a "dismissive and insulting approach" and "shameful and offensive" and "dangerous".⁹ As the former Secretary of State, Clinton should be able to provide some clear detail on this subject, but she has not.

6. Why does Clinton think visa-overstayers are entitled to citizenship? Doesn't amnesty undermine the efforts of visa adjudicators in the State Department?

Clinton is on record supporting legalization of illegal immigrants. It is estimated that around half of the illegal immigrant population is made up of people who came legally but then broke the promises made to our State Department officials and overstayed their visas.¹⁰ Does Secretary Clinton believe that all foreigners should view temporary visas as a pathway to permanent residency in the United States? If so, does she believe that our visa officers overseas should stop looking for signs that an applicant is likely to overstay?

7. In 2006, Clinton said "we need to have tougher employer sanctions" to prevent employers from hiring illegal aliens. What type of sanctions does she support, and will she mandate E-Verify?

In October 2006, Clinton gave a speech calling for an amnesty, but also said the United States must "Secure our borders with technology, personnel, physical barriers if necessary in some places; and we need to have tougher employer sanctions."¹¹ However, she supports President Obama's Deferred Action program, which rewards law-breaking businesses by giving work permits to their illegal immigrant laborers. Does she now believe all businesses should be able to employ illegal aliens?

8. Why does Clinton support a 550 percent increase in Syrian refugees when the FBI and USCIS say there are gaps in the data necessary to do adequate screening?

On the issue of Syrian refugee resettlement, the FBI testified that there are "gaps" in the screening process and that "There is risk associated of bringing anybody in from the outside, but specifically from a conflict zone like that."¹² Testimony from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) indicates the agency has difficulty doing background checks, doesn't have the ability to send an investigator to Syria, and that Syria itself is lacking databases U.S. officials can look through. Is Clinton prepared to assure the American people that zero terrorists will slip through the refugee resettlement process?

9. Why has Clinton ignored federal law and allowed tens of thousands of criminal aliens to be released into our neighborhoods?

In 2013, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) released 36,007 convicted criminal aliens with records that included 193 homicide convictions, 426 sexual assault convictions, 303 kidnapping convictions, 1,075 aggravated assault convictions, and many other crimes — nearly 88,000 crimes in total.¹³ It is believed this practice of releasing criminal aliens from countries that refuse to take back their nationals existed under Clinton's entire term as Secretary of State despite the fact that federal law requires the State Department to stop issuing visas to people in that country until the country cooperates.¹⁴

10. In light of the controversy surrounding the H-1B visa program, will Clinton end the program or dramatically increase the number of H-1B visas issued each year?

Over the past year, a number of companies have been hired foreign workers to replace American workers in tech positions. The *New York Times* reports that Disney employees were forced to train their replacements, who were brought in by an outsourcing firm based in India through the H-1B visa program.¹⁵ Similar replacements were reported at Toys 'R' Us, Southern California Edison, Pfizer and other companies.

End Notes

- ¹ [U.S. Senate Roll Call Votes 109th Congress - 2nd Session](#); Julio Ricardo Varela, [“Clinton: ‘You Have to Control Your Borders’](#)”, Latino USA, November 9, 2015.
- ² Frank Newport, [“In U.S., Support for Decreasing Immigration Holds Steady”](#), Gallup, August 24, 2016.
- ³ Katie Sanders, [“Boehner: Obama said ‘22 times’ that he couldn’t do immigration executive action”](#), Politifact, March 1, 2015.
- ⁴ David Martosko, [“Hillary Clinton says Obama’s immigration orders are ‘just the beginning’ as she slams Republicans for giving illegal immigrants ‘second-class status’ and promises ‘to go even further’ if she’s president”](#), *Daily Mail*, May 5, 2015; Daniel Halper, [“Hillary Hits Obama for Being Too Strict on Illegal Immigrants”](#), the *Weekly Standard*, October 5, 2015.
- ⁵ Alicia A. Caldwell, [“US government deports fewest immigrants in nearly a decade”](#), Associated Press, October 7, 2015.
- ⁶ Laura Meckler, [“Hillary Clinton Calls Obama’s Deportation Policies Too Harsh”](#), *Wall Street Journal*, October 5, 2015.
- ⁷ Jessica Vaughan, [“Number of Sanctuaries and Criminal Releases Still Growing”](#), Center for Immigration Studies, October 2015.
- ⁸ [“Clinton campaign wants N.C. immigration bill vetoed”](#), Associated Press, October 2, 2015.
- ⁹ [“‘He started with Mexicans. He’s currently on Muslims’: Clinton slams Trump’s ‘Islamophobia’ as ‘shameful, offensive and dangerous’ as she and Sanders make final pitch to Iowa voters”](#), *Daily Mail*, January 26, 2016.
- ¹⁰ W. Gardner Selby, [“Visa overstayers comprise 38 percent to 50 percent of unauthorized U.S. residents, per 2006 calculations”](#), Politifact, April 28, 2014.
- ¹¹ Christian Datoc, [“FLASHBACK: Hillary Supported Secure Border, Deportations For Criminal Immigrants \[VIDEO\]”](#), The Daily Caller, June 8, 2016; see also, [“E-Verify Fact Sheet”](#), Center for Immigration Studies, March 2015.
- ¹² Julian Hattem, [“FBI chief: ‘Gaps’ remain in screening Syrian refugees”](#), *The Hill*, October 8, 2015; see also Mark Krikorian, [“The Syrian Refugee Crisis and Its Impact on the Security of the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program”](#), congressional testimony, November 2015; Steven A. Camarota and Karen Zeigler, [“The High Cost of Resettling Middle Eastern Refugees”](#), Center for Immigration Studies, November 2015; Nayla Rush, [“Meeting Obama’s 10,000 Syrian refugee target, no matter what”](#), Center for Immigration Studies, June 2016.
- ¹³ Stephanie Slifer, [“Report: 36K criminals freed while awaiting deportation”](#), CBS News, May 13, 2014.
- ¹⁴ Jon Feere, [“Why Hillary Clinton & John Kerry Share Responsibility for Criminal Alien Releases”](#), Center for Immigration Studies, May 2014.
- ¹⁵ Julia Preston, [“Pink Slips at Disney. But First, Training Foreign Replacements”](#), *The New York Times*, June 3, 2015.