

Our Broken Immigration System and How to Fix It

Tompkins County Public Library

Stephen Yale-Loehr and Tania Peñafort

November 20, 2025

Current system



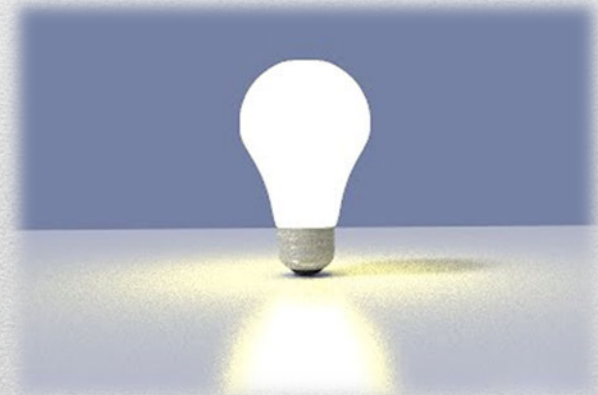
Broken system



Success stories



Solutions



Overview



Green Card Stories

Introduction by Laura Danielson and Stephen Yale-Loehr
Stories by Sandra Amrhein
Photographs by Ariana Lindquist

umbrage

- Not mentioned in the Constitution
- What that means
- Federal v. state regulation of immigration



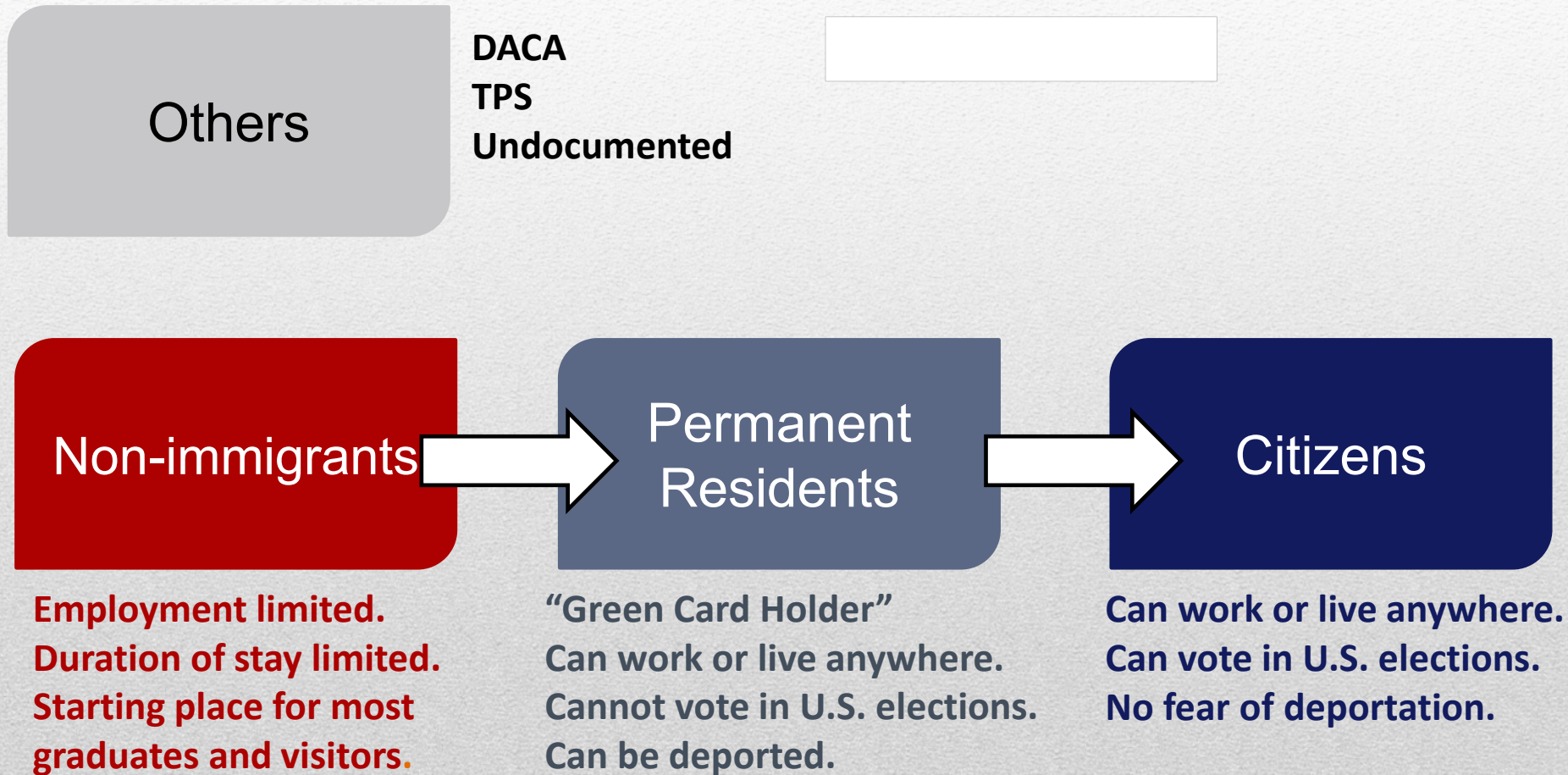
Where is immigration in the U.S. Constitution?

- Largest immigration system in the world
- 10 million non-immigrants every year
- Over 1 million immigrants every year



U.S. Immigration System

Overview of U.S. Immigration: People in the U.S.



Work Permitted

- A-1 (Diplomat)
- E-1,2 & TN (Treaty)
- H-1, 2, 3
(Temporary Worker)
- I (Media)
- L-1 (Transfer)
- N, O, P, Q, R, S

Work Not Permitted

- B-1, 2 (Visitor)
- C-1 (Transit)
- D-1 (Crewmember)
- VWPP/WT (Tourist)

Special Cases

- F-1 (Student)
- J-1,2 (Exchange)
- K-1 (Fiance)
- M-1 (Vocational Student)

Nonimmigrant Visas (NIVs)

Family-Sponsored

- Immediate relatives of US citizens
- FS-1, 3, 4 (Family of US citizens)
- FS-2 (Family of green card holders)

750-800,000
per year

Employment Based

- **EB-1 (Priority workers)**
- **EB-2 (Advanced degrees)**
- **EB-3 (Professionals/others)**
- EB-4 (Religious workers)
- EB-5 (Immigrant investors)

140,000
per year

Humanitarian

- Asylum/Refugee

80-120,000
per year

Diversity

50,000
per year

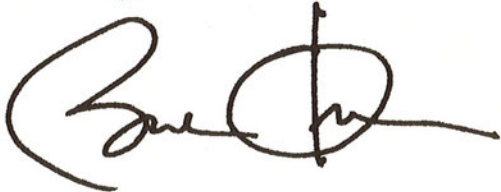
Immigrant Visas (Green Cards)

- Green card through stepfather, who was sponsored by employer
- From Mexico
- From NYC to Ithaca, then Candor
- Naturalized in 2015
- Now immigration attorney at Journey's End Refugee Services

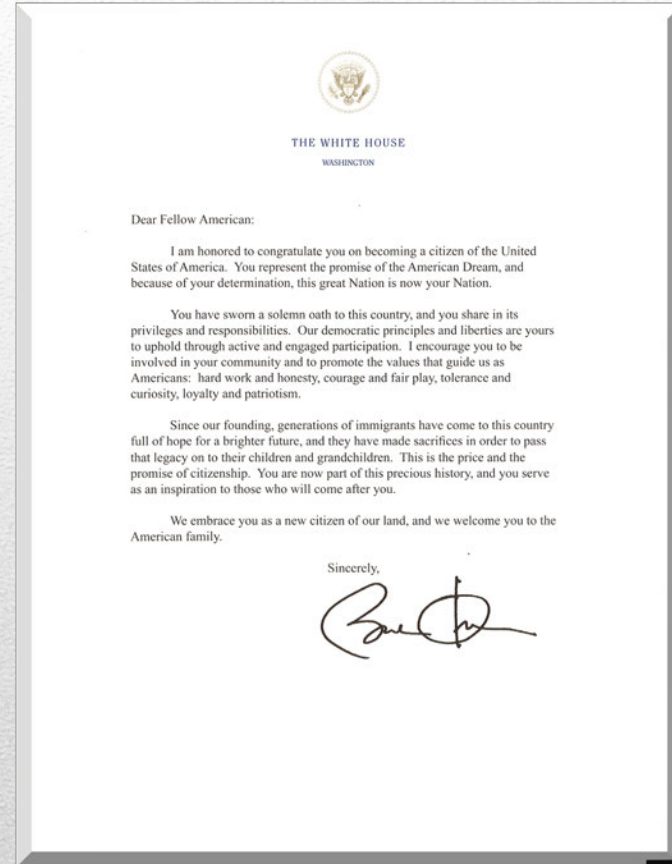


Tania Peñafort

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



Dear Fellow American:



Tania Peñafort

- Asylum
- Colombia
- Magician
- Spoke out against right-wing paramilitary forces and left-wing guerillas



Cesar Domico

- Employment-based green card
- Iceland's first female neurosurgeon
- Fell in love with NH during her childhood



Hulda Magnadóttir

- Diversity lottery
- Japan
- Preserve cultural heritage with embroidery



Shuji and Masa Tamura



Naturalization

- Tibetan
- Political asylee in Minnesota
- Teaches Buddhism classes
- Wants to come back in next life as US citizen



Thupten Lama

Family-Sponsored	All Chargeability Areas Except Those Listed	CHINA-mainland born	INDIA	MEXICO	PHILIPPINES
F1	Nov 2016	Nov 2016	Nov 2016	Nov 2005	Jan 2013
F2A	Feb 2024	Feb 2024	Feb 2024	Feb 2023	Feb 2024
F2B	Dec 2016	Dec 2016	Dec 2016	Dec 2007	Oct 2012
F3	Sep 2011	Sep 2011	Sep 2011	May 2001	Sep 2004
F4	Jan 2008	Jan 2008	Nov 2006	Apr 2001	Mar 2006

Family-based Green Card Backlogs

Employment -based	All Chargeability Areas Except Those Listed	CHINA- mainland born	INDIA	MEXICO	PHILIPPINES
1st	C	Dec 2022	Feb 2022	C	C
2nd	Dec 2023	Apr 2021	Apr 2013	Dec 2023	Dec 2023
3rd	Apr 2023	Mar 2021	Aug 2013	Apr 2023	Apr 2023
4th	Jul 2020	Jul 2020	Jul 2020	Jul 2020	Jul 2020
5th	C	Dec 2015	Feb 2021	C	C

Employment-based Green Card Backlogs



US Immigration Agencies



Broken System



The Sacramento Bee, 2006 Rex Babin

Broken System



Broken System



The Debate



Immigration Reform in Congress



DACA, DAPA, & Executive Actions

- Mexico
- Arrived undocumented
- Father deported
- Lived with brother in garage until sponsored by local family
- Attending ASU



Luis De La Cruz

Trump's Immigration Executive Orders

Border
Security

Interior
Immigration
Enforcemt

Travel Ban
Order

Mass
Deportation
s

H-1B
\$100,000 fee

Asylum
restrictions

Increased Enforcement:



Changes at the Border

Increased Enforcement:



Interior Enforcement

Current Enforcement Statistics:

- Number of persons in ICE detention: 59,762
- 71.5% of current detainees have no criminal convictions
- Number of persons arrested by ICE in September: 24,755
- 22% of persons are detained in Texas
- Approximately 85% arrests in Sept. were conducted in the interior of the country by ICE

Source: cliniclegal.org

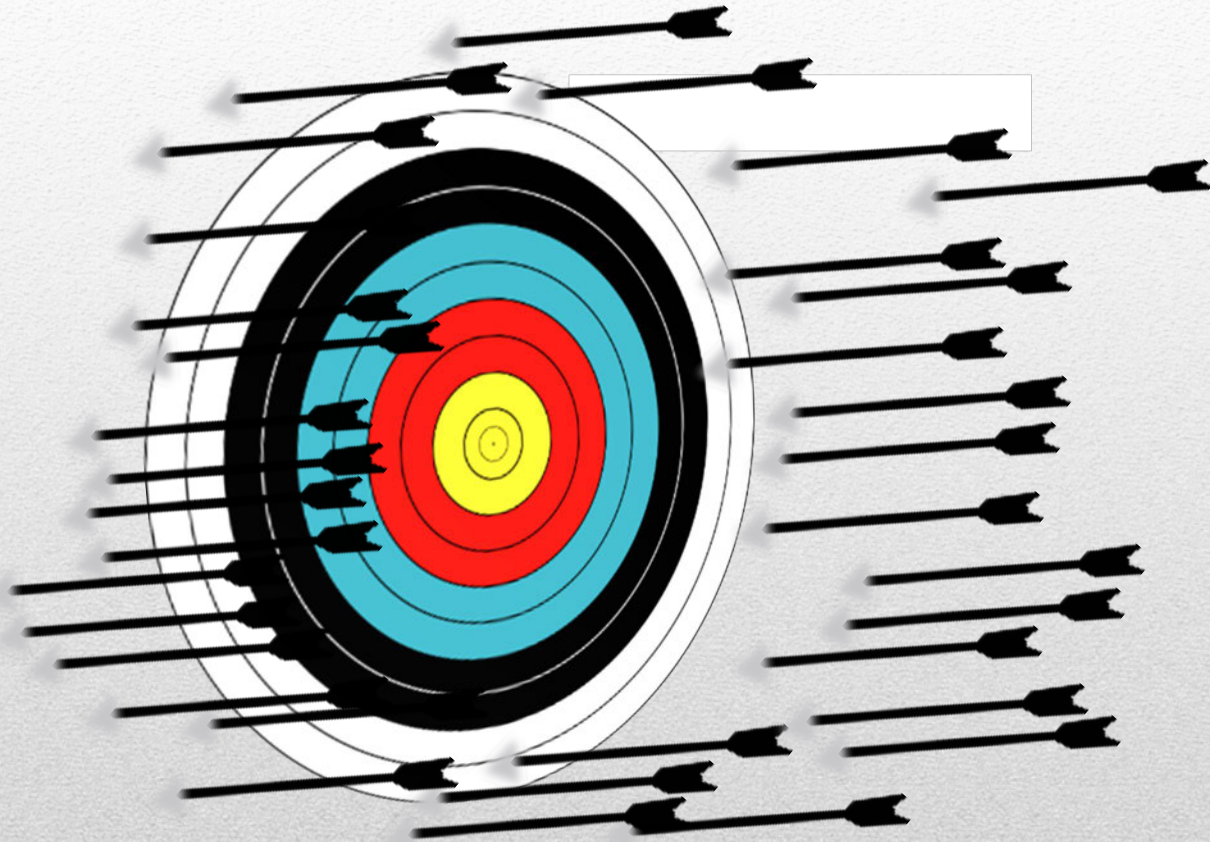
Interior Enforcement

What is a “Sanctuary” City or State?

- No set legal definition
- Symbolic statement: immigrants are “safe” in that city because local police limit cooperation with ICE
- Some cities have different additional “sanctuary” policies
- ICE can still come to a sanctuary locality and conduct raids, arrests, etc.



Myth of the Criminal Immigrant



- Mexico
- Brought to US illegally as a child
- Excelled in school despite challenges
- Received green card in 1986 through special program



Cleto “Sundy” Chazares

- Mexico
- Didn't realize he was undocumented until college
- Judge cancelled deportation orders



Randolph Sealey

- Peru
- Undocumented and business savvy
- Gained green card through marriage



Nelly Boyette

TPS Terminations



TPS Terminations

- *Venezuela 2023 (Apr. 7, 2025)*
 - *Took effect as of Oct. 3 while litigation continues.*
 - *Afghanistan (July 22, 2025)*
 - *Cameroon (Aug. 4, 2025)*
 - *Nepal (Aug. 20, 2025)*
 - *Nicaragua (Sept. 8, 2025)*
 - *Honduras (Sept. 8, 2025)*
 - *Venezuela 2021 (Nov. 7, 2025)*
 - *Syria (Nov. 21, 2025)*
 - *Burma (Nov. 25, 2025)**
 - *Ethiopia (Dec. 12, 2025)**
 - *South Sudan (Jan. 5, 2026)*
 - *Haiti (Feb. 3, 2026)*
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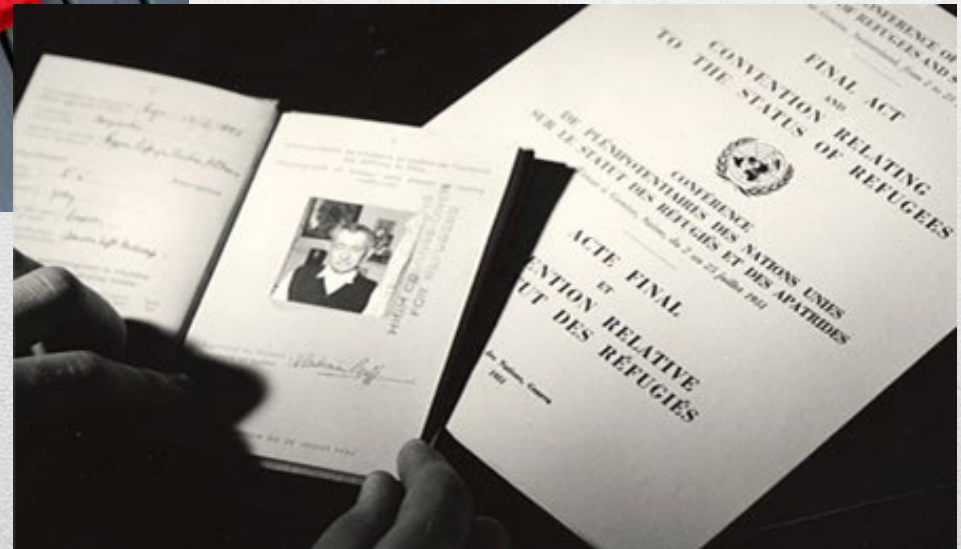
Travel Ban and Refugee Restrictions



- Sudan
- Lost Boy
- Arrived as refugee
- Studying to be a lawyer



Peter Ajak



Asylum

1951 UN Refugee Convention

- Librarian from Liberia
- Asylum
- Took 2 years to bring family here



Saah Quigee

- Expanded visas
- Earned legalization
- Enforcement



Solutions



Legislation and Sausage



Economic Benefits of Immigration

- Tourist visa decline
- International student enrollment decline
- Adverse economic impact
- Invisible wall



Adding It All Up

What you can do personally

- Write your members of Congress
- Support comprehensive immigration reform
- Contribute to immigrants' rights organizations like Journey's End Refugee Services:
<https://www.jersbuffalo.org/?form=donatetoday>
- Access to Representation Act (ARA) S.141/A.270- Write to your NY State Senator to support.
- Follow national immigration organizations





Questions?
