

Executive Summary

Barbara Jordan Immigration Reform Act of 2025

Purpose and Vision

The Barbara Jordan Immigration Reform Act of 2025 seeks to modernize the U.S. immigration system, honoring the legacy of Congresswoman Barbara Jordan, who championed lawful, fair, and national-interest-driven immigration policy. The Act aims to restore public trust, enforce the rule of law, and create pathways that align immigration with economic growth, national security, and American values.

Title I — Front Door Immigration Reform

- **New Department of Immigration Services (DIS):**
Establishes DIS as an independent cabinet-level agency, separate from enforcement agencies, to handle legal immigration services, eliminating conflicts of interest in current structures (pp. 4–6).
- **Modern Digital Processing System (FIPS):**
Implements an integrated digital platform for immigration applications, biometric verification, fraud detection, and secure communication (p. 6).
- **Annual Immigration Limits:**
Sets lawful permanent resident admissions between 750,000 and 1,250,000 per year, adjustable based on national interests and subject to Congressional review (pp. 7–8).
- **Merit-Based System:**
Introduces a points system prioritizing skills, education, English proficiency, and contributions to civic life.
- **Family Reunification Changes:**
Expands “immediate relative” definition to include minor children of lawful permanent residents but narrows extended family sponsorship to merit-based criteria (pp. 7–8).
- **EB-6 New American Generation Visa:**
Creates a new immigrant category for individuals under 35 demonstrating potential for economic and civic contribution, with a pathway to a Green Card after 3 years of lawful presence (pp. 8–9).
- **Self-Repatriation Reentry Program (SRRP):**
Allows individuals unlawfully present to depart voluntarily and return through legal channels without certain re-entry bars (pp. 9–10).

Title II — Fairness and Stabilization for Long-Term Residents

- **Blue Card Program:**
Establishes provisional legal status for undocumented individuals residing in the U.S. for over 5 years. Blue Card holders may work, travel domestically, and adjust to lawful permanent residency after 5 years, contingent on good moral character and integration criteria (pp. 10–11).
- **Paths to Green Card via Blue Card:**
Eligibility for permanent residency requires continued residence, work, and either military service, extraordinary public service, or consistent employment and tax compliance (p. 11).
- **DACA and Childhood Arrivals:**
Ensures eligibility for Blue Cards for DACA recipients and other childhood arrivals who meet educational or military service requirements (pp. 11–12).

- **Social Security Reconciliation:**
Allows individuals to reconcile past Social Security contributions made under invalid or mismatched SSNs for future benefits eligibility (p. 12).
- **Protections for Cooperating Witnesses:**
Shields undocumented victims or witnesses who assist law enforcement from deportation, offering nonimmigrant status (p. 13).

Title III — Asylum Modernization (Asylum 2.0)

- **SAFE System for Asylum Processing:**
Requires most asylum applications to begin via the Secure Asylum Filing and Evaluation (SAFE) System, including remote credible fear interviews (pp. 14–16).
- **Two-Step Asylum Adjudication:**
Applicants determined to have credible fear proceed to full merits hearings, while those denied face expedited removal with limited exceptions for emergencies and non-refoulement obligations (pp. 16–19).
- **Legacy Backlog Transition:**
Permits pending asylum cases to either proceed under existing processes or transfer into the new SAFE system for expedited review (p. 15).
- **Protections for Unaccompanied Minors:**
Sets strict transfer, care, and sponsorship standards for minors encountered at the border (p. 20).

Title IV — Employment Verification Modernization

- **Electronic Verification System (EVS):**
Replaces E-Verify with a nationwide digital system interoperable with multiple federal and state databases, providing near-instant work authorization confirmation (pp. 22–23).
- **Biometric and Photo Matching:**
Integrates biometric and photo comparison to prevent document fraud (pp. 23–24).
- **Penalties for Violations:**
Establishes significant civil and criminal penalties for employers who knowingly hire unauthorized workers, especially minors under exploitative conditions, and mandates public disclosure of violators (pp. 24–25).
- **Small Business Support:**
Provides technical support and simplified tools for businesses with fewer than 10 employees (p. 25).

Title V — General Provisions

- **Rulemaking and Oversight:**
Strict limitations on regulatory overreach; significant judicial review processes ensure agency actions stay within statutory bounds (pp. 28–29).
- **Funding:**
Authorizes necessary appropriations for new systems and mandates public reporting on performance and expenditures (pp. 29–30).
- **Definitions and Severability:**
Includes comprehensive statutory definitions and severability clauses to preserve the integrity of the legislation if portions are invalidated (pp. 26–28).