Nearly 7 out of 10 Americans support letting unauthorized immigrants stay in the U.S. Recent executive actions could increase GDP by $210 billion. The current Administration has removed more people than any other. AILA members fight for mothers and children seeking asylum.
Families are waiting years to reunite with loved ones. Businesses cannot hire the workers they need. And millions of families and workers have no way to legalize their status.

**There is widespread agreement**  
Congress must reform our laws.  
7/10

AILA urges Congress to pass reforms that legalize the undocumented, plus improve the legal immigration system, border security and interior enforcement, and due process and humanitarian protections.

With Congress failing to pass legislation, President Barack Obama set forth a series of immigration reforms in 2014. These reforms—including the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and Deferred Action for Parents of Americans and Lawful Permanent Residents (DAPA) programs—rest firmly within the legal authority of the executive branch.

Nearly seven out of 10 Americans (69 percent) support allowing unauthorized immigrants to remain in the country.  

**IMMIGRATION REFORM IS GOOD FOR THE ECONOMY**

The White House Council of Economic Advisers (CEA) estimates that the president’s 2014 immigration reforms would lead to a decrease in the federal deficit between $25 billion and $60 billion over the next 10 years.

The CEA also estimates that the president’s reforms would increase gross domestic product (GDP) by as much as $210 billion over a decade.

Immigration reform would increase GDP by as much as $210 billion.
THE LEGAL IMMIGRATION SYSTEM NEEDS REFORM

America’s legal immigration system must be reformed to meet the needs of our families and the economy. Congress must provide sufficient numbers of green cards and nonimmigrant visas for both employment-based and family-based categories. Both categories are vital to our national interest, and slots in one category should not be cut to offset an increase in another category.

AILA supports the Senate bipartisan Immigration Innovation “I-Squared” Act, S.153. Go to www.aila.org/isquared

CASE IN POINT

Originally from the Netherlands, Jelle Ferwerda is the founder of the prosperous small business, LogicNets, Inc. The company provides expert decision support software to several large U.S. corporations. LogicNets has generated several millions of dollars in revenue and employs 20 U.S. workers. Jelle is the kind of entrepreneur that our immigration laws should be attracting, but the lack of reform has made it more difficult for him, his family, and many other innovative job creators to thrive in the United States.

“I-Squared] is a common sense approach to ensuring that those who have come here to be educated in high-tech fields have the ability to stay here with their families and contribute to the economy and our society.”
—Bill Sponsor Senator Orrin Hatch (R-UT)

LEGALIZATION IS VITAL

Congress must legalize the status of those who are undocumented and give them an opportunity to apply for permanent residence, and ultimately citizenship if they choose. The legalization plan should be broad and inclusive to ensure the greatest number of people can come out of the shadows.

FOR MORE ONLINE RESOURCES:
www.aila.org/ImmigrationReform
The federal government has committed unprecedented resources to immigration enforcement—both in the interior and at the border. Annually, immigration enforcement spending is $18.5 billion—exceeding that of all other federal criminal law enforcement combined, including the FBI, DEA, ATF, and the U.S. Marshals.

Nonetheless, critics claim that the Administration is not adequately enforcing the law. These claims do not hold up against the data, which shows aggressive enforcement of immigration law over the past decade.

**Border apprehensions are at 40-year lows, and the undocumented population has declined.**

One indicator that enforcement has been robust and effective is that the number of people apprehended at the border is the lowest it has been since the early 1970s. Moreover, the total unauthorized population has fallen from 12.6 million in 2006 (the high mark) to 11.3 million in 2013.¹

The slight growth in apprehensions since 2011 is due to the increase in Central American arrivals, including many families and children seeking refugee protection at the border. The rise in these numbers is indicative of the severe violence in Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador. Families and children are asking Border Patrol to protect them rather than evading apprehension.

**Removals are at all-time highs.**

In fiscal year 2013, total removals by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and Border Protection (CBP) reached an all-time high of over 438,000 individuals. In the first six years of the Obama administration, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) removed about 2.4 million people—more than any other U.S. president.

About 2.4 million people were removed in the first six years of the Obama administration—more than any other U.S. president.
ENFORCEMENT ON THE BORDER IS AT UNPRECEDENTED LEVELS

The past decade has been marked by a build-up of border enforcement and the expenditure of enormous resources on Border Patrol, infrastructure, and surveillance. Nonetheless, House lawmakers continue to pursue an unrealistic security bill that would seal the U.S.-Mexico border. “Secure Our Borders First Act of 2015,” H.R. 399, demands an impossible 100-percent-sealed border that comes with a $10 billion price tag.

Technology and infrastructure have increased. DHS has more surveillance aircraft and marine vessels, lighting sensors, video and radar systems, night vision equipment, and other infrastructure on the Southwest border than ever before.2

Fencing is extensive. CBP had constructed nearly 700 miles of total fencing by 2014, compared to just 77 miles in 2000.

In 2014, CBP had 20,863 Border Patrol agents—a 500-percent increase from 1992 when there were about 4,000 agents.

1992: 4,000 agents 2014: 20,863 agents

The number of border agents has skyrocketed.

The federal government cannot possibly apprehend, detain, and remove 11 million people who are living unauthorized in the United States. Mass deportation would gravely fracture American society, negatively impact businesses, and hurt the economy. Under the well-established principle of prosecutorial discretion, DHS and every other enforcement agency sets priorities for enforcement. DHS should focus on keeping America safe by targeting those who present real threats to our national security and public safety.

“There is no plan to deport 11 million people. We should give them a path to legal status...” —Presidential hopeful Jeb Bush, 2015

Congress should not increase spending on interior and border enforcement until the need for such expenditures is demonstrated. Congress should pass reforms to the legal immigration system, legalization, and an employment verification system—which taken together will significantly reduce illegal immigration.
ENFORCEMENT MUST REFLECT AMERICAN VALUES

The rapid expansion of enforcement has resulted in a deep erosion of due process, fairness, and humanitarian protections for immigrants. Enforcement must be carefully balanced when these fundamental values are at stake.

In 2014, the steadily increasing levels of violence and insecurity in Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador erupted into a regional humanitarian issue. Record numbers of children and families fled to the border in seek of refugee protection. The president responded with mass detention and rapid removals.

Removals are faster and more are bypassing court. 83%

PROTECTION FOR UNACCOMPANIED CHILD VICTIMS

AILA is concerned that Congress or the president will weaken the 2008 human trafficking law in order to accelerate the removal of Central American children. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees has concluded that the current process used for Mexican children is inadequate and forces children back into danger. Congress should reject attempts to apply the Mexican process to children from other countries, such as those proposed by Congressmen Jason Chaffetz (H.R. 1149) and John Carter (H.R. 1153).

DHS is employing more rapid removal procedures. In 2013, 83 percent of all removals were done using summary procedures like “expedited removal” which bypass the immigration courts. In fiscal year 2013, more than 363,000 were removed by such measures.

Detention of Central American families seeking asylum has escalated dramatically.

RESOURCES:
www.aila.org/HumanitarianCrisis
“Our message to this group is simple:
We will send you back.”
—DHS Secretary Jeh Johnson, July 2014

In 2014, DHS began increasing family
detention from a capacity of 90 beds to
an expected 4,000 beds in 2015. The U.S.
government has never detained families
on such a mass scale. Most of the families
in detention include young children, many
still breastfeeding infants. By late summer,
AILA and the American Immigration
Council began a pro bono project with
hundreds of volunteer lawyers helping
detained families.

Central American families qualify for asylum.

Screening by DHS asylum officers has found that 70 percent of these families have a basis to seek asylum—an incredibly high rate since most have no legal counsel. AILA members have won the vast majority of these family asylum cases in court.

CASE IN POINT

Juliza was persecuted in Guatemala because of her indigenous ethnicity. As a young teen, she was raped by her relatives, who referred to her as a “dirty Indian.” When she went to the police, the officers sexually propositioned her. When she fled to the United States, the Border Patrol officer deported her.

Back in Guatemala, Juliza was drugged, raped, and thrown into a river. Gang members attempted to kidnap her son. Juliza and her son fled to the United States and were detained by DHS. An AILA volunteer helped her win asylum before an immigration judge, but her son remains in removal proceedings.

FLEEING FAMILIES DON’T POSE A SECURITY RISK

DHS blocks release for detained families even when they are not a flight risk or a risk to public safety. In 2015, a federal court enjoined DHS from detaining families for the purpose of deterring future immigration or even considering deterrence of immigration as a factor in its detention decisions.

The “incantation of the magic word ‘national security’ without further substantiation is simply not enough to justify significant deprivations of liberty.”
—Federal district court Judge James Boasberg