AILA 2020 Presidential Candidate Survey

Julián for the Future

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1. How do you propose to improve America’s legal immigration system to ensure it meets the needs of American families, communities, and businesses?

I believe the United States should completely reform the U.S. visa-based immigration system to reunite families, protect vulnerable individuals, respect asylum claims, and advance our nation’s global economic competitiveness. Our visa-based immigration system is a reflection of our values and future as a nation. I support expanding legal immigration, not reducing it.

Specifically, we must pass the Reuniting Families Act to permanently expand residency for close family members of permanent residents, claim unused green cards, extend protections for spouses of guestworkers, and end all country caps on green cards that lead to citizens of certain countries waiting decades or over a century. I also support stronger labor protections for guestworkers and the transformation of the agricultural guest worker program into one that leads to permanent residency in the United States.

2. Do you support reforms to ensure USCIS upholds its service-oriented mission to adjudicate immigration benefits in a fair and timely fashion? (Yes/No)

3. How would you reform USCIS to uphold its mission to adjudicate immigration benefits in a fair and timely fashion?

Thanks to unnecessary and inefficient USCIS policies driving delays and acting as barriers to legal immigration, USCIS is now an immigration enforcement arm rather than the service-oriented immigration benefits agency that Congress intended it to be.

I would reverse the President’s illegal asylum ban, disband denaturalization task forces he has constituted, ensure asylum claims and credible fear interviews are adjudicated by trained professionals, and ensure USCIS’ primary duty is to transform aspiring Americans into full members of our society.

4. How would you address the population of unauthorized immigrants in the United States, including Dreamers, DACA recipients, and TPS recipients?

Undocumented immigrants and families have lived in the United States for years, paying taxes and contributing to their communities. These people includes Dreamers and recipients of DACA, DED, and TPS status. In my administration, these new Americans will have a pathway to citizenship.

Through the Dream and Promise Act of 2019, I will defend DACA, TPS, and DED protections. I will ensure that parents of American citizens and lawful residents, many who have been here for decades, raising their children are shielded from deportations by reinstituting the Deferred Action for Parents of Americans program during the legislative process.

I also support a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants in the United States and the designation of TPS status for Venezuelans if the conditions in that country persist.
5. Do you support enactment of a legalization plan that provides unauthorized immigrants lawful permanent resident status and the opportunity to apply for citizenship? *(Yes/No)*

6. Do you support the creation of an independent Article I immigration court system? *(Yes/No)*

7. How would you reform the immigration court system to ensure the fair and effective administration of justice?

Our immigration court system has been plagued by systemic problems that have severely undermined its ability to deliver just and fair decisions in a timely manner. With my People First Immigration Plan we will create a well-resourced and independent immigration court system under Article I of the Constitution.

These courts would outside the jurisdiction of the Department of Justice, where it has been vulnerable to executive branch interference, which this current administration has exploited and which undermines the very integrity of the system.

An independent immigration court system would be followed by increased hiring of independent judges to adjudicate immigration claims, managing a backlog of over 900,000 cases, and an end to case completion quotas and other actions instituted by the Trump administration that deny due process for immigrants and the effectiveness and independence of judges.

I am proud to have been the first candidate to support independent Article I courts and thank AILA and the American Bar Association in leading on this issue.

8. How would you improve immigration enforcement and ensure accountability over the agencies responsible for the enforcement of immigration law?

The purpose of our immigration enforcement to uphold the rule of law based on clearly articulated goals and priorities. We must recognize that those goals and priorities that our enforcement systems was created on are no longer there. First, right now there is an unprecedented level of resources the federal government committed to immigration enforcement. With such a commitment of resources, there must be more accountability and transparency to the public how they are spending taxpayer resources.

In my People First Immigration plan, I propose ending agreements Section 287(g) of the Immigration and Nationality Act and other such agreements between federal immigration enforcement agencies and state and local entities that erode trust between communities and local police and ICE detainers.

I would also reconstitute the U.S. Immigration and Custom Enforcement by splitting the agency in half and re-assigning enforcement functions, including within the Enforcement and Removal Operations to other agencies, such as the Department of Justice.

Lastly, there must be a thorough investigation of ICE, CBP, and DOE’s rule in family separation policies instituted by the Trump administration.

9. Do you support the reduction of immigration detention, including reduction in U.S. taxpayer funding of immigration detention? *(Yes/No)*

I support a humane way of treating people who come to this country. My People First Immigration Plan will eliminate the for-profit immigration detention and prison industry, effectively end the use of detention in conducting immigration enforcement, except in serious cases the detainment of more than 55,000 on any given day, especially children and families. This policy is unfair and unjust.
10. How would you ensure the fair, humane and efficient screening of migrants coming to the southern border of the United States?

The way we hear the claims of asylum seekers and other migrants must be done in an efficient and orderly way, while ensuring due process and a meaningful opportunity for those who qualify for relief who seek protection. We must uphold our asylum laws, due process, and our nation’s humanitarian commitment to protect vulnerable individuals. We will immediately remove asylum “metering”, and the Remain in Mexico policy.

We will also protect victims of domestic and gang violence by reversing guidance by Attorney General Jeff Sessions that prohibited asylum claims on the basis of credible fear stemming from domestic or gang violence.

11. How would you address the root causes of migration that is resulting in more people fleeing from violence and persecution in the Americas region?

In my People First Immigration Plan, I propose establishing a 21st century “Marshall Plan”. I will prioritize high-level diplomacy with our neighbors in Latin America to fight for higher standards of governance, transparency, rule of law, and anti-corruption enforcement. A Castro Administration will enlist all actors in Central America to be part of the solution to bolster economic development, protect labor rights, create environmentally sustainable jobs, target illicit networks and transnational criminal organizations, re-establish the Central American Minors programs. This entire effort will be focused on increasing support for bottom-up development and violence prevention programs.

12. Do you support the right to legal counsel for people facing removal, including counsel paid-for by the government for those who cannot afford it? (Yes/No)

13. How would you ensure people facing removal receive legal counsel and have meaningful access to their counsel?

I support publicly-financed legal counsel for individuals facing removal who are unable to afford an attorney.