



## David Bier on "What Biden Has Gotten Right on Immigration Policy"

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There is much to criticize in the Biden Administration's record on immigration policy, and I myself have sometimes been among the critics, most notably on the administration's extension of cruel Title 42 "public health" expulsions of migrants, and other harmful pandemic-era migration restrictions. But it is also important to recognize that Biden has made major improvements in immigration policy, and has even—belatedly—begun to wind down some of the awful policies he himself previously perpetuated. At the very least, claims that Biden has mostly just perpetuated Trump's ultra-restrictionist policies are utterly unjustified.

Cato Institute immigration policy expert David Bier—himself often a critic of the administration—has a helpful summary of their achievements in this field. The list is long and difficult to summarize. I urge anyone interested in these issues to read (or at least skim!) the whole thing.

However, it's worth emphasizing that Biden has now—however belatedly—terminated almost of all of Trump's major restrictionist innovations, including his anti-Muslim travel bans, restrictions on work visas, the massive Title 42 expulsions (now scheduled to end on Dec. 21, though litigation might yet prevent that), and much else. And, in his establishment of private refugee sponsorship programs that make it possible to admit migrants far faster and cheaper than in the moribund traditional refugee system, he has gone beyond merely repudiating Trump. These innovations, most notably the Uniting for Ukraine program, not only improve on Trump's policies, but also on those of prior administrations.

As Bier notes, there are still many flaws in Biden's immigration policies. Moreover, most of his beneficial initiatives have the shortcoming that they largely depend on unilateral executive action. As such, they could potentially be easily reversed by a future president, or even by Biden himself, should he find it politically advantageous to do so.

Furthermore, the Administration's successes on immigration policy should not blind libertarians—or anyone—to its shortcomings on other issues. Ironically, the same president who (rightly) denounced Trump's abuse of emergency powers to try to build his border wall, is using similar high-handed tactics to facilitate student loan debt cancellation.

Nonetheless, Biden does deserve considerable credit for the many improvements he has made on immigration policy. Reducing immigration restrictions is one of the great issues of our time. Barriers to migration are among the most severe restrictions on liberty imposed by Western democracies (including that of current US citizens), and inflict massive harm on both would-be immigrants (many of whom are forcibly condemned to lifelong poverty and oppression merely because they were born in the wrong place or to the wrong parents) and natives, alike.