



## Immigration: No Bueno

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From the beginning of his political career, Donald Trump has articulated a view of immigrants that could lead only in one direction: toward policies to rid the country of them.

The president started 2017 by ordering a "travel ban" that barred nationals of six majority-Muslim countries. By November, he had substantially reduced the number of people allowed in from all Muslim-majority countries and cut Muslim refugee admissions by 94 percent. (Christian refugees have not benefited either—he slashed their admissions by two-thirds.)

Trump's promises of a "merit-based" system haven't spared skilled immigrants. Administration officials are harassing employers of H-1B workers, redefining which occupations qualify as "skilled," and challenging an unprecedented number of applications. They also rescinded a rule that authorized 100,000 spouses of H-1B holders to find jobs in the country.

Unsurprisingly, the government issued fewer visas overall this year than last. Those trying to come legally faced an onslaught of new regulations that have doubled or tripled the length of required forms, forcing many to hire attorneys to help them answer opaque "extreme vetting" questions.

In January 2017, Trump stated his intention to deport "probably 2 million, could be even 3 million" immigrants. But his executive order went even further, declaring open season on virtually all unauthorized immigrants, a population of over 11 million. Though he hasn't broken records yet, arrests jumped on his watch. In September, he ended the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, which gave work authorizations to people who were illegally brought here as children.

The year laid the foundation for the president's long-term agenda. Facing legal challenges to his travel ban, he asserted the power to prohibit any group of immigrants for any reason at all. The Supreme Court apparently agrees: In December, it allowed the ban to take effect while the justices consider a final ruling. This power could prove useful if lawmakers fail to pass a Trump-endorsed bill to cut legal immigration in half.

The president also laid some literal foundations for his favorite vanity project: a border wall. But to get far, he'll need money from Congress. As the new year dawns, he's asked for a deal: less legal immigration plus funds for his wall and mass deportation ambitions, in exchange for giving citizenship to DACA recipients. It's a bargain policy makers are unlikely to take. He'll have to find other ways to advance his anti-immigration agenda.

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