



## Trump's latest diatribe against immigrants might've been his ugliest yet

False claims aside, Trump doesn't believe all immigrants should have legal representation—a principle that predates the Bill of Rights.

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Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump clamped down hard on his anti-refugee, anti-Muslim, and anti-immigrant rhetoric on Monday following three suspected acts of terrorism over the weekend in New Jersey, New York, and Minnesota.

Trump has often invoked heinous criminal acts committed by undocumented immigrants to shore up support to build a border wall along the southern U.S. border. In the past, he has called for the mass deportation of undocumented immigrants, suggested a temporary ban on immigration from countries that have had terrorist attacks, and claimed that immigrants are responsible for thousands of homicides.

Monday's campaign stop in Estero, Florida was no different. Trump pulled out old—and inaccurate—claims about immigrants that have been thoroughly debunked. Many of his talking points may resonate with his supporters who believe that immigrants commit more crimes than native-born Americans, but that is simply not true.

What follows is a claim-by-claim debunk of the false claims Trump made about undocumented immigrants last night.

**TRUMP:** *“These attacks and many others were made possible because of our extremely open immigration system, which fails to properly vet and screen the individuals coming into our country. We have seen how failures to screen those who are entering the U.S. puts all of our citizens, everyone in this room, in danger.”*

*“So let me state very, very clearly. Immigration security is national security.”*

People seeking refugee status in the United States—particularly those from Syria—undergo a nearly two-year long process that occurs abroad, usually in their home countries. During this process, refugees are vetted through intensive background checks and mandatory documentation fed through various federal agencies, as ThinkProgress previously reported.

**TRUMP:** *“Altogether, [Hillary Clinton’s] plan would bring in 620,000 refugees in her first term with no effective way to screen them or vet them. Law enforcement said there’s no way.”*

To start, Congress has never authorized enough funds to bring in 620,000 refugees in one presidential term, or roughly 155,000 refugees annually. Since the 2011 fiscal year, Congress has appropriated enough funding for fewer than 80,000 refugees. President Obama is expected to announce on Tuesday that the United States will increase the number of refugee admissions to 110,000 in the 2017 fiscal year. At current levels, there is only enough funding in the upcoming year for 100,000 refugees.

In congressional testimony last year, FBI Director James Comey said that “a number of people who were of serious concern” had managed to get into the country as Iraq War refugees, including two arrested on terrorism-related charges, the Washington Post reported. Though the process has “improved dramatically” since then, Comey also said, “I can’t sit here and offer anybody an absolute assurance that there’s no risk associated with this.”

**TRUMP:** *“[Hillary Clinton’s] plan would cost \$400 billion in terms of lifetime welfare benefit and entitlement costs.”*

To begin with, undocumented immigrants do not have access to welfare, food stamps, Medicaid, and generally most public benefits. And legal immigrants have to wait five years to become citizens before they can access the benefits. A 2015 Cato Institute report found that a study done by an anti-immigrant group had “exaggerated” its findings to show that immigrants use more welfare than native-born Americans.

**TRUMP:** *“You can’t have vetting if you don’t look at ideology. And Hillary Clinton refuses to consider an applicant’s worldview and thus their likelihood of being recruited into the terror cause at some later date, which is going to happen in many, many cases. This isn’t just a matter of terrorism. This is also really a question of quality of life. We want to make sure we are only admitting people into our country who love our country. We want them to love our country. And we want them to love our people.”*

In the past, Trump has proposed “extreme vetting” to the point of banning all Muslim immigrants from entering the country. In June, he even proposed to ban immigrant from countries with terrorist cells. However, such a suggestion could also affect western countries that he may not have considered to be on the list including France, the United Kingdom, and Spain.

What’s more, many immigrants, including those who are legal or undocumented, want nothing more than to become U.S. citizens. Just this year, there was a spike in the number of people becoming citizens nationwide. In New Mexico there was a 25 percent gain in citizenship applications over the same quarter last year.

**TRUMP:** *New York and New Jersey bombings suspect Ahmad Khan Rahami will “probably even have room service, knowing the way our country is. And on top of all of that, he will be represented by an outstanding lawyer. His case will go through the various court systems for years and in the end, people will forget and his punishment will not be what it once would have been.”*

It may appear that Trump is hinting that immigrants get benefits when they are admitted in hospitals. It's true that undocumented immigrants—as well as the indigent—have access to emergency Medicaid, which allows them to be admitted in emergency rooms. The cost of subsidizing their health care hovers around \$10.7 billion every year, a [2009 study](#) by the immigration-restrictionist organization Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR) found. However, a 2015 *Journal of General Internal Medicine* [study](#) found that undocumented immigrants provided a surplus of \$35.1 billion to the Medicare Trust Fund between 2000 and 2011.

Trump's suggestion that Rahami shouldn't have access to legal representation goes against the [6th Amendment](#)'s right to counsel, a principle that predates the Bill of Rights. As [Slate details](#), John Adams—a founding father who later became the second president—defended British soldiers after the Boston Massacre and believed that even the worst criminals deserved counsel.

What's more, Trump's suggestion would also need congressional approval to overturn *Hamdi v. Rumsfeld*, a 2004 U.S. Supreme Court decision that grants [due process](#) to U.S. citizens who are treated as [enemy combatants](#). (Trump described Rahmani as a “foreign enemy combatant” last night.)