



White House aide: GOP Immigration Bill makes America safer, critics disagree

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President Trump's central campaign promise is to fix America's immigration system.

In Trump's first 100 days in office, he has signed executive orders on securing the border, and most recently endorsed two Republican senator's bill, the RAISE Act, which will cut legal immigration in half.

"These are all things that will make Americans safer, because we will actually have visibility and control over who comes into this country," said Sebastian Gorka, Deputy Assistant to the President,

The RAISE Act, co-sponsored by Republican Senators Tom Cotton of Arkansas and David Perdue of Georgia, would also cut the number of refugees allowed into the United States in half - from about 100,000 down to 50,000 each year. The bill mirrors Trump's executive order which temporarily drops the number of refugees admitted into the US. If the legislation passes, it will make Trump's order permanent.

Alex Nowrasteh, an immigration policy analyst at the Cato Institute says the RAISE Act is a bad and poorly thought through piece of legislation.

"One of the main threads through the president's actions both through the executive orders and this introduced legislation is that refugees pose a particular threat to the US that they are very likely to be terrorist."

But the White House disagrees.

"Everything we're doing when it comes to immigration right now has the priority of national security," said Gorka.

From 1975 to the end of 2015, 20 out of 3.2 million refugees admitted into the U.S. were either convicted or charged of committing terrorist attacks on U.S. soil. But in the same 41-year span, 88% of the deaths caused by acts of terrorism on US soil, came at the hands of foreign-born terrorist. 12% caused by U.S. born terrorists

The RAISE Act also prioritizes high-skilled workers over family reunification. Nowrasteh argues that policy could lead to more illegal border crossings.

“A wall is not going to stop that, making it more difficult to come here legally -- this administration will make it more difficult to actually control the border,” said Nowrasteh.

Presidential executive orders have limited power and currently the bill’s prospects are uncertain. Senate Democratic leader, Chuck Schumer says the GOP bill is a “non-starter” because of the cuts to legal immigration.