

Immigration Alert

President Obama Announces Executive Action on Immigration

11.21.2014

BY [SUSAN COHEN](#)

During [last night's primetime television broadcast](#), President Obama announced steps to fix what he termed the "broken" US immigration system. The president focused his speech on increasing border security and providing a method for undocumented parents of US citizens and lawful permanent residents to "temporarily stay in the US."

President Obama announced four primary areas of action in both the speech and in an earlier set of infographics on [whitehouse.gov](#):

- **Border Security:** President Obama promised more resources and enforcement at the border and to quickly deport individuals who had recently crossed.
- **Deportation Prioritization:** "Deport felons, not families"; President Obama announced he would prioritize enforcement resources to focus on deporting criminals.
- **Deferred Action for Parents:** Undocumented parents of US Citizens and Lawful Permanent Residents who have been in the US for 5+ years can pass a background check and pay back taxes in order to temporarily stay and work legally in the US.
- **Legal Immigration Boost:** President Obama mentioned he would make it "easier and faster" for high-skilled workers to stay in the US.

While most of the president's speech was spent outlining details of increased support for border security and deportation prioritizations, the White House did specify that the executive action would "streamline legal immigration to boost our economy and promote naturalization" by "expanding work authorization for high-skilled workers who are in line for a green card."

Noting that "Americans are tired of gridlock," President Obama advised Congress to simply "pass a bill" and said, "I want to work with both parties to pass a ... solution." The president also stated that "our history and the facts show immigrants are a net plus to our economy and our society."

Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary Jeh Johnson sent an email to DHS employees Thursday stating that he had already visited US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) staff to explain the executive actions, and he and the leadership of US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), US Customs and Border Protection (CBP), and USCIS travel to South Texas today to review the executive actions with the DHS workforce.

We are closely monitoring these immigration developments and will provide regular updates as concrete information is released by DHS regarding the specific details of the upcoming immigration law and policy changes.

Should you have any questions about the president's executive action on immigration, please [contact a member of the Mintz Levin Immigration Team](#).



Susan Cohen, *Member*

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4447-1114-NAT-IMM