

SENATE THIRD READING  
SJR 8 (Arreguín)  
As Introduced June 16, 2025  
Majority vote

## SUMMARY

Supports House Resolution (H.R.) No. 1511 and Senate Bill (S.B.) 2606 that propose to modify Section 249 of the Immigration and Nationality Act to allow undocumented immigrants who meet specified criteria and who entered the United States at least seven years before their application to apply for legal permanent residency.

### Major Provisions

- 1) Makes findings and declarations related to federal immigration policy, the importance of California's immigrant population, and the introduction of federal legislation referred to as the "Registry bills."
- 2) Resolves, on behalf of the Senate and the Assembly of the State of California, jointly, that a workable, humane, and just approach to solving our nation's broken immigration system would benefit California and the United States as a whole, and therefore, the Registry bills should be supported.

## COMMENTS

Immigrants to the United States can have a range of immigration statuses. Individuals who enter the United States with prior authorization often come with either an immigrant visa (issued to individuals with intent to stay in the United States usually through an application filed by a family member or sponsored by an employer), or a non-immigrant visa (issued to individuals for temporary visits, such as a tourist, work, or student visa). Someone who enters with a valid visa, but stays beyond the date authorized, loses their lawful immigration status, and is considered undocumented. Someone who crosses the border into the United States without prior authorization is also considered undocumented. Some immigrants, whether undocumented or otherwise, may also obtain legal permanent residency, often referred to as a green card or LPR, after which point they choose to apply for citizenship. However, undocumented immigrants face steep barriers to qualifying for residency.

California is home to nearly a quarter of the country's immigrant population, totaling approximately 10.6 million people across the state. This population consists of individuals from dozens of countries, with the most common countries of origin being Mexico, the Philippines, and China. As of the most recent data, 83% of California's immigrant population were naturalized citizens, or had some form of legal residency status. Approximately the remaining 17% are undocumented. (Public Policy Institute of California, *Immigrants in California* available at: <https://www.ppic.org/publication/immigrants-in-california/>.)

*Attempts to revoke birthright citizenship.* On January 20, 2025, the President issued Executive Order Number 14160 titled "Protecting the Meaning and Value of American Citizenship." It ordered, despite long-standing precedent to the contrary, that a child born in the United States whose mother was either undocumented or was in the U.S. with temporary lawful status (such as a tourist visa) and whose father was a noncitizen without lawful permanent residency would not be a citizen at birth. In effect the order limits citizenship conferred at birth to children with at

least one parent who is either a citizen or a lawful permanent resident. In issuing this directive, the order relies on the argument that the Fourteenth Amendment has "always excluded from birthright citizenship persons who were born in the United States but not 'subject to the jurisdiction thereof.'" The order does not explicitly argue how children born in the U.S. born to noncitizen parents are *not* subject to the jurisdiction of the United States. On April 1, 2026, the Supreme Court will hear oral argument in a case challenging the Order.

The Trump administration has made no secret of its intent to engage in a mass deportation campaign. While the recent events in Minnesota have focused national attention on the topic, closer to home, on June 6, 2025, protests grew in Los Angeles in response to widespread immigration enforcement activity throughout the area. In response to the protests, President Trump deployed National Guard troops and Marines to L.A. over the objection of state officials, including Governor Newsom. (Hutchinson (ABC News) June 11, 2025 *LA protests timeline: How ICE raids sparked demonstrations and Trump to send in the military* available at: <https://abcnews.go.com/US/timeline-ice-raids-sparked-la-protests-prompted-trump/story?id=122688437>.) Immigration raids have continued throughout L.A. in the months since the protests, prompting residents to stay home out of fear of being detained. (Vives, Rainey, and Jany (Los Angeles Times) June 15, 2025 *L.A. neighborhoods clear out as immigration raids send people underground* available at: <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2025-06-15/some-l-a-neighborhoods-clear-out-as-immigration-raids-push-people-underground>.) Moreover, the fear triggered by the presidential administration's new aggressive deportation policies has forced many immigrants further into the shadows, keeping their children home from school and opting to stay home from work.

*H.R. 1511 and S.B. 2606: Renewing Immigration Provisions of the Immigration Act of 1929.* Since 1986, Congress has struggled to pass any comprehensive immigration reform. Most recently, a bipartisan measure which included significant increases to funding for immigration enforcement as well as creating new pathways for legal immigration died in the Senate following a sharp rebuke from then-candidate Trump. (Kelly Garrity (Politico) February 5, 2024 available at: <https://www.politico.com/news/2024/02/05/border-bill-trump-00139584>.) On March 9, 2023 Representative Zoe Lofgren (D-CA-18) introduced H.R. 1511: Renewing Immigration Provisions of the Immigration Act of 1929. On July 27, 2023, Senator Padilla (D-CA) introduced S.2606 titled the same. The bills together are known as the "Registry Bills" and seek to revive the key provision of IRCA (still titled the Immigration Act of 1929 due to its original enactment date which was subsequently amended by IRCA). Both measures would remove the existing language which has effectively sunset. The statute as amended would allow those who are "long-term residents of the United States" and entered at least seven years before their application date to apply for legal permanent residence as long as they met the same conditions as the Reagan amnesty program. It is estimated that 8 million people would be eligible for the program.

In recognition of both bills' potential to bring millions of people out of the shadows this resolution voices this Legislature's support for the "Registry bills" and immigration reform generally.

#### **According to the Author**

The immigration system in the United States is broken. There are millions of immigrants living, working and contributing to our communities and economy who are living with fear and uncertainty. Joint Resolution 17 supports federal bills SB 2606 and HR 1511, urging Congress to modernize the Immigration Act of 1929, "the Registry Act". The federal registry

provision of the Act offered a pathway to permanent residency for people who resided in the US continuously for several years. However, the eligibility date requiring entry before 1972 has not been updated since 1986, and now the law is virtually obsolete. It also fails to recognize the reality of millions of long-term residents who have built lives, families, and careers in this country, including the 2 million Dreamers who were brought to this country as minors.

In California, where roughly 2.8 million undocumented immigrants live, updating the registry would provide much-needed stability for communities, strengthen the economy, and support a more compassionate and modern immigration system for the individuals who collectively contribute \$51.4 billion in state and local taxes. Legal residency would allow thousands of Californians to contribute more fully, secure better jobs, and invest in their families' futures.

This resolution is a commonsense step that reflects our values and the urgent need for federal action. California must reaffirm its support for Congress to modernize the immigration registry and ensure that dignity and opportunity are extended to those who have proven their deep ties to our nation.

### **Arguments in Support**

This resolution is sponsored by supported by the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA) and supported California League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) and the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) California. In support of the measure CHIRLA submits:

This resolution recognizes the urgent need to provide a fair and permanent pathway to legalization for long-term undocumented immigrants who call the United States home. CHIRLA is a statewide, membership-based organization that seeks to advance the human, civil, and labor rights of immigrants and refugees. We advocate at the local, state, and federal levels to ensure dignity, inclusion, and justice for all immigrant communities.

The Registry Act of 1929 has been one of the few avenues for long-time undocumented residents to adjust their status. Over the last century, Congress has updated the registry date multiple times in 1940, 1958, 1965, and most recently in 1986, when the cutoff date was set at January 1, 1972. It has now been nearly four decades since the last update, rendering the program effectively obsolete. Federal legislation being introduced, the Renewing Immigration Provisions of the Immigration Act of 1929 (H.R. 1511 / S.B. 2606) would address this issue by creating a rolling registry, allowing undocumented individuals who have resided in the United States for at least seven years and meet certain conditions to apply for permanent residency.

California is home to more than 2.3 million undocumented immigrants, modernizing the registry could benefit hundreds of thousands of people who already contribute to our workforce, our communities, and our economy. Nationally, over 8 million immigrants could be eligible, unlocking \$121 billion in additional wages and generating more than \$83 billion in tax revenue over ten years.

We have worked with thousands of individuals who have lived in the U.S. for decades raising families, paying taxes, and contributing to society but who remain vulnerable to exploitation, detention, and deportation due to outdated immigration laws. Updating the

registry would provide long-overdue relief and restore trust and stability to immigrant communities.

**Arguments in Opposition**

None on file

**FISCAL COMMENTS**

None

**VOTES**

**SENATE FLOOR: 29-0-11**

**YES:** Allen, Archuleta, Arreguín, Ashby, Becker, Blakespear, Cabaldon, Caballero, Cervantes, Cortese, Durazo, Gonzalez, Grayson, Laird, Limón, McGuire, McNerney, Menjivar, Padilla, Pérez, Reyes, Richardson, Smallwood-Cuevas, Stern, Umberg, Valladares, Wahab, Weber Pierson, Wiener

**ABS, ABST OR NV:** Alvarado-Gil, Choi, Dahle, Grove, Hurtado, Jones, Niello, Ochoa Bogh, Rubio, Seyarto, Strickland

**ASM JUDICIARY: 8-0-4**

**YES:** Kalra, Bauer-Kahan, Connolly, Harabedian, Pacheco, Papan, Stefani, Zbur

**ABS, ABST OR NV:** Macedo, Bryan, Dixon, Sanchez

**UPDATED**

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FN: 0002303