

Statement by the President in honor of Cinco de Mayo

Today we honor the victory of the Mexican people in their fight for freedom at the Battle of Puebla 151 years ago. On Cinco de Mayo we celebrate the contributions and heritage of Mexican Americans and we recognize the strong cultural, familial, and economic ties that bind the United States and Mexico. This week, I was proud to visit Mexico to reaffirm our vision for the Americas as a region of shared opportunity and prosperity. I left even more convinced that we have historic opportunities to expand trade and make our economies even more competitive, so that we continue creating good jobs in both of our countries. In Mexico, I also emphasized the need to pass commonsense immigration reform that lives up to our tradition as a nation of laws and a nation of immigrants, including generations of Mexican Americans who have enriched our country. Fixing our immigration system is one of my top legislative priorities and I am hopeful that we can make immigration reform a reality this year. Cinco de Mayo reminds us that America's diversity is America's strength. Today, as we celebrate the contributions and history of Mexican Americans and Hispanics in America, let us celebrate the larger story of America and our unique immigrant heritage.

The White House. 5/6/13.

Sheriffs, law enforcement groups unite against Senate immigration bill

As the Senate prepares to conduct its markup of the "Gang of Eight" immigration bill on Thursday, sheriffs and other law enforcement officials have joined forces to oppose the legislation on the grounds that it, in their opinion, makes the current system of immigration law worse than it would "be a significant barrier to the creation of a safe and lawful system of immigration." In a letter (below) that was delivered to every member of Congress in both the House and the Senate on Thursday, National Association of Former Border Patrol Officers chairman Zack Taylor, National Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Council president Chris Crane and at least 30 sheriffs nationwide argued the bill would make America's broken immigration laws worse off than they already are. "Driven by mere speculation that S. 744 may be enacted by Congress, illegal border crossings have spiked dramatically," the law enforcement figures wrote. "Thousands of unaccompanied children, runaways, and families now attempt to illegally enter the United States in hopes of receiving legalization. This trend will surely continue after enactment as S. 744 provides no commitment of stronger border enforcement for at least five to ten years following the initial legalization phase. Thousands will be victimized or perish as they attempt the treacherous crossing into the United States in hopes of attaining legal status. Cut-off dates established in S. 744 will mean little to those in other countries who are unfamiliar with the 867-page bill." In addition to the safety and security risks of the ongoing rush of illegal immigrants on the border, the law enforcement community representatives point out that the Rubio-Schumer bill "provides no guarantee of increased border security." "Instead, it relinquishes Congress' authority to establish border security measures to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), which will then develop its own unilateral border security plan," they wrote. "DHS is then permitted to measure its own successes and failures after implementing that plan. Clearly recognizing the high probability that this approach will fail and DHS will not

develop a successful border security plan, S. 744 establishes a commission to review security at the border five years after the plan has been implemented (if the Secretary decides such a commission is needed).” However, the law enforcement community representatives note, that “powerless commission” only would have “the authority to make recommendations on how to achieve border security” and those “recommendations may very well be ignored by DHS.” The law enforcement officers also wrote that the bill “does not address current failures of interior enforcement that will render any legislation ineffective, regardless of its provisions.” “Currently, ICE officers cannot arrest or remove most illegal immigrants they come in contact with, even if officers believe those individuals present a risk to public safety,” they wrote. “To avoid offending special interests, ICE officers are also prohibited from making street arrests, and are also prohibited from arresting illegal immigrants who are public charges or who violate laws involving fraudulent documents. “ICE officers are under orders to wait until immigration violators commit and are convicted of criminal offenses and placed in jail by state authorities before they can act in their capacity as Federal immigration officers and make an arrest. Even though illegal entry and visa overstay violations account for the majority of the 11 million illegal immigrants currently residing in the United States, DHS and ICE have directed ICE officers not to enforce the laws related to these offenses.” The sheriffs and law enforcement representatives also point out that the bill weakens current law when it comes to entry-exit visa security for immigrants. They wrote that the bill “establishes a biographic (instead of biometric) exit system that has already proven easy to circumvent and not worthy of investment” and “limits the exit system to air and sea ports and does not expand the program to include monitoring of the nation’s land borders.” “This will not provide adequate coverage and security to the nation’s ports of entry and will result in identifying only a fraction of the visa violators unlawfully present in the United States,” they wrote. The law enforcement figures added that the bill opens up Registered Provisional Immigrant (RPI) legalization status to illegal immigrants “with long criminal records, gang affiliations, felony arrests, and those with multiple misdemeanor criminal convictions” and “allows criminal aliens to continue to commit and be convicted of criminal offenses after receiving provisional legal status, as long as the individual’s convictions remain below the eligibility threshold.” The letter signers believe the reason the bill makes all of these national security and law enforcement problems worse is because the Gang of Eight—Republican Sens. Marco Rubio (R-FL), John McCain (R-AZ), Jeff Flake (R-AZ) and Lindsey Graham (R-SC) and Democratic Sens. Chuck Schumer (D-NY), Dick Durbin (D-IL), Bob Menendez (D-NJ) and Michael Bennet (D-CO)—excluded law enforcement from helping draft the bill but brought in special interest groups like labor unions and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and extremist pro-amnesty groups. “While business groups, activists, and other special interests were closely involved in the drafting of S. 744, law enforcement personnel were excluded from those meetings,” they wrote. “Immigration officers and state and local law enforcement working directly within the nation’s broken immigration system were prohibited from providing input. As a result, the legislation before us may have many satisfactory components for powerful lobbying groups and other special interests, but on the subjects of public safety, border security, and interior enforcement, this legislation fails. It is a dramatic step in the wrong direction.” Sheriffs who signed the letter are from counties in states including New Mexico, Colorado, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Massachusetts, Maryland, Indiana and Pennsylvania.

Latinos now less likely to report crimes to police, poll says

Many Latinos say they are less likely than before to report crimes because local police are increasingly involved in enforcing immigration laws, leading to a sharp increase in deportations, according to a new study. About 44% of Latinos surveyed said they were less likely now to contact police if they were victims of a crime because they fear officers will inquire about their immigration status or the status of people they know. The figure jumps to 70% among Latinos who are in the country unlawfully. “There is fear that is really widespread,” said Nik Theodore, an associate professor of urban planning and policy at University of Illinois at Chicago and the author of the study. The report, “Insecure Communities: Latino Perceptions of Police Involvement in Immigration Enforcement,” is based on a telephone survey of 2,004 Latinos in Los Angeles, Houston, Chicago and Phoenix. The results are scheduled to be released Tuesday. The survey was sponsored by the think tank PolicyLink of Oakland and conducted by Lake Research Partners, a polling firm in Washington, D.C., between Nov. 17 and Dec. 10. “Over the last four years or so, the extent of deportations has seeped into the community’s consciousness,” Theodore said. “Trust has been undermined and that potentially has lasting implications.” The Obama administration deported 409,849 people in fiscal year 2012, a 40% increase from 2007. Officials have attributed the increase in part to a fingerprint sharing program in local jails that notifies federal immigration agents when people arrested are in the country unlawfully or overstayed their visas. Some officials have warned that the fingerprint sharing program, called Secure Communities, has deterred some crime victims from coming forward to aid police. “This report highlights how local law enforcement’s greater role in immigration enforcement has created mistrust between the Latino community and local police, making all of our communities less safe from crime,” said Rep. [Jared Polis](#) (D-Colo.). Polis will host a panel discussion about the report on Capitol Hill on Wednesday. Colorado last week repealed a state law that had required police to report individuals suspected of being in the country illegally. “This confirms what police experts have been saying for decades,” said Thomas A. Saenz, president and general counsel of MALDEF, a Latino nonprofit civil rights organization based in Los Angeles. “We have to have policies that make it clear there will be a separation between local police and immigration enforcement.”

Los Angeles Times. 5/7/13.

Transformation of a town underscores immigrants’ impact

Nearly 20 years after he arrived penniless in this country from Mexico, Moises owns two restaurants, with a third on the way. He has five employees, an American wife and a stepdaughter. His food even has a following on [Yelp.com](#). What Moises does not have is American citizenship, or even a green card permitting him to reside legally in the United States. So he inhabits an economic netherworld, shuttling among his establishments on the bus and train because he cannot get a driver’s license and making do without bank loans or credit cards even as he files for zoning permits and incorporation papers. While the estimated 11 million immigrants here illegally are often portrayed as dishwashers, farmhands, gardeners and other low-paid service workers, increasingly they are also business owners and employers. That is one reason economists say opening the door to entrepreneurs like Moises — whose last name is being withheld because of the risk of deportation — could give the American economy a shot in

the arm. The most prominent feature of the [proposed immigration bill](#) introduced by a bipartisan group of senators last month would provide residents of the United States who overstayed their visas or arrived illegally before Dec. 31, 2011, a long and winding path to citizenship, one that would probably take more than a decade to complete. But less noticed is that the legislation would offer such residents much more immediate provisional status, enabling them to work and travel legally. That status would make it easier for immigrants here illegally to open businesses, buy big-ticket items like homes and cars and negotiate raises. All of these help explain why immigration reform is one of the few things economists on the left and right generally agree on these days. While there is considerable debate about whether increased immigration depresses wages on the low end of the pay scale, most experts say allowing more new immigrants and offering a more secure legal footing for workers who are currently in the country illegally would bring the nation broad economic gains. “We need more legal immigration,” said Diana Furchtgott-Roth, an economist at the conservative Manhattan Institute. “Additional human capital results in more growth.” Lawrence F. Katz, a liberal professor of economics at Harvard who is among those who say that immigration can push down pay for workers directly competing with new immigrants, nevertheless supports the argument that a freer flow of people from other nations would foster more growth. “No doubt some individuals are harmed,” he said, “but the benefits outweigh the costs.” Some conservative skeptics, though, see a steep price in a broad amnesty, largely because of increased spending on social services and entitlements. The pluses and minuses of more immigration are evident in this working-class village of 29,000 about 30 miles north of Midtown Manhattan that shares a border with affluent Greenwich, Conn. A wave of Hispanic immigrants, both legal and illegal, has transformed downtown Port Chester, which fell on hard times in the 1980s and ’90s after factories and mills closed and an older generation of Italian immigrants moved away or died off. Today, 59 percent of the village’s population is of Hispanic origin, said Christopher Gomez, Port Chester’s director of planning and development. From 1990 to 2010, Port Chester’s population jumped by 17 percent, twice as fast as Westchester County as a whole. The immigrant influx, he said, has become the “lifeblood” of the town. “I don’t know where we’d be without it.” Mexican and Peruvian restaurants dot the downtown streets, while immigrant-owned stores and markets offer goods from Ecuador and services like money transfers to Guatemala and other Central American countries. The predominance of Spanish-speaking customers has forced older businesses to adapt. Chris Rubeo, the owner of Feinsod Hardware on North Main Street, hired several Spanish-speaking workers to help him compete with a nearby Home Depot and lure Hispanic contractors and builders. Fourteen years after she arrived from Lima, Peru, and started working as a baby sitter, Itziar Llamoca now owns Fiesta Place, which makes traditional decorations and balloon arrangements for family events like baptisms, weddings and the girl’s coming-of-age party called the quinceañera. She earned her associate’s and bachelor’s degrees from colleges in Westchester and bought the store with her sister from its original owners several years ago. Ms. Llamoca, who now holds American citizenship, did not rely on bank loans to make the purchase. “For us, it was easier to borrow money from the family,” she said. A few doors down, a Guatemalan-born accountant, Julio Grijalva, shares a storefront with a travel agent originally from Mexico. Mr. Grijalva serves a growing clientele of legal immigrants like himself as well as unauthorized ones who nevertheless file using an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number granted by the Internal Revenue Service. “I’m starting to get more business owners asking for help with accounting and taxes,” Mr. Grijalva said. He is looking for a permanent place to call his own, but rents have been rising in recent years as a result of the downtown resurgence so he

is splitting an office for now. The I.R.S. does not share data with immigration enforcement agencies, so taxpayer identification numbers are a familiar feature in the economic netherworld Moises inhabits. “I’m doing everything right,” he said. “I worked day and night. I know what to do.” “I have many years living like that,” he said. “But if I had the documents, it would be easier.” Even as Moises has prospered, the influx of cheap labor in the form of new immigrants has depressed wages among certain types of workers. That benefits business owners like John Muscatella, who can pay the minimum wage to workers in the kitchen of his Italian restaurant, T&J Villaggio Trattoria. “We can replace them in five minutes,” he said. “We have five people looking for every job, so you can fill it in a heartbeat.” But it underscores research by some economists that shows increased immigration can reduce wages slightly for some native-born workers, especially lower-skilled ones. There are other side effects of the influx here. Port Chester’s schools suffer from overcrowding as children of immigrants flood the education system, and longtime residents complain that houses are occupied by many more residents than zoning laws permit. And with one resident in 10 below the poverty line, social services in the town have felt a strain. Still, at street level, the economic impact of the immigrant wave has largely been positive. Immigrant-owned restaurants have drawn patrons from wealthier areas like Rye, N.Y., and Greenwich, and more upscale options like Mario Batali’s Tarry Lodge have moved into the community. Several new real estate developments aimed at affluent renters have opened or are in development, like the Mariner, where rents for a one-bedroom exceed \$2,000 a month. “It’s not the Bedfords and North Salems that are growing,” said Mr. Gomez, the Port Chester planning director, referring to upscale communities farther north in Westchester. “It’s here.”

New York Times. 5/6/13.

Aspiring Americans share their stories as Senate debates immigration reform

As the Senate debates bipartisan immigration reform legislation, the [President and the Vice President hosted a meeting today](#) in the Oval Office with young immigrants, also known as DREAMers, as well as with the siblings and spouses of undocumented immigrants. The meeting was an important opportunity for the President and the Vice President to hear directly from people whose families are affected daily by our nation’s broken immigration system. The President and the Vice President were moved by the stories of courage and determination these young immigrants shared. The DREAMers shared how the deferred action changed their lives for the better and emphasized that they and their families need a permanent solution that will allow them to fully contribute to the country they call home. Their stories were both powerful and authentic, inspiring us all to remember the important task and responsibility we carry as public servants and members of the Obama administration. From Justino Mora, Angie Kim and Mehdi Mahraoui, to Diana Colin and Kevin Lee, all of the stories they shared were full of hope and optimism that one day their family members and their broader communities could realize the dream of becoming citizens of a country that has provided them with the opportunity to work hard and to succeed. Miguel Leal and Melissa McGuire-Maniau also shared their commitment to this country as veterans of the US Armed Forces and all expressed their desire to continue to contribute as volunteers, mentors, and leaders in their own communities. As the meeting was

wrapping up, the President reiterated his commitment to passing a bipartisan, [commonsense immigration reform](#) bill this year. And while he reminded everyone in the room that the bill is not perfect, he noted that it does represent an important step towards the broad principles that need to be part of any immigration reform package. He also encouraged them to continue to share their stories with the American public to move the hearts and minds of individual leaders and to propel the immigration debate forward.

The White House. 5/21/13

The political and economic power of immigrants, Latinos, and Asians in the Buckeye State

Immigrants, Latinos, and Asians account for large and growing shares of the economy and population in the electoral swing state of Ohio. Immigrants (the foreign-born) make up 4% of the state's population, and half of them are naturalized U.S. citizens eligible to vote. "New Americans"—immigrants and the children of immigrants—account for 3.1% of all registered voters in the state. Latinos and Asians (both foreign-born and native-born) account for 1 in 20 Ohioans and wield nearly \$18 billion in consumer purchasing power. At last count, businesses owned by Latinos and Asians had sales and receipts of \$9.1 billion and employed more than 63,000 people. Ohio is also home to the nation's second largest Somali population, whose many businesses contribute to the state's economy. At a time when the economy is still recovering, Ohio can ill-afford to alienate such an important component of its labor force, tax base, and business community.

Immigrants and their children are growing shares of Ohio's population and electorate.

- **The foreign-born share** of Ohio's population rose from 2.4% in [1990](#), to 3.0% in [2000](#), to 4.0% in [2011](#), according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Ohio was home to 456,422 immigrants in [2011](#), which is more than the total population of [Atlanta, Georgia](#).
- **49.5% of immigrants (or 225,770 people) in Ohio were naturalized U.S. citizens** in [2011](#)—meaning that they are eligible to vote.
- Unauthorized immigrants comprised roughly **0.9% of the state's population** (or 100,000 people) in [2010](#), according to a report by the Pew Hispanic Center.
- **3.1% (or 189,363) of all registered voters** in Ohio are "New Americans"—naturalized citizens or the U.S.-born children of immigrants who were raised during the current era of immigration from Latin America and Asia which began in 1965—according to analysis of 2008 Census Bureau by [Rob Paral & Associates](#).

1 in 20 Ohioans are Latino or Asian.

- The **Latino share of Ohio's population** grew from 1.3% in [1990](#), to 1.9% in [2000](#), to 3.2% (or 364,018 people) in [2011](#). The **Asian share of the population** grew from 0.8% in [1990](#), to 1.2% in [2000](#), to 1.7% (or 194,814 people) in 2011, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

- **Latinos comprised 1.3%** (or 74,000) **of Ohio voters** in the 2008 elections, and **Asians just under 1%** (or 51,000), according to the [U.S. Census Bureau](#). Although the numbers of Latino and Asian voters were relatively small, they were equivalent to nearly half of the narrow margin of victory ([258,897 votes](#)) by which Barack Obama won this key battleground state.
- In Ohio, **4 in 5 (or 84% of) children with immigrant parents were U.S. citizens** in [2007](#), according to the Center for Social and Demographic Analysis at the University of Albany.
- In Ohio, **85.3% of children with immigrant parents were U.S. citizens** in [2009](#), according to data from the Urban Institute.
- In [2009](#), **85.1% of children in Asian families** in Ohio were U.S. citizens, as were **94% of children in Latino families**.

Franklin County is home to roughly a quarter of Ohio's foreign-born population—especially the Somali refugee community—and they contribute to the state's political and economic landscape.

- **The share of Franklin County's foreign-born population** increased from 3.4% in [1990](#),^[xx] to 6.0% in [2000](#), to 9.0% (or 105,536 people) in 2011, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.
- **Columbus, Ohio, ranked 2nd in percent of new foreign-born residents** (those who came to the United States since 2000) compared to other major metropolitan areas, according to a study by [Community Research Partners](#).
- The Somali Community Access Network estimates that Central Ohio was home to **more than 45,000 Somali Americans** in [2009](#)—making it the second largest Somali population in the United States; second only to Minneapolis, Minnesota.
- Somalis own **more than 400 small businesses** in Columbus, Ohio, which contribute revenue to the local economy.
- Somali community leaders estimate that as **much as 30% of the Somali population** in Central Ohio (roughly 14,000 people) has now gained U.S. citizenship—and they vote, according to [news reports](#).

Latino and Asian entrepreneurs and consumers add tens of billions of dollars and tens of thousands of jobs to Ohio's economy.

- **The 2012 purchasing power of Ohio's Latinos totaled \$8.2 billion**—an increase of 432% since 1990. **Asian buying power totaled \$9.7 billion**—an increase of 422% since 1990, according to the [Selig Center for Economic Growth](#) at the University of Georgia.
- Ohio's 18,198 [Asian-owned](#) businesses had sales and receipts of **\$6.8 billion and employed 51,478 people** in 2007, the last year for which data is available. The state's 9,722 [Latino-owned](#) businesses had sales and receipts of **\$2.3 billion and employed 11,562 people** in 2007, according to the U.S. Census Bureau's Survey of Business Owners.

Immigrants are essential to Ohio's economy as workers and taxpayers.

- Immigrants comprised **4.7% of the state's workforce** in [2011](#) (or 271,966 workers), according to the U.S. Census Bureau.
- Unauthorized immigrants comprised **1.2% of the state's workforce** (or 70,000 workers) in [2010](#), according to a report by the Pew Hispanic Center.
- Immigrants accounted for **7% of total economic output** in the Cleveland metropolitan area and **5% of economic output** in the Cincinnati metropolitan area as of 2007, according to a study by the [Fiscal Policy Institute](#).
- If all unauthorized immigrants were removed from Ohio, **the state would lose \$4.0 billion in economic activity, \$1.8 billion in gross state product, and approximately 25,019 jobs**, even accounting for adequate market adjustment time, according to a report by the [Perryman Group](#).

Unauthorized immigrants pay taxes.

- Unauthorized immigrants in Ohio paid **\$103.9 million** in state and local taxes in [2010](#), according to data from the Institute for Taxation and Economic Policy, which includes:
 - \$7.5 million in property taxes.
 - \$71.3 million in sales taxes.
 - \$25.1 million in personal income tax

Immigrants are integral to Ohio's economy as students.

- Ohio's 26,427 **foreign students contributed \$717.3 million** to the state's economy in tuition, fees, and living expenses for the 2011-2012 academic year, according to [NAFSA: Association of International Educators](#).

Immigrants in Ohio excel educationally.

- **The number of immigrants in Ohio with a college degree increased by 47.5% between 2000 and 2011, according to [data](#) from the Migration Policy Institute.**
- **41.4% of Ohio's foreign-born population age 25 and older had a bachelor's or higher degree in [2011](#), compared to 23.8% of native-born persons age 25 and older.**
- **In Ohio, 87.1% of children with immigrant parents were considered "English proficient" as of [2009](#), according to data from the Urban Institute.**
- **The English proficiency rate among Asian children in Ohio was 88.7%, while for Latino children it was 87.8%, as of [2009](#).**

Immigration Policy Center. 5/1/13

Associated Press: Obama 'owes' Hispanic voters following re-election campaign

This may be the year Congress decides what to do about the millions of immigrants living illegally in the U.S. After years of gridlock, there are ideas whizzing all around Washington. For

now, all eyes are on an 844-page Senate proposal with the you-said-a-mouthful title of the "Border Security, Economic Opportunity and Immigration Modernization Act of 2013." Look for the Senate Judiciary Committee to take its first votes on the legislation on Thursday. What's in that bill? Is there a Plan B? And who are all these immigrants, once you get past the big round numbers? A big dose of facts, figures and other information to help understand the current debate:

Why Now?

Major problems with U.S. immigration have been around for decades. President George W. Bush tried to change the system and failed. President Barack Obama promised to overhaul it in his first term but never did. In Obama's second term, he's making immigration a priority, and Republicans also appear ready to deal.

Why the new commitment?

Obama won 71 percent of Hispanic voters in his 2012 re-election campaign, and he owes them. Last year's election also sent a loud message to Republicans that they can't ignore this pivotal voting bloc. It's been the kind of breathtaking turnaround you rarely see in politics. Plus, there's growing pressure from business leaders, who want to make it easier for the U.S. to attract highly educated immigrants and to legally bring in more lower-skilled workers such as farm laborers.

What's The Problem?

Talk about "comprehensive immigration reform" generally centers on four main questions:

- What to do about the 11 million-plus immigrants who live in the U.S. without legal permission.*
- How to tighten border security.*
- How to keep businesses from employing people who are in the U.S. illegally.*
- How to improve the legal immigration system, now so convoluted that the adjective "Byzantine" pops up all too frequently.*

What's *The Gang of Eight*?

A group of four Democrats and four Republicans in the Senate that crafted a bill to address all four questions. In a nutshell, this proposal would tighten border controls, allow more high- and low-skilled workers to legally immigrate, require employers to verify their workers have legal status, and create an opportunity for those who are in the U.S. illegally to eventually become citizens.

Is There a Plan B?

And C and D. Obama has his own backup plan in case congressional talks fail, but he's given his support to the Senate bill as a worthy compromise. In the House, Republican Rep. Bob Goodlatte, the head of the House Judiciary Committee, says his committee will tackle the main immigration issues one by one, instead of starting with a single sweeping bill. Separately, there's a bipartisan House group working on legislation. Obama says he will keep an open mind about the various proposals, but the final deal has to address all the big issues.

Coming to America

A record 40.4 million immigrants live in the U.S., representing 13 percent of the population. More than 18 million are naturalized citizens, 11 million are legal permanent or temporary residents, and more than 11 million are in the country without legal permission, according to the Pew Hispanic Center, a private research organization. Those in the U.S. illegally made up about 3.7 percent of the U.S. population in 2010. While overall immigration has steadily grown, the number of immigrants in the U.S. illegally peaked at 12 million in 2007.

Where From?

Twenty-nine percent of the foreign-born in the U.S., or about 11.7 million people, came from Mexico. About 25 percent came from South and East Asia, 9 percent from the Caribbean, 8 percent from Central America, 7 percent South America, 4 percent the Middle East and the rest from elsewhere. The figures are more lopsided for immigrants living here illegally: An estimated 58 percent are from Mexico. The next closest figure is 6 percent from El Salvador, says the government.

Where To?

California has the largest share of the U.S. immigrant population, 27 percent, followed by New York, New Jersey, Florida, Nevada, Hawaii and Texas, according to the Migration Policy Institute, a private group focused on global immigration issues. California has the largest share of immigrants in the U.S. illegally, at 25 percent, followed by Texas with 16 percent. Florida and New York each has 6 percent, and Georgia has 5 percent, according to the Department of Homeland Security.

Getting In

Here's one way to think about the ways immigrants arrive in the U.S: Some come in the front door, others the side door and still others the back door, as laid out in a report from the private Population Reference Bureau.

-Arriving through the front door: people legally sponsored by their families or employers. Also refugees and asylum-seekers, and immigrants who win visas in an annual "diversity" lottery.

-Side door: legal temporary arrivals, including those who get visas to visit, work or study. There are dozens of types of nonimmigrant visas, available to people ranging from business visitors to foreign athletes and entertainers. Visitors from dozens of countries don't even need visas.

-Back door: Somewhat more than half of those in the U.S. illegally have come in the back door, evading border controls, Pew estimates. The rest legally entered, but didn't leave when they were supposed to or otherwise violated terms of their visas.

Is It a Crime?

Simply being in the United States in violation of immigration laws isn't, by itself, a crime; it's a civil violation. Entering the country without permission is a misdemeanor criminal offense. Re-entering the country without authorization after being formally removed can be felony. Pew estimates that a little less than half of immigrants who lack legal permission to live in the U.S. didn't enter the country illegally. They overstayed their visas, worked without authorization, dropped out of school or otherwise violated the conditions of their visas.

What's in a Name?

There are varying and strong opinions about how best to refer to the 11 million-plus people who are in the U.S. without legal permission.

Illegal immigrants?
Undocumented workers?
Unauthorized population?
Illegal aliens?

The last has generally fallen out of favor. Some immigrant advocates are pressing a "Drop the I-Word" campaign, arguing that it is dehumanizing to refer to people as "illegal." "Undocumented worker" often isn't accurate because many aren't workers, and some have documents from other countries. Homeland Security reports refer to "unauthorized immigrants," but the agency also reports statistics on "aliens apprehended."

Definitions, Please:

-Legal permanent residents (LPRs): people who have permission to live in the U.S. permanently but aren't citizens. They're also known as "green card" holders. Most of them can apply for citizenship within five years of getting green cards. In 2011, 1.06 million people got the cards.

-Refugees and asylees: people who come to the U.S. to avoid persecution in their home countries. What's the difference between the two terms? Refugees are people who apply for protective status before they get to the U.S. Asylees are people who apply upon arrival in the U.S. or later.

-Naturalization: The process by which immigrants become U.S. citizens.

Going Green

Is there an actual green card? Indeed there is. It's the **Permanent Resident Card** issued to people who are authorized to live and work in the U.S. on a permanent basis. In 2010, the government redesigned them to add new security features - and make them green again. The cards had been a variety of colors over the years. New green cards are good for 10 years for lawful permanent residents and two years for conditional residents.

Path to Citizenship

There's a lot of talk about creating a "path to citizenship" for immigrants who are in the U.S. without legal status. But there's vigorous debate over what conditions these immigrants should have to satisfy to get citizenship - among them are paying taxes, fines and fees, and passing background checks. Some legislators want to set additional conditions, such as improvements in border security and in tracking whether legal immigrants leave the country when required. Others want to limit immigrants who are in the U.S. illegally to some sort of legal status that stops short of citizenship. But more than 60 percent of Americans think those who are here illegally should have a way to become citizens, according to an Associated Press-GfK poll conducted in April. The Senate bill would allow those in the country illegally to obtain "registered provisional immigrant" status six months after the bill was enacted if they met certain conditions. Additional border security improvements would have to go into place before anyone obtained green cards or citizenship. It would take immigrants living here illegally at least 13 years to get all the way to citizenship. They'd have to pay taxes, fees and \$2,000 in fines. No one

who entered the country after Dec. 31, 2011, or had a felony conviction or more than three misdemeanors would be eligible.

The A-Word

Nothing stirs up a hornet's nest like talk of amnesty for immigrants who are in the country illegally, although there's a lot of disagreement over how to define the term. A 2007 effort to overhaul the immigration system, led by Bush, failed in part because Republicans were dismayed that it included a process to give otherwise law-abiding immigrants who were in the country illegally a chance to become citizens. Critics complained that would be offering amnesty. All sides know it's not practical to talk about sending 11 million-plus people back to their countries of origin. So one big challenge this time is finding an acceptable way to resolve the status of those who are in the country illegally. Backers of the Senate bill stress that those who are in the country illegally would have a longer and more difficult path to citizenship under their plan than would immigrants who followed all the rules.

Getting a Reprieve

While the larger immigration debate goes on, the government already is offering as many as 1.76 million immigrants who are in the country illegally a way to avoid deportation, at least for now. Obama announced a program in June that puts off deportation for many people brought here as children. Applicants for the reprieve must have arrived before they turned 16, be younger than 31 now, be high school graduates or in school, or have served in the military. They can't have a serious criminal record or pose a threat to public safety or national security. Applications for the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program are averaging more than 3,000 a day. By mid-April, nearly 489,000 people had applied and more than 268,000 had been approved, with most of the rest still under consideration. Applications have come from all 50 states, with the largest number coming from California and Texas. Nearly 75 percent of the applicants are originally from Mexico. In some ways, the program closely tracks the failed DREAM Act, which would have given many young illegal immigrants a path to legal status. Obama's program doesn't give them legal status but it at least protects them from deportation for two years.

History: Doing The Wave

The U.S. is in its fourth and largest immigration wave. First came the Colonial era, then an 1820-1870 influx of newcomers mostly from Northern and Western Europe. Most were Germans and Irish, but the gold rush and jobs on the transcontinental railroad also attracted Chinese immigrants. In the 1870s, immigration declined due to economic problems and restrictive legislation. The third wave, between 1881 and 1920, brought more than 23 million people to the U.S., mostly from Southern and Eastern Europe, aided by cheaper trans-Atlantic travel and lured by employers seeking workers. Then came the Great Depression and more restrictive immigration laws, and immigration went into decline for decades. The fourth wave, still underway, began in 1965 with the end of immigration limits based on nationality. Foreign-born people made up 1 in 20 residents of the U.S. in 1960; today, the figure is about 1 in 8.

History: Here a Law, There a Law

Until the late 1800s, immigration was largely a free for all. Then came country-by-country limits. Since then, big changes in U.S. immigration law have helped produce big shifts in migration patterns. Among the more notable laws:

-1965 Immigration and Nationality Act: Abolished country-by-country limits, established a new system that determined immigration preference based on family relationships and needed skills, and expanded the categories of family members who could enter without numerical limits.

-1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act: Legalized about 2.7 million immigrants living in the U.S. illegally, 84 percent of them from Mexico and Central America.

-1990 Immigration Act: Increased worldwide immigration limit to a "flexible cap" of 675,000 a year. The number can go higher in some years if there are unused visas available from the previous year.

-1996 Immigrant Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act. Expanded possible reasons for deporting people or ruling them ineligible to enter the U.S., expedited removal procedures, gave state and local police power to enforce immigration laws.

-Post-2001: In 2001, talk percolated about a new immigration plan to deal with unauthorized immigrants, guest workers and violence along the Mexican border. But the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks of 2001 put an end to that, amid growing unease over illegal immigration.

About Last Time . . .

The last big immigration legalization plan, in 1986, took six years to get done.

The law, signed by President Ronald Reagan, had three main components: making it illegal to hire unauthorized workers, improving border enforcement and providing for the legalization of a big chunk of the estimated 3 million to 5 million immigrants then in the country illegally. The results were disappointing on two central fronts: The hiring crackdown largely failed because there was no good way to verify eligibility to work, and it took a decade to improve border security. As a result, illegal immigration continued to grow, fueled by the strong U.S. economy. What did work as intended: Close to 3 million immigrants living in the U.S. without permission received legal status. By 2009, about 40 percent of them had been naturalized, according to Homeland Security.

Latinos Rising

Census figures show that between 1960 and 2010, immigration from Europe declined while the numbers coming from Latin America and Asia took off. As the immigrants' points of origin changed, so did their destinations. Concentrations shifted from the Northeast and Midwest to the South and West. A few Census Bureau snapshots:

-In 1960, there were fewer than 1 million people in the U.S. who were born in Latin America. By 2010, there were 21.2 million.

-In 1960, 75 percent of foreigners in the U.S. came from Europe. By 2010, 80 percent came from Latin America and Asia.

-In 1960: 47 percent of the foreign-born lived in the Northeast and 10 percent in the South. By 2010, 22 percent lived in the Northeast and 32 percent in the South.

The Fence

The fence between the U.S. and Mexico runs off and on for 651 miles along the 1,954-mile border. Most of it has been built since 2005. At some points, it's an 18-foot-high steel mesh

structure topped with razor wire. At others, it's a rusting, 8-foot-high thing, made of Army surplus landing mats from the Vietnam War. The fencing is one of the more visible manifestations of a massive effort over the past two decades to improve border security. The results of that effort are dramatic. Those images of crowds of immigrants sprinting across the border illegally while agents scramble to nab a few are largely a thing of the past. Two decades ago, fewer than 4,000 Border Patrol agents worked along the Southwest border. Today there are 18,500. Plummeting apprehension statistics are one measure of change: 357,000 last year, compared with 1.6 million in 2000. The numbers are down in part because fewer are trying to make it across. The border isn't sealed but it is certainly more secure. The Senate bill would require the government to have even tougher border security plans before those who are in the country illegally could become legal permanent residents.

Who's Hanging Around

With tighter border security and years of economic difficulty in the U.S., it turns out that most of the immigrants who are in the U.S. without permission have been there for a while. Just 14 percent have arrived since the start of 2005, according to Homeland Security estimates. In contrast, 29 percent came during the previous five years. At the peak in 2000, about 770,000 immigrants arrived annually from Mexico, most of them entering the country illegally. By 2010, the pace had dropped to about 140,000, most of them arriving as legal immigrants, according to Pew.

Who's Leaving?

Mexicans, mostly. Since 1986, more than 4 million noncitizens have been deported. Deportations have expanded in the Obama administration, reaching 410,000 in 2012 from 30,000 in 1990. Most of those deported - 75 percent - are sent back to Mexico. Nearly half of those removed had prior criminal convictions. So far, the Obama administration has deported more than 1.6 million people.

To Naturalize Or Not

Lots of U.S. immigrants who are eligible to become naturalized citizens don't bother. As of 2010, about two-thirds of eligible immigrants had applied for citizenship, according to the Migration Policy Institute. That lags behind the rate in other English-speaking countries such as Australia and Canada, which do more to promote naturalization.

Why Bother?

What's so great about citizenship? Naturalization offers all sorts of rights and benefits, including the right to vote and run for office. Naturalized citizens are protected from losing their residency rights and being deported if they get in legal trouble. They can bring family members into the U.S. more quickly. Certain government jobs and licensed professions require citizenship. Citizenship also symbolizes full membership in U.S. society. In 2010, there was a 67 percent earnings gap between naturalized citizens and noncitizen immigrants, according to a report from the Migration Policy Institute. Even after stripping out differences in education, language skills and work experience, naturalized citizens earned at least 5 percent more.

Skipping It

Nearly two-thirds of the 5.4 million legal immigrants from Mexico who are eligible to become U.S. citizens haven't done so, according to a Pew study released in February. Their rate of naturalization is half that of legal immigrants from all other countries combined. The barriers to naturalization cited by Mexican nonapplicants include the need to learn English, the difficulty of the citizenship exam and the \$680 application fee.

Workers

How do immigrants who are in the U.S. without permission fit into the nation's jobs picture? In 2010, about 8 million were working in the U.S. or trying to get work. They made up about 5 percent of the labor force, according to Pew. Among U.S. farm workers, about half are believed to be in the country illegally, according to the Government Accountability Office. Business groups want a system to legally bring in both more highly skilled workers and more lower-skilled workers such as agricultural laborers. The idea is to hire more when Americans aren't available to fill jobs. This has been a sticking point in past attempts at immigration overhaul. Labor groups want any such revamped system to provide worker protections and guard against displacing American workers. Current temporary worker programs are cumbersome and outdated. The Senate bill would establish a agriculture worker visa system and create more visa programs for high- and low-skilled workers. Farm workers already here illegally would be able to qualify for green cards after five years if they'd already worked in agriculture in the U.S. for two years and if they kept working in the industry.

Employers

Current law requires employers to have their workers fill out a form that declares them authorized to work in the U.S. Then the employer needs to verify that the worker's identifying documents look real. But the law allows lots of different documents, and many of them are easy to counterfeit. The government has developed a mostly voluntary employment verification system called E-Verify, which has gradually gotten better. But so far just 10 percent of employers are using it, according to the Migration Policy Institute. The system is now required in varying degrees by 19 states. The Senate proposal would require all employers to implement it within four years.

Families vs. Jobs

A big question in the immigration debate centers on how much priority to give to the family members of U.S. citizens and permanent residents. Under current law, the U.S. awards a much larger proportion of green cards to family members than to foreigners with job prospects here. About two-thirds of permanent legal immigration to the U.S. is family-based, compared with about 15 percent that is employment-based, according to the Migration Policy Institute. The rest is largely humanitarian. Some policymakers think employment-based immigration should be boosted to help the economy. Advocates for families want to make sure any such action doesn't come at the expense of people seeking to join relatives in the U.S. The Senate plan would prevent citizens from bringing in siblings and would allow them to sponsor married sons and daughters only if the children were under 31. It would raise the cap on visas for high-skilled workers, create a startup visa for foreign entrepreneurs, and set up a new merit visa that would award points to prospective immigrants based on their education, employment, length of residence in the U.S. and other factors.

Who Cares?

For all the attention being devoted to immigration right now, it's not the top priority for most people, even for most Hispanics. It ranked 17th on a list of policy priorities in a recent Pew Research Center poll. Among Hispanics, one-third said immigration was an extremely important issue to them, behind such issues as the economy and jobs, education and health care.

A View From The South

Is life actually better in the U.S.? A little more than half of Mexican adults think so, according to a 2012 Pew Global Attitudes poll. Thirty-eight percent said they'd move to the U.S. if they had the chance. Nineteen percent said they'd come even without authorization.

CBSDC. 5/6/13

Immigrant pact begins to emerge from House

Illegal immigrants could become citizens in 15 years under legislation being drafted by a bipartisan group of House lawmakers, a timeline two years longer than under a similar Senate bill. The timeline was one of the few specifics to emerge Friday from an "agreement in principle" that a so-called gang of eight House lawmakers struck Thursday evening on a broad overhaul of immigration laws. Details that trickled out suggested that the House plan would diverge in some important areas from a bipartisan Senate bill, differences that House Republicans said would make the plan more palatable to their GOP colleagues. "Our bill has a better chance of passing the House than the Senate bill," Rep. John Carter (R., Texas) said Friday. Both the House and Senate plans would make the 11 million illegal immigrants already living in the U.S. wait 10 years before being eligible for permanent legal status, also known as a green card. But under the House plan, it would take an additional five years to become a citizen, as it generally does under current law. The Senate bill would shorten that to three years. Visas for low-skill guest workers could emerge as another point of tension. House Democrats appear ready to back the Senate bill's terms for awarding the visas, as well as accompanying wage rules, which were negotiated by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the AFL-CIO. House Republicans don't back that agreement. The guest-worker issue is likely to be fought out in tandem with the main immigration bill, with Democrats and Republicans putting forward competing proposals when the broader bill is released, aides familiar with the negotiations said. Both the House and Senate plans would require all businesses within five years to screen workers with E-Verify, the federal database used to check workers' legality. House lawmakers reached their general agreement on Thursday evening after resolving their last major disagreement, which centered on the rules for health-insurance coverage for illegal immigrants already living in the U.S. Details of their health-coverage agreement weren't immediately available. Republican lawmakers from the group chatted with reporters Friday about the agreement's generalities, while Democrats largely stayed out of the spotlight. Aides said Democrats were simply abiding by the gang's agreement to keep details of the plan confidential while staff crystallized their agreement into legislative language. Aides said the bill could be filed in early June. House GOP lawmakers in the group said they were confident that their bill would survive an airing in the House Judiciary Committee, whose chairman, Rep. Bob Goodlatte (R., Va.), has already started considering a series of smaller immigration bills on a piecemeal basis. Rep. Mario Diaz-Balart (R., Fla.), a member of the bipartisan House group, told reporters

he was confident that Mr. Goodlatte's committee would consider the comprehensive bill. Mr. Carter predicted the committee would keep the bipartisan bill in one piece -- though he said that because the panel includes some of the most conservative Republicans and liberal Democrats in the House, "they might mess it up a little bit." A Judiciary Committee aide said Mr. Goodlatte "encourages the bipartisan House working group to keep working toward producing a bill." The aide also said the panel also planned to continue its "step-by-step approach," which considers various elements of the immigration system separately. That piecemeal approach might be discarded later if House Republicans coalesce around the bipartisan bill. For now, the committee is proceeding along both tracks, so that the House has some form of immigration legislation in case support for the broader overhaul falters, according to a senior GOP aide.

Wall Street Journal. 5/18/13

Bill would block Ohio driver's licenses for immigrants

A battle over driver's licenses for young immigrants has brought a national debate to the Ohio Statehouse. The Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles decided in March, after months of confusion at local offices, [to begin issuing temporary driver's licenses to youth](#) accepted into the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program. The DACA program was initiated last year by President Barack Obama to defer deportation or other action against people younger than 30 who were brought to the U.S. as children and raised here. A bill introduced in the Ohio House this month would reverse that decision and amend state law to list eligibility for licenses, explicitly excluding DACA grantees. The bill would allow citizens of other countries in the U.S. on a travel visa to obtain licenses but not undocumented immigrants. The bill's sponsor, Republican Rep. Matt Lynch of Solon, said Ohio should not have to follow policy set by the federal government that preempts state laws. "Ohio is a sovereign state — we have the right to determine when and who will get driver's license in Ohio," Lynch said Wednesday during a small rally against immigration legislation being considered by Congress. Lynch said his bill will return the law to as it was pre-DACA and "deny illegal immigrants licenses in Ohio and protect Ohio jobs for Ohio citizens." But Attorney General Mike DeWine, in a letter to the Ohio Commission on Hispanic/Latino Affairs, concluded DACA grantees are eligible for licenses under existing Ohio law, rules and regulations. More than 291,000 undocumented immigrants — including 1,779 in Ohio — have been accepted into the program after meeting several criteria, which include being enrolled in school, working after completing a degree or serving in the military. DACA status allows these individuals to work and attend school in the U.S. and grantees are eligible to receive a Social Security card. Individuals granted deferred action do not possess legal status, but are considered "lawfully present" by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. State licensing rules require U.S. citizenship or "legal presence" along with documents verifying name and Social Security number. The Migration Policy Institute estimates between 10,000 to 20,000 individuals in Ohio are eligible for DACA. "The license is important for them to be able to get to work, to have a little bit more access to the things people in their age group should be doing," said Nick Torres of DreamActivist Ohio, which advocates for permanent citizenship for youth illegally brought to the U.S. "For those who have gone to high school here, it's an important rite of passage. It's a way for them to be able to contribute back to the community." Officials in at least 45 states have issued driver's licenses to DACA grantees. Only Arizona and Nebraska have not issued licenses to DACA grantees. The BMV issued 716 licenses to DACA grantees since March 29. The licenses look the same as regular licenses, but have the

words “NON-RENEWABLE AND NON-TRANSFERABLE” printed below the driver’s signature and have an earlier expiration date. Groups on both sides of the issue say driver’s licenses are the tip of the iceberg for how states handle changes in federal immigration policy. Torres said the situation shows how changing immigration policy can cause confusion and he hopes the license process will help states better comply with future reforms. Lynch and supporters of his bill worry the federal government will open the doors to more immigrants, noting the Ohio Latino Affairs Commission approved a resolution urging in-state college tuition for DACA grantees. “They’re going to continue to expand these benefits to who knows where and we have to show the feds that Ohio is sovereign and we’re in charge,” Lynch said. Steve Salvi, founder of the Ohio Jobs and Justice PAC, said youth brought illegally to the U.S. have benefited from a \$100,000 taxpayer-paid K-12 education. Salvi supports deporting those immigrants. “With a good American education, they can be a great value to Mexico or Colombia or wherever they came from. Let them be successful in their own countries and we’ll be happy to do trade with them,” Salvi said. Torres said the DACA recipients he knows consider themselves American. “They’ve grown up here,” Torres said. “They don’t have much identification with the country of their birth. They want to be able to live as normal a life as they can.”

Dayton Daily News. 5/28/13

Arizona Sheriff Joe Arpaio to appeal judge's finding his department engaged in racial profiling

Sheriff Joe Arpaio's attorneys said today they plan to appeal a federal judge's finding that the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office, helmed by Arpaio, racially profiled Latinos while on immigration patrols. Complaints of deputies pulling over and singling out people who are dark skinned and speak Spanish to check their immigration status have long been levied against the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office. Tim Casey, the attorney representing Arpaio and the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office said racial profiling has never been a policy of the department, but said deputies may have been given faulty training by federal authorities on immigration enforcement. "The law clearly says you cannot do that, and this judge has clearly made it known that that is not the law, and ICE (Immigrations and Customs Enforcement) taught that, and that is not correct," he said. Casey said the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office would appeal the judge's ruling in the next 30 days. The lawsuit was brought against the department by a group of Latinos who alleged they were racially profiled by Arpaio's deputies for the purpose of immigration status checks. The group did not seek monetary damages in the lawsuit and instead asked for a judge to declare the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office had engaged in racial profiling and to order policy changes. "We were looking for a declaration from the court that these are unconstitutional practices as an important first step in stopping those practices," said Don Pochoda, legal director for the American Civil Liberties Union, which has championed the case. The 142-page ruling was issued on Friday, more than eight months after a seven-day bench trial was held in the case. U.S. District Court Judge G. Murray Snow wrote that "the evidence introduced at trial establishes that, in the past, the MCSO has aggressively protected its right to engage in immigration and immigration-related enforcement operations even when it had no accurate legal basis for doing so." A hearing has been set on June 14 in Phoenix to discuss how to carry out the orders in the ruling. Arpaio, who will turn 81 in June, is serving his sixth consecutive term as sheriff of Arizona's most populous county, which includes Phoenix. The

self-styled "America's Toughest Sheriff" has made national headlines for everything from putting inmates in pink underwear to creating the nation's first all-female chain gang. In February, he tapped actor Steven Seagal to lead members of the Arizona sheriff's volunteer posse through a simulated school shooting.

ABC News. 5/25/13

Obama courts Hispanic leaders as Senate drafts immigration bill

Hispanic business leaders will descend on Washington this week for an all-day meeting hosted by top administration officials as President Barack Obama seeks to maintain congressional momentum for immigration legislation even while saying little about the issue publicly. The immigration bill is Obama's best chance of a major legislative victory in his second term. So, he's been choosing his words carefully -- or often, not at all. Obama has taken just one immigration-focused trip this year, traveling to Las Vegas to outline his views in January. In recent appearances in Austin, Texas, and Baltimore, he's not mentioned the topic at all, focusing instead on the economy. The May 29 meeting, the inaugural event of the Hispanic Business Leaders Forum, underscores the cautious strategy Obama has adopted to push for his top domestic priority. While Obama remains quiet in public, his staff is escalating a private White House campaign to build support for the bill. At the same time, the White House is also working to stay close to a constituency that backed Obama by 71 percent in the last election -- no matter what the outcome with the immigration bill on Capitol Hill. While immigration is certainly on the agenda for this week's meeting, White House officials stress that the administration is engaging Latino executives as national business leaders who care about the nation's pressing economic issues. Obama's approach to the immigration bill is an acknowledgment that support among Republicans, whose votes are crucial to passage, will be weakened if the bill is too closely allied with the Democratic president. "He could have just come in and said, 'Look this is my priority and I think I won the election by virtue of the fact I'm for it,'" said Marshall Fitz, director of immigration policy at the Center for American Progress. "But the political reality that he's reading is that he would have had this immediate backlash." Seventy-five business leaders are expected to attend the event, held in conjunction with the U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. Treasury Secretary Jacob J. Lew is scheduled to discuss the economy, domestic policy adviser Cecilia Munoz to brief participants on the implementation of the health care law, and Chief Technology Officer Todd Park to detail the administration's open data initiatives. Senior adviser Valerie Jarrett will offer opening remarks. Administration officials said they expect detailed conversations about taxes, economic competitiveness, and other fiscal issues. Attendees will include Joe Echevarria, chief executive of Deloitte LLP, Gustavo Arnavat, executive director of the Inter-American Development Bank, Kimberly Casiano, president of Casiano Communications, the largest Hispanic-owned publisher in the U.S., and Linda Alvarado, president of Alvarado Construction and the owner of the Colorado Rockies baseball team. The wide-ranging group and the schedule go beyond just another meeting of supporters eager to push the revamp of immigration laws, which the president has largely left in the hands of allies on Capitol Hill -- at their request. As a bipartisan Senate working group began drafting a bill earlier this year, Democratic allies asked Obama to keep a low-profile on immigration legislation, warning him that strong statements could make it impossible for Republicans to embrace a bipartisan agreement. "They don't want to give the president a win," said Illinois Senator Dick

Durbin, in an interview on Capitol Hill earlier this month. "That's part of the reality of this town." Some supporters, though, said strategy carries significant political risk. The president and his team followed a similar playbook in their push for gun control earlier this year. That effort ended in defeat when the Senate voted down a stripped-down version of Obama's plan. Democratic supporters criticized the president's decision to stay quiet, saying he didn't fight push forcefully. "If the bill does go down he's going to be blamed," said Frank Sharry, executive director of America's Voice, a Washington-based immigration advocacy organization. "He was re-elected with strong support from Latino and Asian American voters and he could be setting himself up for the accusation that he didn't fight hard enough." In an effort to stave off those claims and build backing for the bill, White House officials have been working quietly to shore up support. There are near-daily calls with people and groups that have a stake in the outcome. On May 7, White House aides, including Munoz and Park, hosted a roundtable with officials from 25 different business, technology, and university groups. While the advocates pressed for increasing the number of visas available for high-skilled workers, White House officials pushed the groups to take their pro-immigration message across the country, according to attendees. The effort reaches across departments, with lower-level officials fanning out to events across the country promoting the immigration overhaul. Earlier this month, Alejandro Mayorkas, director of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, hosted an interactive town hall meeting about streamlining technology visas at the University of Chicago Booth School of Business with executives from local startups. On May 13, Mark Doms, the undersecretary of economic affairs at the Department of Commerce, addressed an immigration forum at the St. Regis in Aspen, Colorado, hosted by the Aspen Institute. He shared the stage with Ari Matusiak, the director of private sector engagement at the White House. The president has held White House meetings with supporters, most recently hosting Asian-American leaders on May 8 and Latinos on April 29. In those sessions, he's urged them to back the bill even if they had concerns about the details, stressing the importance of a large vote in the Senate, according to a participant who asked for anonymity to discuss the private meeting. The Senate Judiciary panel approved that chamber's proposal earlier this month and the full Senate will debate the measure in June. A bipartisan House group has reached an agreement in principle on its own immigration proposal and will start preparing legislation. The Senate legislation is similar in approach to what Obama outlined in Las Vegas, though there are some key differences. The Senate bill makes citizenship for undocumented immigrants contingent on securing the U.S. border, which Obama's plan does not. It also doesn't recognize same-sex couples, a proposal Obama supports. The White House has stressed that the president remains in constant contact with key lawmakers on Capitol Hill. "A lot of work remains to be done," Jay Carney, the White House press secretary told reporters this month. "We're engaged in this process with the Senate and monitoring very closely the developments." Obama has long struggled to strike the right balance with Congress. During his first two and a half years in office, he was immersed in legislative wrangling, meeting quietly to convince lawmakers to pass the health care bill, economic stimulus package, and Wall Street regulations. After talks to strike a debt deal with House Speaker John Boehner failed in 2011, Obama switched to what aides call an "outside-in" strategy of using public rallies to pressure lawmakers. Still, he lost on his first big initiative of his second term: Tougher background checks for gun buyers. That measure, a stripped-down version of the gun control package initially proposed by the president, failed when five Democrats and 41 Republicans voted against the bill. Supporters say the politics of immigration differ from that of gun issues, largely because there's more Republican support for taking up the issue. The November election changed the political

calculus for Republicans, who watched as 71 percent of Hispanic voters sided with Obama. Even in the House, where immigration legislation faces a steeper fight, the proposals have won praise from Speaker Boehner and Representative Paul Ryan of Wisconsin. Republicans involved with the effort have praised Obama's approach, saying they've kept the president briefed on their progress and in return he's left them to their work of building support for the measure in the Senate. "He's trying to grow the vote," said Senator Lindsey Graham in an interview earlier this month on Capitol Hill. "He has tried to give the Democrats cover and give Republicans the space they need to get to yes."

Bloomberg Business Week. 5/28/13