



SSN Forum on the Immigration Impasse

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Immigration reform is supported by businesses, churches, and most voters. In 2013 the U.S. Senate passed bipartisan reforms, but the GOP-led House has shunned compromise in favor of threats to deport all eleven million undocumented residents, including law-abiding workers, families, and young adults originally brought to this country as children. **What are the roots and implications of this impasse?** We asked nine SSN experts to weigh in.

[Children of Central American Turmoil and the U.S. Reform Impasse](#)

Douglas S. Massey, Princeton University

"Despite 'crisis' rhetoric now gripping the U.S. media, in reality, the entry of Central American children seeking to reunite with undocumented families in the United States is not new... But the numbers are now rising because children left behind are growing up and are taking matters into their own hands - or they are being sponsored by parents who, desperate

to see their offspring removed from harm's way, pay coyotes to smuggle them across the border."

Three Pathologies in U.S. Immigration Policy

David Cook-Martín, Grinnell College

"American policymakers and citizens need to take international as well as domestic realities into account and consider the costs of continuing with an ever-shifting set of ad hoc, discretionary responses.... Immigration challenges are here to stay and we have to do a better job of debating and dealing with them."

There is no Immigration Security Threat that Reform with an Earned Path to Citizenship Cannot Address

Ernesto Castañeda, The New School for Social Research

"There is no real security threat, either from the current Central American minors or from earlier waves of unauthorized immigrants now woven into the fabric of American life. Rather, in political circles especially, there is a shortfall of understanding and compassion.... Before long, we must hope progress toward comprehensive immigration reform will enable... authentic America to find itself again."

Amid Congressional Deadlock, U.S. Immigration Courts are Overwhelmed

David Scott FitzGerald, University of California, San Diego

"Without broader decisions about how to adjust U.S. immigration policies and deploy limited enforcement resources, government steps will continue to lurch from one ad hoc crisis response to another, leaving basic difficulties to fester and get worse. Our choked immigration courts are a case in point."

Tough Decisions About Who America Lets In

Irene Bloemraad, University of California, Berkeley

"The Central American children and family migrants arriving at the southern U.S. border are, in a very real sense, exercising their freedom to exit violent, economically depressed societies. But these migrants are not being extended a warm welcome to stay, because a right of exit does not guarantee a right of entry into the United States – at least not for Central Americans, unlike people who escaped Cuba, the Soviet Union or Vietnam during the Cold War."

America Can Welcome the Newly Arrived Central American Children

Roberto G. Gonzales, Harvard University

"Unaccompanied immigrant children have been making the voyage to the United States for generations to reunite with family members or after losing their parents to war or famine. In many instances, the United States has used resources and marshaled compassion to integrate such young arrivals into our communities.... If we make serious efforts to integrate the new arrivals from Central America, similar positive results can happen...."

The Roots of Minority Popular Opposition to Immigration Reform

Robert W. Glover and Jordan P. LaBouff, University of Maine

"Confronting extreme anti-immigrant rhetoric and obstructionism will require active campaigns to make voters aware of the ways in which their political leaders are not effectively representing their interests or furthering good outcomes for American society and the U.S. economy as a whole."

Constitutional and Political Storm Clouds Brewing

Daniel J. Tichenor, University of Oregon

"If President Obama expands the reach of the 2012 Deferred Action measure to protect millions of additional law-abiding undocumented immigrants from looming threats of deportation, legal precedents may be on his side; yet such a step would certainly provoke what one staffer described as 'a nuclear reaction' from congressional Republicans."

To read all featured SSN Scholars' contributions on a single page, [click here](#).

And see our previous SSN Spotlights on immigration, ["Will the House of Representatives Enact - Or Kill - Immigration Reform?"](#) (August 2013) and ["Immigration - Time for a New Approach"](#) (December 2012).