



United States House of Representatives (HoR)

# Debating the Immigration Reform in the United States

## CHAIRS

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## 1. COMMITTEE DESCRIPTION

### 1.1. WHAT IS THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES?

The legislative branch of the United States is what is described in politics as Bicameral, meaning that it is divided into two separate assemblies with distinct powers. The House of Representatives serves as the lower chamber, and has the objective of directly representing the people, contrary to the Senate, the upper chamber, which has the responsibility of representing the states interests equally, as well as checking on the members of the House of Representatives.

Such difference is reflected in the duration of the terms of each house, with the members of the Senate being elected every six years, and those of the House being elected as often as every two years, following the ever changing needs of the population. Additionally, further characteristics that showcase the closeness of the House of Representatives to the population are:

1. The House introduces and votes on bills, which need to be approved by the senate and later the president before becoming a law.
2. The House has the sole authority to initiate revenue bills, more commonly known as tax legislation.
3. The house has power to initiate the impeachment of federal officials, such as the president, vice-president or federal judges, if they are accused of "*Treason, Bribery, or other high Crimes and Misdemeanors*".
4. If there is not a majority of votes for a presidential candidate in the electoral college, the House of Representatives will choose the president.

## 1.2. THE COMPOSITION OF THE HOUSE

The House of Representatives has a total of 435 members, and the number of representatives from each state is decided as to be proportional to the size of its population. For instance, currently, California, as the state with the largest population (approximately 39,000,000 residents), has a total of 52 representatives in the House, contrasting with states with fewer residents such as Delaware and North Dakota, with each having a single representative.

Prominent roles within the House are: the Speaker of the House, Majority and Minority Leaders, each with distinct obligations and responsibilities, which will be stated in sections 1.2.1.and 1.2.2..

### 1.2.1. Speaker of the House

The Speaker of the House presides over its sessions, this role includes calling sessions to order, ensuring that debates run smoothly, enforcing the established rules of parliamentary procedure, and making sure decorum is maintained during all sessions. Furthermore, the speaker has the authority to grant or deny speaking privileges to members during debates, also representing the assembly in official meetings with the White House and other governmental organs. They are official members of the USHoR who are elected every two years, and, therefore, have a party of their own, which can influence or bias their decisions.

This role will be assigned to both the Committee's chair and co-chair. However, in order to maintain the fairness of the committee and not jeopardise the participation of any MPs, the speakers will maintain an impartial stance towards the debate as a separate entity, meaning they will not assume any "personality" throughout the sessions.

### 1.2.2. Majority and Minority Leader

The Majority and Minority Leaders are leading members in the Senate who act as spokespeople for their parties and coordinate legislative strategies. The Majority Leader is the leader of the party with the most members, while the Minority Leader heads the party with the second most members. Additionally, a power conceived to the majority leader is the management of the agenda directly with the Speaker and the President, while the role of the minority leader is to negotiate with the Majority leader in order to guarantee its party's rights.

Nevertheless, these roles will be modified to fit the standards of a school based debate. However, to maintain the traditional hierarchy of the House of Representatives, both leaders will be the ones to present any bills or agenda written by their party and will deliver a speech in its favour.

## 1.3. RULES OF PROCEDURE

As the U.S. House of Representatives is one of the special committees in this year's PosiMUN; some rules of procedure will differ from those detailed in the Rules of Procedure Guide. Those differences will be stated in section 1.3.1. through 1.3.4.

Please note that any procedures not stated in this document are to be done according to the Rules of Procedure Guide, available at PosiMUN's website.

### 1.3.1. Freezing Date

Due to this committee's special nature, the freezing date for the debate will be October 1st, 2024, and therefore, the MPs should only use sources or cite events from before this date. Bear in mind that any documents published after the established date will not be considered by the chairs in the Position Paper.

### 1.3.2. The Debate

Those participating on the USHoR are impersonating representatives, and therefore should be addressed as such. For instance, a MP may call the participants of the debate referring to their party or surname, e.g. “representative of the democratic/republican party” or “representative Smith”. Additionally, bear in mind that the representatives should address the chairs as Mr. or Mrs. Speaker.

Traditionally, there is no speaker’s list in the House of Representatives, and the Deputies may call the attention of the speakers in order to speak during a moderated caucus (which is not made in the pulpit, the Deputy only needs to stand). Additionally, it is established that the pattern in which the deputies speak must alternate between blocks to ensure that the debate runs smoothly. The only case this pattern does not apply is if no Deputy from a specific party wishes to speak.

### 1.3.3. Opening the Session

The House of Representatives, as usual, start with a roll call to ensure that a quorum is present. Once the quorum is confirmed, the setting of the agenda is the next step. The agenda plays a major role in the development and flow of the debate, therefore it is the second stage in the initiation of the session, coming directly after the roll call. Majority and Minority Leaders may present an agenda and later propose amendments if deemed necessary. Following the setting of the agenda, the Speakers will declare the session officially open, followed by the deputy’s opening statements.

### 1.3.3. Writing the Bills

The bills are, in a simplified scope, law projects which will be voted in the House of representatives, and if futurely approved by the Senate and the President, officially become law. Since the House follows a bipartisan system, it is advised that the deputies write two bills, following their block's perspective.

The structure of a bill will be stated below:

1. *Title*: The title summarizes the main subject or purpose of the bill. It should accurately reflect the content and intent of the legislation.
2. *Enacting Clause*: This clause typically states, "Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled," indicating that the bill is being proposed as law.
3. *Preamble*: Some bills include a preamble that provides background or context for the legislation, although this is not always required. In this year's PosiMUN a preamble will be obligatory in every bill written.
4. *Sections*: Bills are divided into sections, which outline specific provisions or requirements. Each section addresses a particular aspect of the legislation and may include definitions, rules, and procedures. They can also be further divided into subsections, paragraphs, and subparagraphs for clarity and organization.
5. *Effective Date*: Most bills specify when they will take effect if passed. This could be immediate, upon a certain date, or dependent on specific conditions.

Here follows a bill sample:

#### 1.3.4. Presenting the Bills

As stated previously, both Majority and Minority Leaders will be responsible for presenting the bills written by their party, as well as delivering a speech in its favor. The Majority Leader, as the second only to the Speakers, will present its party's proposals first, which will be followed by a speech against the bill, made by any member of the opposing party. Note that if there is not a speech against, the bill passes as friendly.

#### 1.3.5. Voting Procedures

There are numerous voting methods in the house, each serving different purposes and ensuring that legislative decisions are made transparently and efficiently. This encompasses the the following modalities of voting for this committee:

- a) Voice Vote:* This is the most common method of voting in the House. Members respond verbally with "aye" or "no" when the Speaker asks for their position on a question. The Speaker then announces which side appears to have more support based on the audible responses. If no member challenges this decision, it stands as conclusive.
- b) Division Vote:* If the outcome of a voice vote is unclear or if a member requests it, a division vote can be called. In this method, members physically stand to be counted — those in favor rise first, followed by those opposed. The Speaker announces the totals, but individual votes are not recorded.
- c) Note that there is also the Ya or Nay Vote (vote by roll call), but it is recorded through an electronic voting system, hence, the PosiMUN USHoR will not adhere to this method.*



Further, the decisions carried out by the House of Representatives primarily require a simple majority to pass, with the exception of constitutional amendments, which require a two thirds majority.

## **2. HISTORICAL CONTEXT**

### **2.1. THE BIPARTISAN SYSTEM**

Bipartisanship refers to a political situation where two opposing political parties find common ground and cooperate on legislation or policy initiatives. This concept is particularly prevalent in two-party systems, such as that of the United States, where the Democratic and Republican parties dominate the political landscape.

In a bipartisan effort, members from both parties work together to reach compromises on issues that may not align perfectly with their respective party ideals, often resulting in legislation that reflects a compromise between differing viewpoints.

#### **2.1.1. Republicans**

The Republican Party, established in the mid-19th century, is often associated with conservative ideologies, which emphasize limited government, free-market principles, and individual liberty. Its position towards immigration has suffered changes throughout the last decades, a fact caused majorly because of the rise of the “Tea Party Movement” in late 2000s, characterized by its conservative stance. This period marked a transition towards more restrictionist rhetoric within the party, which was catalyzed by the election of Barack Obama , as many conservative Republicans began to voice opposition to immigration policies perceived as lenient.

The most dramatic transformation came with Donald Trump's presidential campaign in 2016. His platform prominently featured anti-immigrant rhetoric, including promises to build a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border and to implement strict measures against undocumented immigrants, resulting in significantly reduced legal immigration levels.

### 2.1.2. Democrats

The Democratic Party, founded in the early 19th century, is generally associated with progressive and liberal ideologies. Its perspective on immigration has historically emphasized inclusivity, protection for vulnerable populations, and pathways to citizenship. However, recent developments indicate a significant shift in this stance, particularly in response to changing public sentiment and political pressures.

In the initial stages of Donald Trump's presidency and his hardline immigration policies, Democrats went fully against these measures. However, as public opinion began to shift towards favoring stricter immigration controls, some Democrats started to adopt a more moderate position towards the matter, which caused a division within the party.

## 2.2. TIMELINE

*1980:* President Jimmy Carter signed the Refugee Act, which raised the limit of refugee visas from 17,500 to 50,000 annually and established the Office of Refugee Resettlement.

*1986:* Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) is enacted, granting legal status to approximately 3 million undocumented immigrants who arrived before 1982 and mandating employer verification of employee immigration status.

*1990:* Immigration Act expands the number of immigrant visas available and creates the H-1B visa for skilled workers. It also introduces a diversity lottery for underrepresented countries.

2001: The USA PATRIOT Act is enacted post-9/11, tightening security measures affecting immigration.

2008: The Secure Border Initiative is announced, aiming to enhance border security and reduce illegal immigration.

2012: The Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program was established by President Obama, helping certain undocumented immigrants brought to the U.S. as children to avoid deportation.

2013: A bipartisan immigration reform bill proposing a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants passes the Senate but fails in the House.

2017: President Trump signs executive orders aimed at increasing border security, including reinstating the "Remain in Mexico" policy and banning travel from several predominantly Muslim countries.

2020: The COVID-19 pandemic leads to significant immigration restrictions, including postponing refugee admissions and expelling migrants at the border under public health orders.

2021: President Biden issues executive orders reversing several Trump-era policies, including ending the "Remain in Mexico" policy.

2022: The Biden administration faces legal challenges regarding its immigration policies while attempting to address record-high migrant encounters at the southern border.

### **3. CURRENT SITUATION**

The end of 2024 was a politically polarized period, which preceded the presidential election disputed by Donald Trump and Kamala Harris. This year's PosiMUN will take this

political scenario as base for the debate, and require that the MPs will take it into account as well.

### 3.1. NUMBER OF SEATS OF EACH PARTY

From the results of the election of 2022, out of the 435 seats, the Republican party had 222 (50.0%), while the Democratic party had 213 (47.3%). Therefore, in this term, the majority leader seat is occupied by a Republican (Steve Scalise), whereas the minority is occupied by a democrat (Hakeem Jeffries).

### 3.2. THE REPUBLICAN PERSPECTIVE

The list below present the current major republican beliefs on the topic *Immigration Reform*:

- a) Emphasis on border security.
- b) Deportation focus.
- c) Reduction of legal immigration.
- d) Limited refugee admissions.
- e) Punitive measures against employers of illegal immigrants.

Throughout sections 3.3.1 to 3.3.3, some important individuals from the Republican party will be presented.

### 3.2.1. Steve Scalise



Scalise, born in 1965, Louisiana, has held several leadership roles in the U.S. House of Representatives, including serving as the House Majority Whip from 2014 to 2019 and later becoming the House Majority Leader in 2023. He is known for his conservative stance on various issues, including taxation, gun rights, and immigration.

From the start of his career, he has advocated for stricter immigration policies and opposed pathways to citizenship for undocumented immigrants, supporting stronger border security measures, including the construction of a border wall. Scalise has also backed legislation to crack down on sanctuary cities and has emphasized the need for stricter enforcement of existing immigration laws.

### 3.2.2. Marjorie Taylor Greene



Marjorie Taylor Greene, born in 1975 in Louisiana, is known for her outspoken nature and alignment with far-right ideologies, often drawing national attention for her controversial statements and promotion of conspiracy theories. She advocates for stringent immigration policies, emphasizing border security and strict enforcement of immigration laws. In June 2021, she introduced the "Protect

America First Act," aiming to stop all immigration for four years, fund and continue building the border wall, expedite the deportation of illegal aliens, and revoke programs such as DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals).

### 3.2.3. Jim Jordan



Born in Ohio, 1964, Jim Jordan served in the Ohio House of Representatives and the Ohio State Senate before his congressional career. He maintains a firm stance on immigration, advocating for strict enforcement of existing laws and enhanced border security. Additionally, in 2009, Jordan co-sponsored the "Birthright Citizenship Act," aiming to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to restrict automatic citizenship to children born in the U.S.

only if at least one parent is a U.S. citizen, lawful permanent resident, or active member of the U.S. Armed Forces.

## 3.3. THE DEMOCRATIC PERSPECTIVE

The list below represents the current major democratic beliefs on *Immigration Reform*:

- a) Pathway to Citizenship.
- b) Focus on Humanitarian Issues.
- c) Opposition to Mass Deportation.
- d) Support for Legal Immigration Expansion.
- e) Border Security with Compassion.

Throughout sections 3.3.1 to 3.3.3, some important individuals from the Democratic party will be presented.

### 3.3.1. Hakeem Jeffries



Born in New York, 1970 and elected in 2023 as the House Minority Leader, Hakeem Jeffries became the first African American to lead a major party in either chamber of Congress. He advocates for comprehensive immigration reform, emphasizing the need for a pathway to citizenship for undocumented individuals. He has expressed support for farm workers, essential workers, asylum seekers, and undocumented individuals, highlighting the importance of addressing immigration issues for the integrity of democracy.

### 3.3.2. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez



Born in 1989, in New York, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, often referred to by her initials AOC, is the daughter of a Puerto Rican mother and a Bronx-born father. She advocates for comprehensive immigration reform, emphasizing the need for humane and just policies. Additionally, she has been a prominent figure in the "Abolish ICE" movement, criticizing the agency's practices and calling for its dissolution. In a 2018 interview during her congressional primary race, she described ICE as a "product of the Bush-era Patriot Act suite of legislation" and expressed concern over its increasingly paramilitary nature.

### 3.3.3. Adam Schiff



Born in 1960, Massachusetts, Adam Schiff has served as a U.S. Representative for California since 2001. He gained national prominence for his role in leading the first impeachment trial of Donald Trump in 2019, and has consistently supported comprehensive immigration reform, emphasizing a balanced approach that combines border security with a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants. In 2006, he voted against the Secure Fence Act, which proposed building a fence along the U.S.-Mexico border, reflecting his stance against purely enforcement-focused immigration policies.

## 4. GUIDING QUESTIONS

Guiding questions are prompts designed to assist deputies, explore key aspects of the topic at hand, and stimulate the flow of ideas. These questions serve as an offset for discussions to develop around in a deeper sense. However, deputies are not required to strictly follow the questions presented below and are free to develop the topic assigned according to their will, arguments, and perspectives.

1. What economic factors are associated with immigration reform?
2. What are the arguments for increasing border security, and how do proponents of reform balance these with the need for humane treatment of migrants?



3. What legal pathways for immigration are currently available, and how would proposed reforms alter these pathways?

## 5. REFERENCES

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## 6. APPENDIX

This appendix will be composed of a Bill sample for delegates to follow when writing resolutions:

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# A BILL

To amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for the coordination of programs to prevent and treat obesity, and for other purposes.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

### **SECTION 1. Short title.**

This Act may be cited as the “Treat and Reduce Obesity Act of 2021”.

### **SEC. 2. Findings.**

Congress makes the following findings:

(1) According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, about 41 percent of adults aged 60 and over had obesity in the period of 2015 through 2016, representing more than 27 million people.

(2) The National Institutes of Health has reported that obesity and overweight are now the second leading cause of death nationally, with an estimated 300,000 deaths a year attributed to the epidemic.

(3) Obesity increases the risk for chronic diseases and conditions, including high blood pressure, heart disease, certain cancers, arthritis, mental illness, lipid disorders, sleep apnea, and type 2 diabetes.

(4) More than half of Medicare beneficiaries are treated for 5 or more chronic conditions per year. The rate of obesity among Medicare beneficiaries doubled from 1987 to 2002 and nearly doubled again by 2016, with Medicare spending on individuals with obesity during that time rising proportionately to reach \$50 billion in 2014.

(5) Men and women with obesity at age 65 have decreased life expectancy of 1.6 years for men and 1.4 years for women.

(6) The direct and indirect cost of obesity was more than \$427.8 billion in 2014 and is growing.

(7) On average, a Medicare beneficiary with obesity costs \$2,018 (in 2019 dollars) more than a healthy-weight beneficiary.

(8) The prevalence of obesity among older individuals in the United States is growing at a linear rate and, if nothing changes, nearly one in two (47 percent) Medicare beneficiaries aged 65 and over will have obesity in 2030, up from slightly more than one in four (28 percent) in 2010.

### **SEC. 3. Grant Program.**

(a) Establishment: The Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) shall establish a grant program to provide funding to eligible entities for obesity prevention and treatment programs.

(b) Funding:

1. \$100 million shall be authorized for each fiscal year from 2025 to 2030 to support these grants.
2. Grants may be used for initiatives that include but are not limited to:
  - (i) Nutrition education programs in schools.
  - (ii) Community gardens and farmers' markets to increase access to fresh produce.
  - (iii) Physical activity programs that provide safe spaces for exercise.

### **SEC. 4. Training and Education.**

(a) The Secretary shall allocate funds to train healthcare professionals on identifying, treating, and preventing obesity through evidence-based practices.

(b) The Secretary shall develop educational materials aimed at promoting healthy eating habits and physical activity, which will be distributed to schools and community organizations.

### **SEC. 5. Reporting Requirements.**

(a) The Secretary shall submit an annual report to Congress detailing:

1. The effectiveness of funded programs in reducing obesity rates.
2. Recommendations for future initiatives based on program outcomes.

**SEC 6. EFFECTIVE DATE.**

This Act shall take effect on January 1, 2026. This example outlines a comprehensive approach to combating obesity through grants, training, education, and reporting requirements. It emphasizes community involvement and aims to create a supportive environment for healthy living.