



## **PRESIDENT OBAMA, YES YOU CAN!**

*How the President Can Take Executive Action –  
with the Stroke of a Pen –  
to Bring Some Reason and Fairness to Our Immigration System*

### **The President has long been an eloquent supporter of immigration reform, when he was on the campaign trail:**

*"The American people want fairness, want justice. They recognize that the idea that you're going to deport 12 million people is ridiculous, that we're not going to be devoting all our law enforcement resources to sending people back. But what they do also want is some order to the process. We're not going to be able to do these things in isolation."*

[2008 Democratic debate at University of Texas in Austin](#)

*"When communities are terrorized by ICE immigration raids, when nursing mothers are torn from their babies, when children come home from school to find their parents missing, when people are detained without access to legal counsel, when all that is happening, the system just isn't working and we need to change it."*

[2008 campaign appearance at National Conference of La Raza conference](#)

### **And now, as President:**

*"Everybody recognizes the system is broken. The question is, will we finally summon the political will to do something about it?..."*

*"Today, there are an estimated 11 million undocumented immigrants here in the United States.... Regardless of how they came, the overwhelming majority of these folks are just trying to earn a living and provide for their families."*

*"I don't believe the United States of America should be in the business of separating families. That's not right. That's not who we are. We can do better than that."*

Excerpts [from President Obama's remarks on immigration](#), May 10, 2011, in El Paso, TX

### **But his administration's actions tell a different reality on the ground, one in which "all the burdens of a broken system" are imposed "on immigrant families":**

- Deportations are at a record high: nearly 400,000 a year for each of the last two years, higher than during the Bush administration or any previous administration.
- More than half of those deported had no criminal record, even though the administration claims it is targeting dangerous individuals.
- Federal programs that turn local police into immigration agents are expanding rapidly.

**'With the Stroke of a Pen' is a campaign of THE NEW YORK IMMIGRATION COALITION**  
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- Some 400,000 individuals are detained annually while they await a decision on their cases, and 80% of them have no access to counsel.
- Home, worksite, and public transportation raids continue, with ethnic and racial profiling on the rise.

**In short, our nation is facing a deportation crisis.**

**The President maintains that he needs Congress to fix our broken immigration system:**

*“And sometimes when I talk to immigration advocates, they wish I could just bypass Congress and change the law myself. But that’s not how a democracy works. What we really need to do is to keep up the fight to pass genuine, comprehensive reform. That is the ultimate solution to this problem. That’s what I’m committed to doing.”*

**He’s right**—comprehensive reform passed by the Congress and signed into law by the President is the *ultimate* solution. But it’s not the *only* one. While the President can’t fix the immigration system alone, he can begin to undo some of the damage his own administration has caused. He can take executive action— **with the stroke of a pen** -- to put an end to the senseless deportations of hard-working immigrants, the very folks he says should be allowed a chance to come out of the shadows.

### ***Six Steps the President Can Take to Begin to Undo Some of the Damage Caused by our Broken Immigration System***

- The President can **halt the deportation of students** who would be eligible to earn legal status under the DREAM Act and other immigrants currently facing deportation whose removal from the country is not in the public interest.
- The President can **end Secure Communities** and similar programs that erode community policing by co-opting local law enforcement officers as immigration agents.
- The President can allow immigrants currently in the U.S. to **complete the process of becoming legal residents here in the United States**; forcing them to go to their home country to obtain the visa for which they are eligible often results in a ten-year bar to re-entry.
- The President can direct the Department of Homeland Security to **consider individual circumstances and use discretion** at every step of the immigration enforcement process—from the point of apprehension to detention and deportation.
- The President can require that immigration detention is used only after the Department of Homeland Security establishes its necessity and that **alternatives to detention** are expanded nationwide.
- The President can focus workplace immigration **enforcement on exploitive employers** who flout our labor laws and profit from our broken immigration system.

**Join us in our campaign to get the President to move our nation, *with the stroke of a pen*, toward a fairer, smarter immigration system: [www.pencampaign.com](http://www.pencampaign.com)**

**YES HE CAN!**

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