

# Immigration and Homeland Security in the US

## Abstract :

The contradictory provisions of organizations striving to establish national security in the United States of America and the needs for attracting highly qualified immigrants serve as the essence of the ongoing debate. It is established that these requirements are readjusted following laws and specific executive orders. The former is the framework for all solutions to the emerging challenges related to these two aspects, whereas the latter expresses particular views of presidents on the appropriateness of measures. In this context, the political course of Donald Trump and Joe Biden is discussed to demonstrate the two extremes: imposing restrictions and facilitating immigration for boosting the economy. These options are considered suitable if they can be readjusted depending on the conditions of the external environment in a flexible manner.

The analysis of the specified challenge allows making recommendations on how to effectively find a balance between national security and immigration in the United States. First, it is suggested to distinguish between different categories of newcomers to properly assess the benefits they might bring. Second, supporting various types of documents and visas for the described decision is critical to avoid adversities related to the possibility of terrorism or committing crimes. Third, the respect for liberties for all American residents regardless of their legal status alongside eliminating the risks of profiling leads to improvements in the environment. These ideas are underpinned by biblical wisdom, according to which fair treatment of all individuals is vital for everyone's prosperity. This statement is complemented by the Christian perspective on the reasonability of viewing God's providence as one of the principal factors contributing to immigration in the country.

*Keywords:* national security, immigration system, Christian perspective, conflicting political decisions.

## Introduction

The challenge of ensuring the safety of all citizens in the United States of America is a multi-faceted problem complicated by the accompanying risks for newcomers. These obstacles are linked to the interrelation between the task of guaranteeing

homeland security and the need for attracting highly qualified specialists to the country. From this perspective, establishing a balance between the above fields is required; meanwhile, it is almost impossible to achieve in practice. The reasons for this failure are usually connected to the rapidly evolving environment in which the authorities act for the benefit of all individuals and the lack of agreement among them. Therefore, homeland security can be promoted only if the adopted measures are uniform and do not change following single opinions of political leaders while effectively addressing the needs of both the country and the newcomers.

## **The Current State of Laws and Executive Orders**

The performance of the described tasks is typically guided by the existing legal provisions, which are used as a framework for the activity of initiators of the corresponding processes. In this case, immigration laws are useful for this purpose regardless of their seeming controversy stemming from the specificities of perceptions at the time of their creation. For instance, there is a variety of acts that are still referred to as the basis for other solutions suggested by the presidents, and they are selected with respect to their personal opinions. Thus, the political course developed by Donald Trump during his term was underpinned by the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, according to which prioritizing different categories of newcomers is the key to homeland security (Kerwin & Warren, 2017). It also correlated with the provisions of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996, which provided for the possibility of enforcing borders due to accessing authorized funding (Kerwin & Warren, 2017). In other words, the imposed restrictions were in compliance with the previously adopted bills that are still used for this objective.

From this perspective, the idea of a national emergency presented by Trump caused harm to the existing immigration system while being characterized by dubious efficiency. It was supported by a number of executive orders, including those allowing for the construction of the wall between the United States and Mexico and supporting the Muslim Ban (Kashyap, 2019). These decisions reflecting the president's concerns were claimed to be rational, and the declaration of a critical situation made on February 15, 2019, helped secure funding for the implementation of these projects (Kashyap, 2019). However, they showed only one aspect of the matter while neglecting the benefits of attracting immigrants to the country.

The opposing perspective on these political shifts in relation to the issue of homeland security was presented by the Biden-Harris administration, and it currently determines the actions of the government in this respect. The president's focus is on the advantages new people might bring to the United States and, more specifically, their value as a workforce (Kerwin et al., 2021). Since the orientation is on improved naturalization and the ongoing integration of immigrants in the country, his actions can also be viewed through the lens of corresponding bills. Hence, the US Citizenship Act corresponds to his activity alongside the ideas included in the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, such as the legalization of hiring employees from abroad (Kerwin et al., 2021; Kerwin & Warren, 2017). In contrast to Trump's strategies concerning limitations, Biden's approach, which is more friendly to foreigners, does not mean that the president neglects the considerations of the safety of Americans.

Thus, Biden's administration elaborated different executive orders addressing this aspect. In this area, the solutions were clearly determining what kind of people are suitable for immigration and what conditions should be followed during employment (Kerwin et al., 2021). Another statement prepared by the president was the claim of foreigners' economic contributions and other benefits of their participation in the life of communities (Kerwin et al., 2021). These actions seem effective; nevertheless, additional mechanisms for ensuring homeland security seem necessary. Apparently, the conducted work on eliminating discrimination is clearly advantageous, and religious tolerance emphasized in these documents correlates with the Christian perspective of fairness ("Exodus 12:49," n.d.). When complemented by the introduction of more detailed criteria rather than background and language mastery, it will be more positive than Trump's past suggestions.

## **The Impact of Legal Provisions on Homeland Security**

The legal provisions described above present two extremes, and their impact on homeland security varies accordingly. Thus, the primary focus on developing limitations regardless of their actual feasibility and applicability to the country's needs concerning qualified workforce has a predominantly economic influence (Kashyap, 2019). For instance, the absence of specialists in any field critical for the overall well-being of American citizens, such as healthcare, inevitably results in the worsening of their living standards. In this situation, the promotion of restrictive policies in terms of immigration allegedly harms everyone, both current residents

and newcomers, who can thereby potentially improve their position in the workplace (Kerwin, 2018). Consequently, the concerns related to the safety of individuals in the country contradict the expected outcomes of such policies and do not contribute to people's positive reactions to these shifts.

In contrast to this stance, the ideas of eliminating obstacles for immigrants while emphasizing the need for their proper assessments regarding the suitability to the needs of the United States undoubtedly affect public sentiment. They add to the respect for American democracy, which was frequently violated by specific legal provisions related to foreigners throughout history (Kerwin & Warren, 2017). In addition, the economy significantly benefits from the involvement of new specialists, which is especially vital in the context of rapidly evolving market conditions. They lead to the emergence of the requirement to possess specific skills and abilities for higher profits, and attracting immigrants for this purpose is a more favorable solution from the perspective of the collective good (Kerwin & Warren, 2017). As a result, the government obtains more resources for establishing homeland security for its citizens. Thus, the initiative in distinguishing between the potential terrorists and individuals useful for society is better performed with regard to evaluating particular characteristics and acting accordingly while being properly funded.

## **Options for Guaranteeing Homeland Security**

Considering the above factors, it is feasible to discuss options that are most applicable to maintaining a balance between people's needs and their safety as it is supposed to be guaranteed by the government. The specified approaches to this task are reported to have varying degrees of effectiveness; however, despite the alleged benefits of measures preferred by Biden, it is impossible to claim their appropriateness to any case. Thus, for example, the idea of fair treatment correlating the Bible's provisions and advantages for different areas of societal life might not be optimal during actual crises. In this situation, careful examination of external circumstances for revealing actual threats is desirable. Meanwhile, the perceived hazards should not substitute rational methods, as it happened during Trump's presidency, as no evidence of the need to build the border wall was presented other than generalized assumptions.

The selection of a proper political course in this respect implies shifting between the described options while referring to the main direction for ensuring homeland

security. According to the national strategy based on the necessity to prevent terrorism in the United States, the key factors include the efficiency of one or another solution to the predetermined targets (Homeland Security Council, 2007). These directions are disrupting the potential attacks, protecting the available resources, and promoting recovery from adverse events of this nature alongside the orientation of the lasting effects of the adopted measures (Homeland Security Council, 2007). In other words, fair treatment should be the main focus of policymakers, excluding cases of the confirmed risks, which should not be erroneously perceived as discrimination against specific population groups.

## **The Suggested Changes in the Policies and Alternatives**

The proposed flexible way of managing the needs of citizens regarding their security and the economic benefits of immigration can be substituted or complemented by a number of alternatives to the solutions described above. They include the idea of fixing the current system, which is referred to by scholars as broken, by distinguishing between different categories of newcomers and presenting a uniform approach to the problem for all states (Kerwin & Warren, 2017). In the former case, the possibility of achieving a consensus on the political course corresponds to the feasibility of clarifying the nature of a person's permission to stay in the country. In other words, undocumented immigrants should not be treated in a similar manner as refugees or asylum seekers (Kerwin & Warren, 2017). The intention to examine their situations on an individual basis complies with the security needs and, therefore, should be respected.

As for the introduction of the same measures in all states, this necessity is conditional upon the lack of cooperation between them, leading to the dubious efficiency of immigration policies. The failure to respect this condition, as follows from Trump's course on family separation when entering the country at a port different from that claimed in applications, has a tremendous impact on people's well-being (Kashyap, 2019). What is more important, the absence of a mechanism addressing their psychological trauma explains the need for better cooperation (Kashyap, 2019). From this standpoint, an alternative of humane treatment of all people regardless of the states' vulnerability of strengths seems critical for avoiding the mentioned negative outcomes (Kerwin & Warren, 2017). Also, this idea does

not pose a threat to homeland security since the affected persons are to be subject to the same procedures upon arrival.

The additional changes in immigration legislation and practices stemming from it are paying particular attention to documents and highlighting the fact that liberties available to American citizens are equally attributed to newcomers. The former recommendation is vital for revealing the contributions of foreigners to different aspects of societal life. For instance, distinguishing between family-based visas and those of individuals is critical as their importance for the United States varies depending on their occupations (Kerwin & Warren, 2017). Therefore, it is not advisable to apply the same requirements for minors and potential employees in companies throughout the country, and their documents should not be viewed as comparable (Jiang & Erez, 2018). In this situation, the only necessity is to provide for analysis of those events when visas do not comply with any regulations, implying the likelihood of committing crimes.

Moreover, the need for claiming access to liberties provided by the citizenship of the United States since the arrival of immigrants is crucial for avoiding discrimination. This phenomenon is previously discussed by Kashyar (2019) when investigating the situation of Muslim men, implying the presence of profiling. It is also confirmed by the requirement of establishing easier procedures when no direct threat is expressed in the assessment conducted by Kerwin and Warren (2017). The attention of researchers to the matter means that it is crucial for addressing both individual and public needs while balancing between safety and opportunities provided to everyone regardless of personal characteristics.

## **Christian Perspective on Appropriateness of Practices**

The discussed challenges in finding a compromise between the intention to protect citizens from terrorism and ensure that everyone is treated in a fair manner within the existing immigration system correlate with the Christian perspective. Thus, they can be viewed through the lens of the biblical wisdom applicable to the case. One of the principles that should be respected when approaching the problem is expressed in Exodus 12:49 (n.d.), and it states that “the same law shall apply to the native as to the stranger who resides among you.” This stance means that it is important to remember that all people are equal regardless of their origin. In other words, one’s background should not be viewed as a threat in the absence of other circumstances serving as opposing evidence.

In addition, homeland security affecting the state of the current immigration system in the United States should be organized with respect for the necessity to take into consideration external circumstances related to God's providence. As it is written in Genesis 12:1 (n.d.), "Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country, And from your relatives And from your father's house, To the land which I will show you." It means that people's personal plans are not always the key motivation in moving to the country. This intention can be guided by higher forces, and contradicting them correlates with neglecting the design of events that are to happen for everyone's benefit. In this way, the considerations of safety should not prevent individuals from fulfilling their mission in life.