

## **U.S. rewrites the rules of immigration**

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### **Body**

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Depending on who was let in or kept out, reaction to this weekend's announcement by the Clinton administration of new **immigration rules** ranged from fury to relief.

The **rules**, announced Friday, grant deportable Salvadorans a temporary reprieve, allow a few Cuban refugees to enter the USA, and deny automatic work permits to new political asylum applicants.

-- Salvadorans had expected temporary protected status for an estimated 190,000 refugees to be terminated Dec. 31 by President Clinton. They were relieved that no mass deportations are planned and that their work permits will be good for nine months while they seek permanent legal status.

"Salvadorans can have a very happy Christmas with their families without having to worry about losing their jobs on Jan. 1," says Ambassador Ana Cristina Sol.

-- Advocates for Cubans were furious that Clinton will continue to deny entry to an estimated 32,000 Cuban refugees held at military bases in Panama and Guantanamo Bay.

"It's an erroneous policy," says Fernando Rojas, spokesman for the Cuban American National Foundation, a major Cuban exile group that has pushed to admit all Cubans.

**Immigration** authorities will admit only some of the estimated 3,000 children and their families who are too sick or disabled to remain in the refugee camps.

"(But) only families for whom there is full financial sponsorship in the **U.S.** will be (allowed entry)" said Attorney General Janet Reno.

-- Advocates for asylum applicants expressed cautious approval of new **rules** to speed up the asylum system, curb abuses and reduce the 425,000-case backlog. They applauded the decision to drop a proposed \$ 130 application fee.

But a new **rule** that would require applicants to wait six months to get a work permit was called "heartless" by the American **Immigration** Lawyers Association. The old **rules** issued permits after 90 days.

Doris Meissner, commissioner of the **Immigration** and Naturalization Service, said easy access to work permits was one of the reasons why the old system had been paralyzed by a backlog of tens of thousands of spurious asylum claims.

"Asylum can't be an unofficial avenue for **immigration** or a back door to get around **immigration** controls," she said.

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Republican skeptics want even tougher **rules**: "Reform is long overdue, but there seems to be a continuing gulf between the administration's words and its actions," says Rep. Lamar Smith, R-Texas, a leading candidate to chair the House **immigration** subcommittee next year.

Meanwhile, Hispanic activists from 11 states met in Tucson Sunday to lay groundwork for what they called "the next great civil rights movement" - against anti-immigrant sentiment and laws like California's Proposition 187, which denies government services to illegals. The group wants to boycott California and businesses that support 187, and hopes to organize a 1996 march on Washington, D.C.

"What 187 has done with a reactionary society is to galvanize people in other states," said Kevin Alejandro de Leon, an organizer from east Los Angeles.

Seeking asylum Requests for asylum grew 39% from fiscal years 1992 to 1993. Requests filed:

'93 144,166

## Notes

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THE NATION; See info box at end of text.

## Graphic

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GRAPHIC, b/w, Nick Galifianakis, USA TODAY, Source: 1993 Statistical Yearbook of the **Immigration** and Naturalization Service (Line graph); PHOTO, b/w, John Miller, AP

## Classification

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**Industry:** LAWYERS (75%)

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**Person:** BILL CLINTON (78%); LAMAR SMITH (56%)

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