



US SENATE

PACMUN 2016

Vice-President: Blake Hirst





PACIFIC MODEL UNITED NATIONS

UNITED STATES SENATE

Senators,

My name is Blake Hirst, and I'll be your Vice-President for this 2016 PACMUN US Senate session (As well as a secretariat member for the conference as a whole). I'm beyond excited for this committee, because it's one that is new to PACMUN, and isn't seen at very many other MUN conferences. Debating in a non-traditional format, discussing issues of national importance will be a unique experience that I hope all delegates will enjoy! Each member of this committee will represent an actual Senator, however due to the constraints of capacity and practicality, only 50 senators will be represented, one from each state. In choosing which senators to include, we have taken into account several factors such as leadership positions within the Senate, seniority, and in some cases, who would be more fun to represent at the conference!

In the US Senate, we will be debating two major issues that are controversial and divisive in many ways. The first issue discussed is immigration. Immigration has been a hotly debated issue in the United States for the past 150 years, with today's unique concerns revolving around illegal immigration, and terrorist organizations. The second issue being discussed will be the Islamic State (ISIS). Since 2013, finding ways to deal with ISIS have been hotly contested topics. With no obvious path to defeating this terror organization, looking for solutions will be a tough, but important task for the US Senate this year.

Seeing as 2016 is a major election year, this committee session will be playing out as though it will be taking place before the November 8th elections. We are doing this in order to avoid being in a lame duck session (times in the Senate where little to no work gets done due to the fact that many senators now know they will be leaving office in January) and to make debate as invigorating as possible. For example, if your senator loses election in 2016, continue debate as though the election has yet to happen and you don't know the results.

Since this is a new committee, I know that you will likely have a lot of questions as to how this committee will run, and how we will format everything, so if you have any burning questions feel free to reach out to me, but if not, I promise everything will be explained before we begin debate. In order to prepare, I would recommend you read the Senate's rules of order to get an idea of what we are basing ours off of. That being said, I can't wait to meet all of you, and hear what unique perspectives you have, and what solutions you come up with to tackle these important issues!

Regards,

Blake Hirst

Vice-President | United States Senate

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Committee Intro	3
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TOPIC ONE: IMMIGRATION

Topic Introduction	5
History	6
Past Action	7
Current Situation	8
Bloc Positions	9
Guiding Questions	9

TOPIC TWO: ISIS

Topic Introduction	11
History	12
Past Action	13
Current Situation	13
Bloc Positions	14
Guiding Questions	15
Sources	15

TOPIC 1

IMMIGRATION

TOPIC INTRO

Immigration, defined as the act of moving to a new land or nation, is certainly not a new phenomenon. Immigration has always been a cornerstone of human nature since the beginning of recorded history. From settling the first oceanic islands, to connecting eastern and western hemispheres in the 15th century, humans are constantly on the move. This trend carried over with the formation of the United States as well. From the first American colonists to 20th century northern Europeans coming through Ellis Island, immigration is what formed the United States. The issue of immigration today is multifaceted, and more complicated than it may seem.

Especially as of late, opinions of the American public towards older immigration groups, having come in large numbers to the United States over one hundred years ago, have been largely positive (Italians, Poles, Irish), while the attitude of Americans towards newer immigrant groups, coming into the United States in the largest amounts currently (Mexicans, Filipinos), have been largely negative. This xenophobia has been a persistent theme in the United States since as early as the 1880s and has reflected to US Congressional actions such as setting immigration quotas based on racial hierarchies (1924 to 1965), and the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, which prohibited immigration of all Chinese laborers. Today, many Americans are weary of mainly two groups. The first being immigrants from the Middle-East. Since the 9/11 terrorist attacks, and US military involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan, many Americans have profiled Muslim-Americans and Muslim Immigrants negatively, even causing some to call for the banning of the admittance of all Muslim immigrants. Recognizing the threat of Middle Eastern terror groups, other Americans, and several Senators, have proposed implementing strong background checks on immigrants trying to come to the United States. The second of these groups are Mexican-Americans. In 2014 alone, an estimated 11.1 Million illegal immigrants came to the United States, with the majority coming from Mexico, and from the southern border. While some, including Presidential Candidate Donald Trump, have proposed building a wall to keep illegal immigrants from entering the country illegally, others have criticized this as expensive and ineffective, suggesting other ideas such as increasing border patrol and working with the Mexican government.

With illegal immigration, another hotly debated topic is a pathway to citizenship. While many liberal and moderate Republicans support giving illegal aliens a path to citizenship, as opposed to being deported, while more conservative Americans support the idea of deporting illegal immigrants on a more wide spread level, and

requiring those illegal immigrants to apply for immigration into the United States and wait their turn.

HISTORY

The issue of immigration in the United States has been one that has played a huge role in defining who we are as a nation. The United States has been shaped by immigrants, however the country's attitude towards different immigrant groups has shifted over time. In the 1880s, when infrastructure construction in the west, and production in the east required cheap labor, Chinese immigrant laborers came to the United States in record numbers; the first large non-European immigration wave. Fearing their way of life was being threatened by this increase of diversity, many Americans advocated for the banning of East Asian immigration, and compelled Congress to pass the Chinese Exclusion Act (Passed in the Senate 29-15, with 32 Senators absent) banning the immigration of all Chinese laborers to the United States. This ban was upheld until the 1940s, when it was finally repealed by Congress, yet sixty years of banning immigration from a specific country set a precedent that Congress could do this again in the future.

Another major piece of Congressional Legislation that aimed to mitigate immigration was the Emergency Quota Act of 1921 (Passed in the Senate 78-1, with 17 Senators absent). The Emergency Quota Act, The Immigration Act of 1917, and The Immigration Act of 1924 all aimed to set quotas on immigration based on national origin, fueled by xenophobic beliefs that foreigners would damage "The American Way", restrictive immigration legislation was popular in the early part of the 20th century. In 1965, Sen. Ted Kennedy proposed the Immigration and Nationality Act (passed in the Senate 76-18, with 6 Senators absent) which removed restrictive quotas based on racial hierarchies, and moved towards a more inclusive immigration policy.

In 1986, The Immigration Reform and Control Act (Passed in the Senate 69-30, with 1 Senator absent) banned the hiring of illegal immigrants, and tried to deter the act of illegal immigration by attempting to reduce the possibility of being successful without entering the nation legally. Many prospective immigrants and Americans felt that this wasn't a realistic solution, since so few immigrants were admitted to the United States annually. Congress responded to these concerns with the passage of The Immigration Act of 1990 (Passed in the Senate 81-17, with 2 Senators not voting), increasing the number of immigrants allowed into the country by 40% annually. While this made a small dent in the problem, illegal immigration was still, and is still, one of the largest issues facing the United States. An estimate 40% of immigrants to the United States are illegal, and with Congress failing to pass major immigration reform legislation (See 2013 "Gang of 8", Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act), this issue won't go away anytime soon, but it's up to the US Senate in this PACMUN 2016 session, to try and find a smart, comprehensive, solution. In addition to illegal immigration, another major problem facing the United

States has been international terrorism. With many Americans now supporting a ban on Middle-Eastern immigration, and the Chinese Exclusion Act providing precedent for banning immigration from a region, Senators will need to address this issue in any proposed solution in the US Senate.

PAST ACTION

IMMIGRATION REFORM AND CONTROL ACT OF 1986

Passed with a 69-30 vote, this 1986 law is the most recent major immigration reform enacted in the US. The law made it illegal to hire illegal immigrants, yet did not provide a pathway to citizenship for low-skill workers (a major liberal ideology) nor adequate funding to secure the US-Mexico border (a major conservative ideology). Congress assumed that the restrictions on employing undocumented immigrants would halt illegal immigration, however the opposite occurred: illegal immigration ballooned from five million in 1986 to an estimated 11.4 million today. Any kind of comprehensive immigration reform will likely involve rewriting this law.

Key sponsors: Sen. Simpson (R-WY), Sen. Mazzoli (D-KY)

BORDER PROTECTION, ANTI-TERRORISM, AND ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION CONTROL ACT OF 2005 AND COMPREHENSIVE IMMIGRATION REFORM ACT OF 2006

The House of Representatives passed the Border Protection, Anti-terrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act of 2005 with a 239-182 vote. (92% Republicans supporting, 82% Democrats opposing) Shortly afterwards, the Senate passed the Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act of 2006 with a 62-36 vote. However, the two bills failed to reach a conference committee, and both were discarded when Congress ended session in 2007. A key stumbling point was the legalization of illegal immigrants currently living in the US. The Senate's 2006 bill provided for the legalization of over 10 million undocumented immigrants, while the House's bill was perceived as being deportation-heavy. This failure to compromise has been a key factor in the increasing polarization of the US's immigration debate.

Key sponsors: Sen. Specter (R-PA), Sen. Hagel (R-NE), Sen. Martinez (R-FL), Sen. McCain (R-AZ), Sen. Kennedy (D-MA), Sen. Graham (R-SC), and Sen. Brownback (R-KS).

BORDER SECURITY, ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY, AND IMMIGRATION MODERNIZATION ACT OF 2013

Colloquially known as the “Gang of Eight” bill, this bi-partisan immigration bill was passed through the Senate with a 68-32 vote in 2013. The bill provided a pathway to citizenship for many undocumented immigrants, strengthened security along the US-Mexico border, and reformed the visa system. However, the House of Representatives refused to hear the bill, with the bill’s amnesty provision being a key sticking point. “Gang of Eight” has been particularly controversial, highlighting the growing divisions within the Republican Party on the issue of immigration.

Key Sponsors: Sen. Rubio (R-FL), Sen. McCain (R-AZ), Sen. Graham (R-SC), Sen. Flake (R-AZ), Sen. Schumer (D-NY), Sen. Bob Menendez (D-NJ), Sen. Bennet (D-CO), Sen. Durbin (D-IL).

CURRENT SITUATION

The United States is the home of 42 million immigrants, 13 percent of the population. 1.3 million migrants crossed the border in 2014. Immigrants in 2014 mainly came from Asia (specifically India, China and the Philippines), although there were many from Mexico and Canada. Immigration has been on a rise since 1970, increasing almost 9 percent between 1970 and 2014. These immigrants all crossed the border legally.

There were an estimated 11 million illegal immigrants to the US in 2014, 52 percent of them coming from Mexico. However, illegal immigrants from other nations have been on a rise as well, rising from 325,000 in 2009 to 5 million in 2014. California, Texas, Florida, New York, New Jersey and Illinois are destinations for almost 60 percent of undocumented immigrants. Around 40 percent of these migrants come to America legally and overstay their visas.

Current immigration laws can make it difficult to become a US citizen. Current policy requires that someone who wants to become a citizen must be a legal permanent resident for 5 years. They then must pass a test, and pay a fee. There are exceptions for spouses of citizens, members of the US Military, and others.

The Obama administration has developed an immigration proposal in recent years. This plan focuses on three main ideas: border security, selective deportation, and giving illegal immigrants an easier path to citizenship. This has encountered backlash from conservatives, who are not in favor of immigration reform. Donald Trump, Republican presidential nominee, supports building a wall between Mexico and the US. He is also opposed to amnesty.

It will be up to Senators to tackle tough immigration issues, such as how to prevent illegal immigration, how to handle our current immigration system, and how to determine who should be allowed to enter the country.

BLOC POSITIONS

REPUBLICAN PLATFORM

Adopted at the 2016 Republican National Convention, the Republican platform takes a very protectionist stance on immigration reform. Mirroring Republican Presidential Nominee Donald Trump's plans, the platform includes walling off the 2,000 mile US-Mexico border. However, the platform stays silent on Trump's plan for mass deportations of illegal immigrants. For the first time in recent Republican Party history, the platform calls for a reduction of legal immigration, arguing that "it is indefensible to continue offering lawful permanent residence to more than one million foreign nationals every year." Additionally, the 2016 platform includes mandatory five-year prison sentences for illegal re-entry, preventing states from issuing licenses to unauthorized immigrants, penalizing states and localities that have adopted "sanctuary city" policies, and recognizing the role of states in immigration enforcement. The ideology of this platform is shared among many conservative Senators.

DEMOCRATIC PLATFORM

After a contentious primary season, the 2016 Democratic National Convention produced a very progressive party platform. Democratic immigration policy focuses very heavily on giving law-abiding illegal immigrants a pathway to legal residence eventually citizenship. The platform also calls for the end of using private prisons for detained immigrants, expanded access to English language classes, and promotion of naturalization. The ideology of this platform is shared among liberal Senators, and several conservative Senators as well.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- How can the Senate craft a bill that can be agreed upon by both the House of Representatives and the President, unlike the Gang of 8 bill?
- Should the United States build a wall at its southern border or increase border patrol funding and resources?
- What possible solutions do you support to screen refugees and immigrants coming from highly war torn regions such as the Middle East?

- Would voters in your state prefer to allow more immigrants into the United States, or set a quota for each country? (As senators, the opinions of the voters are extremely critical)
- What should be done about illegal immigrants living in the United States currently?
- Should sanctuary cities be allowed to exist? Should anchor babies be allowed to keep an illegal family in the country?
- Should immigrants coming into the United States be “Americanized” or should we promote a stronger culture of diversity?

TOPIC 2

ISIS

TOPIC INTRO

The history of ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) or ISIL (Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant) begins with the formation of Al Qaeda. Al Qaeda was formed between 1988 and 1989 in Afghanistan and Pakistan by Osama bin Laden and other radical ideologues. In February of 1989 Osama bin Laden and mujahideen forces defeated Soviet forces in Afghanistan and the Soviets withdrew from the region. This victory inspired the leaders of Al Qaeda into believing that their victory can be replicated around the world. Between 1989 and 2000 Al Qaeda acted on their belief, orchestrating numerous attacks around the world, killing civilians and foreign forces. The actions of Al Qaeda didn't go unnoticed and the International community began looking for the deemed terrorist organization. After Osama bin Laden called for the killing of American Citizens in 1998, a United States grand jury indicted him for his part in the bombing of U.S embassies throughout Africa. On September 11, 2001 Al Qaeda carried out its largest attack to date. They hijacked 4 planes in the United States; one into each tower of the World Trade Center, the third into the side of the pentagon, and after passengers attempted to overcome the hijackers, the fourth crashed into a field in Pennsylvania while the plane was en route to Washington DC. Following the September 11 attacks, the global approach to Al Qaeda and terrorism drastically changed. Most of the United States' allies around the globe pledged to aid in the fight against Al Qaeda.

In October of 2001 the United States and its closest allies invaded Afghanistan and targeted major Taliban and Al Qaeda strongholds. The fight continued until 2003 at which time NATO joined the war. The war in Afghanistan became the longest war in American history and in 2011 United States SEALs targeted and killed Osama bin Laden in Pakistan. Following the death of Osama bin Laden, near the end of 2014 most international forces had withdrawn from Afghanistan, with NATO transferring full security responsibility to the Afghan government on December 28, 2014. The United States maintains a small military force on the ground in Afghanistan today with about 8,500 US service members.

While Al Qaeda predominantly operated out of Afghanistan, the group began leading jihadist insurgency in Iraq in 2004. After the head of the Iraqi branch of Al Qaeda was killed in a 2006 US air strike, he was succeeded by Abu Ayyub Al-Masri. In 2006 Al-Masri announced the creation of the Islamic State of Iraq (ISL). The group continued jihadist insurgency in the region and in 2010 ISL named Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi the leader. In May 2013 the group rebranded as ISIS after the announcement

of their merger with Al Qaeda in Syria. ISIS continues their campaign of terror to date, launching numerous attacks, holding civilians hostage, and threatening global peace everywhere. In February 2014, frustrated with the group's expansion into Syria and their extreme methods, Al Qaeda's leader cut ties with ISIS. In June 2014 ISIS declared a new Islamic Caliphate. US president Barack Obama authorized airstrikes against the group in late 2014. Between 2014 and present day ISIS has increased its operations, seizing territory as frequently as possible and posting violent propaganda videos to the internet. ISIS has also encouraged people all around the world to plan and carry out attacks in the name of their cause.

HISTORY

The United States began intervening in regard to ISIS on September 5, 2014 with John Kerry urging Ministers of the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Canada, Australia, Turkey, Denmark and Italy to support anti-ISIS forces in Iraq and Syria with supplies and air support. The nine countries, including the United States, all agreed to contribute to the cause. One direct way the United States has acted against ISIS is by arming and funding the Kurdish and Iraqi forces. Initially the United States armed the group with small arms, but as time progressed the nation has given the group larger weapons directly such as man portable anti-tank systems. The United States has led efforts with allies countries and NATO to supply the Kurdish and Iraqi forces.

The United States has also acted against ISIS by committing to the Building Partner Capacity (BPC), which aims to help Iraq regain lost territory. The refugee crisis in territories controlled by ISIS has seen a dramatic increase, and subsequently the United States has helped by providing humanitarian aid to affected areas. In August of 2014 the United States deployed 130 military advisers to Northern Iraq and 20 US Marines. The United States has incrementally increased the number of service members on the ground with 4,400 currently deployed in Iraq.

On December 9, 2014 the United States Senate Committee on Foreign Relations authorized US military force against ISIS. Fearing a repeat of the drawn out conflict in Afghanistan, the Senate limited military force to the term of three years, with the requirement that the Administration report to Congress every sixty days. The authorization specifically prohibits the deployment of US combat troops, except in specific situations, such as the protection of US soldiers, or for intelligence operations.

The United States Congress has not passed any legislation to date with direct actions to be taken with regard to ISIS. There have been 7 bills and resolutions introduced by Congress but these have yet to be passed by either chamber. The most recent in the senate is a bill put forth by Sen. Harry Reid titled "Defeat ISIS and Protect and Secure the United States Act of 2015." This bill, like many others has not gone anywhere. The most current resolution put introduced by congress calls on NATO to invoke article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty and conduct a military campaign against

the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria. Elected United States officials have pledged recently to pass legislation to address the growing threat of ISIS.

PAST ACTION

Since it was kickstarted by President Obama in June of 2014, the American-led intervention in Iraq against ISIS has been backed by both the 113th and 114th United States Congresses. The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015 was slated by the 113th congress, and subsequently voted in by the 114th. Each Defense Authorization act has given money to the executive branch for the branch to use as it sees fit. Consequently, the Congress in total has little say on the usage of the money itself, and merely designates the amount of money given and where it's given too. This means the Congress has very little active role in strategic, tactical and operational calls made in the Middle East. However, outside of the budget, the Congress has controlled decisions made in the Levant through foreign relations and the AUMF.

An Authorization for the Use of Military Force (AUMF) was finally officially drafted by Obama in February for the fight against ISIS. Although not illegal, previously the United States was still using the AUMF issued in 2001 just days after the 9/11 attack. However, Congress refused to vote on the draft, with many GOP leaders calling it too restrictive fearing that it would remain in place for the next President and continue to restrict the usage of ground troops for many years in the future. Democrats, on the other hand, largely supported the bill because of its ability to restrict the enemies that Commander-in-Chief can attack or break relations with, effectively narrowing the lense of the American Military to a few specific enemies. This would've closed the window for Republicans to strongarm both Saudi Arabia and Russia. This AUMF was swept under the table by the Republican dominated Senate, and the Commander-in-Chief continues to use older authorizations that allow Obama constitutionality on strikes basically anywhere in the Levant. Even with these powers, he remains largely focused in the north where ISIS has taken root.

CURRENT SITUATION

The self-described Islamic State is a militant jihadist group of fundamentalist Muslims in Iraq and Syria. ISIS (Islamic state of Iraq and Syria) has been in existence since the early 2000s, but began to gain large scale American media attention around 2013. ISIS currently holds territory in Iraq and Syria, and plans to establish a caliphate and a "truly Islamic state." One action committed by ISIS that helped them get media attention is beheadings. ISIS has, on multiple occasions, captured civilians as well as soldiers and beheaded them, filming the event and publishing them on social media. Several of these hostages have been American citizens.

Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi is the current caliph of ISIS, and people all around the world swear allegiance to him. ISIS has influenced terrorist attacks in many areas, including the Paris attack of December 2015, the shooting in San Bernardino, California, and the attack at the Ataturk International Airport in Istanbul. People who are in support of ISIS have been shown to attempt to travel to the Levant to join the fight. “Jihadi John,” an ISIS member seen in many of their beheading videos, is suspected of being a British national.

The US has been opposed to deploying ground troops to combat ISIS. They have, however, conducted many air strikes against Islamic State targets. These air strikes have been conducted since 2015, and a new offensive was launched in August of 2016 against military infrastructure. The Obama administration has also publicly considered arming Kurdish rebels to fight against the militants.

The regime of Assad is a point of contention between the US and Russia, another country in the fight against the Islamic state. Russia has warned the US against attempting to topple the Assad regime, which the US opposes.

BLOC POSITIONS

In this instance, party lines do a decent job splitting the approaches to tackling ISIS, and by extension the stabilization of the Middle East. Establishment Democrats closely parallel President Obama’s position on most major security issues, including ISIS. As established by the National Convention in 2016, the Democratic Party refreshes its longtime support of Israel, and by extension the arming of rebels to fight ISIS forces. Through stabilizing the Israeli-Palestine conflict, they hope to create a peace so they together can focus on fighting ISIS. In addition to this, establishment Democrats are willing to accept future influence of Moscow in Syria, and are looking therefore to create stronger bonds with Russia and Saudi Arabia in hopes of ending the civil war in Syria and closing the power gap ISIS is feeding on.

Establishment Republicans hold a stronger line policy against turbulence in the Middle East. They’ve consistently called for stronger tactics, including more air strikes, a no-fly zone in Syria, discarding the Iran nuclear deal, and stricter sanctions against Russia. They encourage working with either Saudi Arabia or Russia, with the hope that once the conflict settles down the United States will remain the largest foreign influence on the government.

Included with Establishment Republicans are Senators such as Lindsey Graham (R-SC) and John McCain (R-AZ), who have recently been pushing for an AUMF that allows the executive branch to do whatever it deems necessary to deal with ISIS. However, many argue that with previously based authorizations, the Commander-in-Chief has been dealing with the ISIS situation as he sees fit and will most likely continue to do so regardless of what AUMF is passed. Democrats, on the other hand, have, been calling for an AUMF to limit some of the powers that the president has, in

an attempt to narrow their enemy window to specifically ISIS, al Qaeda and the Taliban. Doing so would shut the Republican window to close relations with Russia and Saudi Arabia.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- Should the United States Senate offer an AUMF to the executive branch for the purpose of defeating ISIS?
- What is the most US intervention you're willing to support in the Levant?
- Should the Iran deal be strengthened, left the same, or scrapped? Could Iran be a partner in defeating ISIS?
- Should we increase our sanctions against Russia? Or work with them to help the situation in the Middle East?
- Is there a diplomatic option the United States should be willing to support in order to help stabilize the Middle East?
- Should Congress play a bigger role in determining how the United States handles ISIS and foreign intervention?
- How important is it to utilize our allies in the Middle East to help stop ISIS from strengthening?

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TOPIC 1

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