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Advocates applaud Biden admin's revival of task force focusing on immigrant inclusion



by Gabe Ortiz
Daily Kos Staff

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President Joe Biden

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The Biden administration **has begun reviving** the Task Force on New Americans, a welcoming initiative that fell to the wayside under the nativist policies of the previous administration. President Biden **signed an executive order** last year reconvening the task force, which, during its existence, focused on helping immigrants onto a path to legal status with skills development and linguistic education, among several actions.

"We know that building an inclusive and cohesive America is work that requires a deliberate investment from all sectors, including the federal government," **said** Nicole Melaku, executive director of the National Partnership for New Americans. "Recognizing the importance of immigrant inclusion in harnessing the talents of America and fostering economically and socially vibrant communities is pivotal to the success of the Biden and any administration."

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"A version of the task force had been in existence off and on under former **President Barack Obama** before it lapsed under the Trump administration," the Associated Press (AP) **reported**. Following President Biden's executive order, he **met with members of Congress** and **met with the White House** for a briefing on the task force.

"The Biden administration's **approach to immigration**—or more specifically immigrants—is more welcoming; the president has said many times that he feels they enrich the United States and make the nation stronger," the AP reported. (It's also true that some of the asylum policies of the administration **have also been openly hostile**, mirroring those of the previous administration.) "According to the White House, the task force will look at existing integration policies and programs and work to sharpen them and identify new key areas of need."

The administration's **whole-of-government naturalization push** for eligible immigrants has been among a slew of government and nongovernmental initiatives that resulted in historic numbers during the past fiscal year, **when more than 967,000 immigrants became Americans on paper.**

That was one of *the* highest rates in U.S. history, with only 1996 and 2008 ranking higher. As many as 10 million were eligible for U.S. citizenship as of last year, but have been stifled by factors including high application fees and language barriers.

In addition to aiding immigrants with workforce training and language skills, the task force will also focus on "education and financial access," as well as "the health of immigrants who have green cards and other types of legal status, according to the White House," the AP continued. A statement **said** that the task force "will build on the work that was undertaken by a similar Task Force established in 2014 under the Obama-Biden Administration, which helped jumpstart integration efforts across the Federal Government and at the State and local levels."

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Incredibly encouraged to see this morning's announcement! It's such an important step forward for [#immigrant](#) & [#refugee](#) communities & advocates. Looking forward to the important work that lies ahead.

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The initiative's return was welcomed by immigration advocates and policy experts, like the American Immigration Council. "The Lab is encouraged by the Biden administration's reinstatement of the Task Force on New Americans and we look forward to supporting its work," **tweeted** Refugee Advocacy Lab. The Michigan Immigrant Rights Center **tweeted** that the task

force's reconvening "is a step toward concrete action at the federal level to benefit immigrant communities."

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