

# Draft White House orders would accelerate deportation of low-income immigrants

Eric London  
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According to a *Washington Post* report Tuesday, the White House is preparing two executive orders that dramatically expand the Trump administration's attack on immigrant workers, targeting especially those immigrants, with or without papers, who make use of public services such as food stamps, Medicaid or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.

The newspaper published copies of the two draft executive orders, as well as accompanying memoranda urging Trump to sign the orders.

One draft order pledges to “[i]dentify and remove, as expeditiously as possible, any alien who has become a public charge and is subject to removal.” The order would expand on Trump's threat to prioritize for deportation those undocumented workers who have criminal convictions or have merely been accused of a crime. In effect, receiving federal benefits to which they were legally entitled would be treated as a semi-criminal act, moving recipients up the priority list for deportation.

The memorandum accompanying this draft order, written by White House staffer Andrew Bremberg, argues, “The immigration laws must ensure the United States does not welcome individuals who are likely to become or have become a burden on taxpayers.”

The language of the order suggests that the Trump administration intends to expand the attack on immigrants receiving federal benefits to include those holding legal visas and work permits, or even green cards. It mandates the secretary of the Department of Homeland Security to draft new rules—subject to public comment and review before enactment—under which “any alien” would be “subject to removal” if they have “become a public charge.”

The order goes on to claim that “households headed by aliens are much more likely than those headed by citizens to use Federal means-tested public benefits,” and it requires various federal departments to collect and publish

statistics to prove this charge.

The first draft order would also eliminate the Child Tax Credit for those immigrants without Social Security numbers who still pay taxes, and would also allow the government to “seek reimbursement from all sponsors of immigrants for the costs of Federal means-tested public benefits provided to sponsored immigrants.” In other words, the husbands, wives, children, parents, and employers of immigrants who sponsor an immigrant's petition would be forced to pay for any benefits their relative or employee uses.

The proposed draft sheds light on what the content of the term “extreme vetting” means for those attempting to enter the US. The order also instructs the agencies to “deny admission to any alien who is likely to become a public charge.” Under current immigration law, immigrants must already prove that they have relatives who can house them and ensure they will not become dependent on government programs. While the Obama administration treated this as one factor in whether an immigrant was admissible, the proposed new order would require denial of admission.

A second draft order is aimed at closing employment opportunities for legal immigrants. It calls for a review of all work-related visas and a tightening of employment options for those without work authorization: those who enter the United States on student or tourist visas.

It is already difficult for undocumented workers to acquire work permits. Usually this can be done once an immigrant has filed a petition to adjust their immigration status, to apply for asylum, or to gain immigrant benefits through a spouse or employer, but otherwise such migrants must work in the shadows.

This draft order contains language aimed at presenting the persecution of immigrants as an effort to help American-born workers, and particularly minorities: “The unlawful employment of aliens has had a devastating

impact on the wages and jobs of American workers, especially low-skilled, teenage, and African-American and Hispanic workers.” This is a particularly cynical lie, given Trump’s adamant opposition to increasing the minimum wage and fund programs to assist these more oppressed layers of the working class.

The second order instructs the government to begin “publishing data in a format easy for the public to understand regarding immigration patterns to the United States and a detailed description of the effect of immigration on wages and employment of US workers since FY 2000.” There are detailed instructions for the kinds of statistics to be collected, strongly suggesting that the new administration intends to launch a propaganda campaign scapegoating immigrant workers for the further driving down of living standards as a result of the decline of American capitalism.

The Trump administration hopes to pit workers against one another along racial and national lines. Trump is cynically attempting to convince black workers that their enemy is immigrant workers when he claims that undocumented workers have “a devastating impact” on the wages of “African-American” workers. The same applies to Trump’s appeals to “teenage” workers and “disadvantaged youth.”

By claiming that workers’ benefits and social programs are threatened by immigrants, Trump hopes to channel workers’ anger away from the true source of the attacks on living standards: the corporations and banks that dominate Trump’s cabinet and will dictate the policies of his administration.

Far from generating funds that would be used to help working people, the crackdown on immigrants will come at the expense of the entire working class. A recent report from the American Action Forum found that deporting all undocumented workers would cost between \$400 and \$600 billion. Since Trump also proposes slashing taxes on the wealthy and on corporations, there is no question the working class will foot the bill.

This vast sum will be used to hire an army of lawyers, ICE officers, and to build a network of internment camps to imprison the over 11 million deportees. At a press conference Tuesday of officials of the Department of Homeland Security, the interim head of Immigration and Customs Enforcement confirmed, in response to one reporter’s question, that ICE was looking to greatly expand its detention facilities.

The attacks on access to benefits for immigrants are a warning that the government plans to limit access to

social programs for all workers. Efforts to kick migrants off of social programs are a sign that the administration’s top priority is cutting spending on public benefits, while drastically expanding government spending on war and police-state surveillance.

The release of the two drafts indicates that the Trump administration is planning to intensify its attacks on immigrants. In so doing, Trump has the support of his newly-appointed Department of Homeland Security Secretary John Kelly, who pledged his full support for the already enacted executive orders during Tuesday’s press conference.

“This analysis is long overdue and strongly supported by the department’s career intelligence officials,” the ex-Marine general said. Repeating the lies used to justify every attack on democratic rights over the last 15 years, he said: “We cannot gamble with American lives. I will not gamble with American lives. These orders are a matter of national security.”

These words make the Democratic Party politically responsible for every element of the Trump attack on immigration. The overwhelming majority of Democratic senators voted to confirm Kelly last week, including Bernie Sanders, Tim Kaine, Charles Schumer and Al Franken. This exposes the fraud of the Democrats’ proclamations of support for immigrants. It was Democratic President Barack Obama who deported 2.5 million immigrants and who bombed or imposed sanctions on each of the seven countries listed in Trump’s Muslim ban.

The Democratic Party is responsible for passing the laws cited in Trump’s executive orders. The Democrats provided the necessary votes for the passage of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996, which was signed by President Bill Clinton, and for the Secure Fence Act of 2006, which was supported by then-senators Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton, Joseph Biden and Charles Schumer. The opposition to Trump must be built on the basis of a turn to the working class, the class which produces all of society’s wealth and shares common interests across national boundaries.



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