

Trump White House declares war on immigrants

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The Trump White House sent a document to Congress Sunday night outlining its demands on immigration policy, calling for a further build-up of the federal police agencies that target undocumented immigrants, a legal witch-hunt against cities and states that are reluctant to cooperate in mass arrests and detentions, and a sharp reduction in legal immigration as well.

The document was reportedly compiled by Trump's fascistic policy adviser Stephen Miller and Attorney General Jeff Sessions, based on input from federal agencies like the Department of Homeland Security, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and the Border Patrol, as well as ultra-right anti-immigrant lobbies in Washington.

It follows by two days the issuance of a letter by Tom Homan, acting director of ICE, threatening mass anti-immigrant raids in California neighborhoods and workplaces, in response to the enactment of a state law, signed by the governor Thursday, which makes California a "sanctuary state," limiting cooperation by state and local police with ICE and other federal agencies.

Under the title "Immigration Principles & Policies," the White House document spells out the framework for an American police state, directed initially against immigrants, but with the potential for targeting far broader layers of the working class. It deepens the attack on such longstanding democratic principles as the presumption of innocence, due process, reasonable bail, and the right to an attorney.

The Trump administration calls for attacks on democratic rights in three major areas:

* A crackdown along the US-Mexico border: this involves not only "completing construction of a wall along the southern border of the United States," but changes in processing of undocumented immigrants and refugees to ensure that most refugee claims are denied and most claimants removed from the country quickly. This

includes hiring thousands more immigration judges and prosecutors, increasing the burden of proof for refugees claiming they are fleeing persecution, and expanding the categories of immigrants who will be considered criminals, by including offenses like using a false Social Security number, which would apply to millions of undocumented workers.

* Stepped-up anti-immigrant activity throughout the interior of the United States, partly by greatly expanding ICE through the hiring of an additional 10,000 agents, and partly by mobilizing state and local police to act as the instruments of federal immigration enforcement. This would increase the size of the force devoted to persecuting immigrants into the millions. Local governments that resist such an effort would be targeted for cutoff of federal aid and threatened with legal action to compel them to provide information and manpower.

* A sharp reduction in legal immigration, by revoking the present system which promotes family reunification, allowing US citizens and legal residents to sponsor parents, children, spouses and other close relatives, in favor of an employment-based system that would cater primarily to the needs of high-tech companies seeking skilled workers and agribusiness interests seeking seasonal labor in the fields. The number of refugees permitted to enter the US would also be sharply reduced.

The Trump immigration document is written in the language of right-wing populism, identified with Miller and with departed White House counselor Stephen Bannon. It demonizes immigrants as threats to US national security (i.e., potential terrorists) and as threats to the jobs and living standards of American workers (the document claims that *legal* immigration "has suppressed wages, fueled unemployment and strained federal resources").

This declaration of war against a substantial section of the working class—an estimated 12 million undocumented

workers and an even larger number of legal immigrants, green card holders, refugees and naturalized citizens—is the real face of the Trump administration, the most right-wing and anti-democratic in American history.

The Trump immigration document exposes the role of the Democratic Party in providing political cover for the White House, most notably in the gushing response of Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer and House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi after a meeting with Trump last month to discuss the status of the 800,000 young undocumented immigrants covered by Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA).

Schumer and Pelosi emerged from a White House dinner with Trump declaring that the president was genuinely sympathetic to the plight of these young people, who have grown up in the United States after being brought here by their parents when they were children. They claimed to have at least the broad outlines of a deal that would prevent deportation of “Dreamers,” in return for some strengthening of border security, but not including Trump’s wall.

Since Trump took office—and even before—the Democratic Party has focused its opposition to the new administration on Trump’s alleged collusion with Russia during the 2016 election campaign, not on the monstrous and anti-democratic attacks on immigrants, or the entire range of ultra-right social policies and militarism to which Trump is committed. The main purpose of this campaign has been to pressure Trump to adopt a more hardline policy towards Moscow, both in the Syrian war and more broadly, across eastern Europe and the Baltic.

Since Schumer and Pelosi’s deal with Trump last month to extend the federal budget authorization and the debt ceiling until mid-December, the Democrats have speculated endlessly on a possible move by Trump “to the center,” i.e., to cutting deals with the Democratic minority in Congress on a range of issues, including immigration, trade, corporate tax cuts and infrastructure, where both capitalist parties share a common right-wing agenda.

Now Schumer and Pelosi profess to be “shocked” that the White House has issued a list of draconian immigration policies with no mention of legalization or even leniency toward those covered by DACA—let alone lifting the fear of detention and deportation from the other 11 million undocumented. “We told the President at our meeting that we were open to reasonable border security measures,” they said in a joint statement, “but this list goes so far beyond what is reasonable. This proposal fails to represent any attempt at compromise.”

A cynical fraud! In fact, any agreement between the Democrats and the Trump administration would involve a further assault on immigrant workers, going beyond the measures enacted by the Obama administration, which included mass deportations and the militarization of the US-Mexico border. Moreover, the purpose of the Democrats’ maneuvers with Trump over DACA was not to protect immigrant workers, but to prop-up a crisis-ridden government and prevent what the Democrats above all fear: the independent intervention of the working class.

While the immediate targets of the White House proposal are immigrant workers, the entire working class is in the crosshairs. The Trump administration is seeking to massively escalate the bipartisan assault on health care, public education, and other social services, while overseeing another historic transfer of wealth from the working class to the rich. The scapegoating of immigrant workers is aimed at dividing the working class, while the police-state mechanisms will be used to suppress all domestic opposition.

Whatever their internal differences, including over immigration policy, the Democrats and Republicans are united on this basic class strategy.

The working class must reject the entire reactionary framework. The defense of immigrant workers and fight for the right of everyone to live and work where they choose—a socialist policy of open borders—must be connected to a program that defends the interests of the entire working class. The resources exist to ensure that all workers have the right to a decent job, health care, public education, and a quality retirement, but these rights are not compatible with the capitalist profit system.



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