

**February 1, 2026**

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(AI has been used in this document's preparation. The Legislator's work is required to be finalized.)

## **Work & Live Immigration Reform Act (Proposed)**

### **Section 1. Short Title**

This Act may be cited as the "Work & Live Immigration Reform Act".

### **Section 2. Definitions**

For purposes of this Act:

(a) "Continuous residence" means physical presence in the United States with no single absence exceeding 180 days or total absences exceeding 365 days since the cutoff date, unless for humanitarian, medical, or other compelling reasons approved by USCIS.

(b) "Minor misdemeanor" excludes traffic violations and other non-violent offenses punishable by less than 6 months imprisonment.

### **Section 3. Work&Live Visa Program (Blue Card)**

**Overview:** The Work&Live Visa (Blue Card) offers temporary legal status for eligible undocumented immigrants residing in the U.S. as of December 31, 2024, allowing them to contribute to society while pursuing a path to permanent residency and citizenship. Those who do not wish to apply may self-deport and retain the right to apply for a US visa. In addition, it reforms asylum claims, requires voter ID for federal elections with citizenship verification, requires E-Verify for all workers, and ends sanctuary jurisdictions that obstruct enforcement. The intent is to provide IDs and legal pathways for those who will contribute to our economy, leaving only those who won't and should be deported. It is bipartisan, as it addresses a list of problems that Republicans and Democrats have long sought to solve.

#### **Eligibility Criteria:**

- Must have resided in the U.S. continuously since December 31, 2024, or earlier.
- Must pass a background check, with no felony convictions or aggravated misdemeanors in the U.S. or home country, verified through U.S. and international databases. Waivers may be granted for minor misdemeanors at USCIS discretion, considering factors such as rehabilitation, time elapsed, and family unity.

- Must apply within 6 months of the bill's passage. Applications with a receipt date stamp are valid for up to 1 year during processing.
- Excludes individuals arriving after December 31, 2024, who face immediate deportation.

### **Application Process:**

Applications are submitted to USCIS with required documentation (proof of residency, identity, etc.). A non-refundable application fee of \$500 covers processing costs (waivable/reducible for extreme hardship). Approved applicants receive a Blue Card, granting rights similar to Green Card holders (work authorization, travel permissions) except voting rights and specific deportation conditions.

### **Fines and Financial Requirements:**

- **Standard Fee:** \$10,000 per individual (\$83/month over 10 years).
- **Couples with Children:** \$15,000 per couple (\$125/month over 10 years), with both adults required to qualify. Children can apply for a Blue Card at age 18 and a green card on the same date their parents are eligible.
- **Individuals Over 60:** \$2,500 (\$21/month over 10 years).
- **Long-Term Residents (Pre-2021):** \$5,000 (\$42/month over 10 years) for those residing since 2021 or earlier.
- **Military Service Credit:** \$1,250 credit per year of active U.S. military service.
- **Dreamers (DACA-Eligible):** \$2,500 (\$42/month over 5 years). Those living in the US for over five years can prepay and apply for a green card without waiting. Payment plans are interest-free. The Secretary of Homeland Security shall establish regulations for hardship exemptions (low-income, medical, etc.). Failure to make 6 payments triggers USCIS review; otherwise, deportation may follow after a hearing.

### **Path to Citizenship:**

After 10 years of continuous compliance (including federal tax obligations, with good-cause waivers), Blue Card holders may apply for permanent residency (Green Card). After 5 additional years as permanent residents, individuals may apply for naturalization. Dreamers may apply for permanent residency after 5 years of continuous residence under the Blue Card and, upon approval, may concurrently apply for naturalization if meeting other requirements (English proficiency, civics).

### **Deportation for Non-Compliance:**

Felony convictions result in automatic deportation upon sentence completion. Misdemeanor convictions trigger USCIS review, with deportation possible based on severity.

## Section 4. Asylum Policy Reform

**Overview:** Streamlines asylum processes to reduce border strain while maintaining humanitarian commitments.

**Amendments to INA Section 208(a)(1).** Section 208(a)(1) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1158(a)(1)) is amended—

(1) by striking "may apply for asylum" and inserting "may apply for asylum, subject to the exceptions and limitations in paragraph (3)"; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

**(3) Exceptions and limitations on authority to apply.**

Notwithstanding paragraph (1), an alien shall not be eligible to apply for asylum under this section unless the alien—

(A) has first filed an application for asylum and received a determination of eligibility from a United States consulate or embassy in the alien's country of nationality (or, if stateless, country of last habitual residence) or in a safe third country designated under subsection (a)(2)(A) or by regulation; or

(B) presents, at the time of arrival or application, documented evidence (including identity documents, affidavits, or other verifiable proof) establishing a credible and immediate need for protection that could not reasonably have been presented prior to arrival, as determined by the Secretary of Homeland Security or the Attorney General under regulations.

An alien arriving at a port of entry or crossing the border without meeting the requirements of subparagraph (A) or (B) shall be subject to expedited removal under section 235(b) or detention pending removal, with processing and deportation completed within 30 days absent exceptional circumstances. Credible fear interviews under section 235(b)(1)(B) shall be limited to cases where the alien presents the documentation required under subparagraph (B) and expresses a fear of persecution or torture; otherwise, no such interview shall be required, and the alien shall be removed without further consideration of asylum.

The Secretary of Homeland Security shall expand consular resources abroad, including staffing and processing capacity at United States embassies and consulates, to facilitate pre-arrival asylum applications consistent with this paragraph.

**Conforming amendments.**

(1) Section 208(a)(2) is amended by adding: "(F) Pre-arrival requirement.—Paragraph (1) shall not apply to any alien who fails to comply with the pre-arrival application requirement in paragraph (3)(A)."

(2) Section 235(b)(1) is amended by inserting after subparagraph (B): "(iii) Limitation on credible fear screening.—Notwithstanding clause (ii), no credible fear interview shall be conducted for an alien subject to the exceptions in section 208(a)(3) unless the alien satisfies the documentation threshold in section 208(a)(3)(B)."

## **Section 5. Identification and Voting Reforms**

**Overview:** To enhance election integrity and prevent fraud in federal elections, this section establishes uniform minimum standards for voter identification and citizenship verification, pursuant to Congress's authority under Article I, Section 4 of the Constitution.

### **(a) Voter Identification Requirements for Federal Elections (Effective January 1, 2027)**

(1) In federal elections, no individual shall cast a ballot in person unless presenting valid photo identification issued by a state or federal government, U.S. passport, military ID, or other EAC-approved form (including REAL ID-compliant).

(2) For mail-in/absentee ballots, provide an ID number from such documents, verified against DMV/USCIS/SSA databases.

(3) States shall provide free or low-cost photo ID to eligible U.S. citizens lacking one, upon request and basic eligibility proof. Federal funds authorized hereunder may support this.

(4) Accommodations for hardships (disability, homelessness, etc.), including provisional ballots.

### **(b) Citizenship Verification and Affidavit Requirement**

(1) To register or vote in federal elections, provide documentary proof of U.S. citizenship (passport, birth certificate with photo ID, etc.) or, if unable due to hardship, a signed affidavit under penalty of perjury attesting citizenship/eligibility, verified against federal databases where possible.

(2) Affidavit includes penalties for false statements (fines up to \$10,000, imprisonment, deportation for non-citizens). States establish alternative processes consistent with NVRA.

(3) False attestation/registration/voting by non-citizens triggers prosecution and mandatory deportation.

### **(c) Voter Affidavit**

Voters sign a separate affidavit affirming citizenship and single vote, with penalties for false claims.

### **(d) Implementation**

EAC issues regulations within 180 days. States comply for federal elections; non-compliance may withhold federal funds. No preemption of stricter state rules for non-federal elections.

### **(e) Non-Discrimination and Privacy**

No discrimination based on protected characteristics. Data protected under privacy laws.

## Section 6. Workplace Verification

**Overview:** Strengthens employer compliance to prevent unauthorized employment.

**Policy (Effective 6 months after bill passage for new hires; full compliance for all employees within 18 months after enactment):**

Employers must verify new hires using E-Verify, requiring valid Photo ID (state/federal, passport with visa, Green/Blue Card) and SSN. Existing employees verified within the 18-month period.

Penalties: \$500 per employee first offense, \$5,000 subsequent. Small businesses (under 50 employees) receive a 6-month grace period beyond the 18-month deadline. USCIS/SSA systems upgraded as needed.

## Section 7. Census ID Verification

**Overview:** Results of the Census must accurately show the number of citizens, authorized immigrants, and non-resident immigrants. This will allow a greater understanding of people's status for budget and planning purposes.

(a) The Census Bureau shall request valid ID from adult respondents to verify status categories where possible. Participation remains voluntary under Title 13. Respondents without ID may self-attest via affidavit or other means, subject to verification where feasible.

(b) Categories: U.S. Citizen, Legal Immigrant, Non-Resident (after failed verification/appeal).

(c) Census takers use secure devices for real-time checks against DMV/USCIS/SSA. 30-day fix period for designations. Report in three categories only.

(d) Affidavit under perjury; verification within 30 days; appeals to USCIS with judicial review. Hardship exemptions.

(e) Privacy: Data anonymized, used solely for statistics; protected under Title 13 and Privacy Act. No enforcement use except perjury.

(f) No fines for non-presentation.

## Section 8. Ending Sanctuary Jurisdictions

**(a) Findings.**

Congress finds that:

(1) State and local jurisdictions that limit cooperation with federal immigration enforcement undermine national security, public safety, and the uniform application of federal immigration laws.

(2) Such jurisdictions often restrict information sharing or compliance with immigration detainers issued by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), contrary to the intent of 8 U.S.C. § 1373.

(3) Federal funds should not subsidize jurisdictions that affirmatively obstruct federal law enforcement efforts.

(4) The Work & Live Visa (Blue Card) Program established by this Act creates a clear, self-selecting mechanism to distinguish between law-abiding, hardworking immigrants who wish to contribute to American society through legal work, tax compliance, and pursuit of citizenship, and those who do not qualify, refuse to participate, or pose risks through criminal activity or unwillingness to support themselves.

(5) Sanctuary policies can shield removable non-citizens — including criminal aliens and non-contributors who decline to apply for or maintain legal status under this Act — from federal removal, thereby frustrating the intent of Congress to prioritize deportation of the latter group while protecting and integrating the former.

(6) Protecting criminal aliens and non-contributors in sanctuary jurisdictions endangers law-abiding communities, including both U.S. citizens and eligible immigrant contributors, and misdirects public resources away from supporting productive members of society.

**(b) Definitions.**

(1) "Sanctuary jurisdiction" means any State or political subdivision thereof that has in effect any law, policy, or practice that—

(A) prohibits or restricts any government entity or official from sending to, or receiving from, DHS information regarding the citizenship or immigration status (lawful or unlawful) of any individual, in violation of 8 U.S.C. § 1373;

(B) prohibits or restricts compliance with a valid immigration detainer issued by DHS; or  
(C) otherwise impedes or obstructs federal immigration enforcement efforts, including by failing to notify DHS of the release from custody of an individual subject to a detainer.

(2) Exceptions: The term does not include a law, policy, or practice that applies only to an individual who comes forward as a victim of or witness to a criminal offense.

**(c) Ineligibility for Federal Funds.**

(1) A sanctuary jurisdiction shall be ineligible to receive any Federal financial assistance (including grants, loans, or other forms of assistance) administered by the Department of Justice (DOJ) or the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) that is substantially related to law enforcement, public safety, terrorism prevention, national security, immigration enforcement, or incarceration of aliens, if the jurisdiction is determined to be non-compliant under subsection (d).

(2) This ineligibility shall apply to funds appropriated for fiscal years beginning after the date of enactment.

(3) The Secretary of Homeland Security, in consultation with the Attorney General, shall annually publish a list of sanctuary jurisdictions and provide notice to affected entities at least 60 days before withholding funds.

**(d) Determination of Non-Compliance.**

(1) DHS shall investigate complaints or evidence of non-compliance and provide the jurisdiction an opportunity to respond within 30 days.

(2) Upon a final determination of non-compliance, funds shall be withheld or reallocated to compliant jurisdictions for the same purposes.

(3) A jurisdiction may appeal the determination to the Secretary of Homeland Security, with judicial review available under the Administrative Procedure Act.

**(e) Criminal Penalties.**

Any State or local official who willfully obstructs or impedes federal immigration enforcement in violation of this section or 8 U.S.C. § 1373 shall be subject to criminal penalties under 18 U.S.C. § 111 (obstruction of federal officers) or other applicable laws.

**(f) Severability.**

If any provision of this section is held invalid, the remainder shall not be affected.

**(g) Effective Date.**

This section shall take effect 60 days after enactment.

## **Section 9. Authorization of Appropriations**

There are authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be necessary for fiscal years 2026 through 2030, including not less than \$5 billion annually for USCIS processing capacity expansion, asylum consular staffing and expansion, E-Verify system upgrades, voter ID state support and free identification programs, Census verification infrastructure, and implementation of cooperation incentives and compliance enforcement under Section 8.

## **Section 10. Severability**

If any provision of this Act, or the application thereof to any person or circumstance, is held invalid, the remainder of this Act, and the application of such provision to other persons or circumstances, shall not be affected thereby.

## **Section 11. Effective Date**

This Act shall take effect on the date of its enactment, with implementation deadlines as specified herein.

## **Section 12. Integration with the Voter Registration Address Update Act**

The mandatory compliance requirement in this bill aligns with the Voter Registration Address Update Act of 2025 by ensuring consistent citizenship verification for federal election processes. To integrate the two bills:

- **Citizenship Verification:** The affidavit option in this bill could be used to confirm citizenship for voter registration updates in the Voter Registration Address Update Act. For example, USPS address change data could trigger a request for an affidavit to verify citizenship, ensuring compliance with the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) requirement for written confirmation (52 U.S.C. § 20507).
- **Unified Appeals Process:** The 30-day appeal process for affidavit verification could be synchronized with the voter registration notification process, streamlining verification across both systems.
- **Data Sharing:** Add a provision to the Voter Registration Address Update Act allowing election agencies to access verified census affidavit data (with individual consent) for voter roll updates, ensuring consistency and NVRA compliance. If the Voter Registration Address Update Act is not enacted, these provisions stand alone.

