

Fromm Institute, Fall 2018

Session 6

Immigrants and Refugees: The American Dilemma, Lifeblood or Threat

The Immigration Debate

- *“The bosom of America is open to receive not only the Opulent and respected Stranger, but the oppressed and persecuted of all Nations and Religions; whom we shall welcome to a participation of all our rights and privileges...”*
George Washington
- *“I’m troubled by [the immigration debate]. When [my family] came from England during the war, people said, “You are welcome here. What can we do to help?” I am a beneficiary of the American people’s generosity, and I hope we can have comprehensive immigration legislation that allows this country to continue to be enriched by those who were not born here.”*
Madeleine Albright

Themes for today

- Review
- What are the most pressing issues today?
 1. DHS Public Charge
 2. Some Resettlement Agencies might need to close
 3. Caravan headed to U.S.
 4. Texas Detention Center
- This is a test of our Character.

Refugee Quiz, Council on Foreign Relations

- <https://www.cfr.org/quiz/see-how-much-you-know-about-refugees>

Budget Cuts, Layoffs And Closures Hit Refugee-Serving Organizations

- <https://www.kpbs.org/news/2018/sep/25/refugee-cap-impacts-san-diego-resettlement/>

Public Charge

- On Saturday, September 21, the Department of Homeland Security announced a proposed change to how it considers immigrant use of public benefits in visa application decisions. If this proposal is adopted, the administration would be able to penalize immigrants applying to become lawful permanent residents if they enroll in SNAP, Medicaid, Medicare Part D, or other essential programs.
- The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) recently announced a proposed regulation that will force choices no family should have to make – between accessing essential public benefits like SNAP and Medicaid and advancing their immigration status. The proposal has already had detrimental effects, with families disenrolling from nutrition assistance programs and stopping visits to the doctor.
- “We condemn the administration’s proposal that will force immigrants to choose between advancing their immigration status and accessing vital public benefits that strengthen them and society overall. At this moment when immigrant communities are increasingly vulnerable, individuals are already foregoing needed medical care and food for their children through programs like SNAP out of concern for their immigration status. This new attack by DHS tarnishes America’s legacy as a nation of opportunity, built by immigrants.

DHS – Inadmissibility on Public Charge Grounds

- SUMMARY: The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) proposes to prescribe how it determines whether an alien is inadmissible to the United States under section 212(a)(4) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) because he or she is likely at any time to become a public charge. Aliens who seek adjustment of status or a visa, or who are applicants for admission, must establish that they are not likely at any time to become a public charge, unless Congress has expressly exempted them from this ground of inadmissibility or has otherwise permitted them to seek a waiver of inadmissibility. Moreover, DHS proposes to require all aliens seeking an extension of stay or change of status to demonstrate that they have not received, are not currently receiving, nor are likely to receive, public benefits as defined in the proposed rule. DHS proposes to define “public charge” as the term is used in sections 212(a)(4) of the Act. DHS also proposes to define the types of public benefits that are considered in public charge inadmissibility determinations. DHS would consider an alien’s receipt of public benefits when such receipt is above the applicable threshold(s) proposed by DHS, either in terms of dollar value or duration of receipt. DHS proposes to clarify that it will make public charge inadmissibility determinations based on consideration of the factors set forth in section 212(a)(4) and in the totality of an alien’s circumstances. DHS also proposes to clarify when an alien seeking adjustment of status, who is inadmissible under section 212(a)(4) of the Act, may be granted adjustment of status in the discretion of DHS upon the giving of a public charge bond. DHS is also proposing revisions to existing USCIS information collections and new information collection instruments to accompany the proposed regulatory changes. With the publication of this proposed rule, DHS withdraws the proposed regulation on public charge that the former Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) published on May 26, 1999.

Honduran Migrants march to the United States

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cFn3syPz7sY>

Trump's Views on the Caravan

- “I must, in the strongest of terms, ask Mexico to stop this onslaught - and if unable to do so I will call up the U.S. Military and CLOSE OUR SOUTHERN BORDER!”
- “We have today informed the countries of Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador that if they allow their citizens, or others, to journey through their borders and up to the United States, with the intention of entering our country illegally, all payments made to them will STOP (END)!”
- "criminals and unknown Middle Easterners are mixed" into the migrant caravan moving toward the United States. He called this a "national emergency"

Who's in the caravan and why are they coming?

- The caravan in April was organized by Pueblo Sin Fronteras, an organization that provides humanitarian aid and legal advice to migrants and refugees. But this time, there isn't a clear organizer, although someone with Pueblo Sin Fronteras was [detained](#) in connection to the caravan and the group has been making statements about the march.
- Some news reports initially said the caravan consisted of [about 2,000](#) men, women and children. But more people joined the caravan in recent days, with new reports pegging the number from [5,000](#) to [more than 7,000](#).
- Pueblos sin Fronteras said the migrants left Honduras on Oct. 13 to escape violence and social upheaval caused by "decades of political, economic and military intervention by the United States and of negligence, coups d'état, insecurity, corruption and impunity by Central America's governments."
- Some migrants are reportedly seeking asylum in the United States, an [immigration protection](#) granted to people with credible fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, or membership in a particular social group or political opinion. To apply for asylum, immigrants must be physically present in the United States.
- Others are coming citing economic hardship in their countries.

Compassion, then concern should greet the Honduras caravan

- The people forming the caravan are not an army. They aren't seeking collectively to capture land or dislodge governments. They are merely individuals seeking a better life and traveling in the direction they think most likely to help them find it.
- They travel in a group for safety
- Many will seek asylum, most will not get it.
- Under the current administration. According to Jeff Sessions most victims of domestic and gang violence do not qualify.

Tornillo Texas Detention Center

- **About 35 miles southeast of El Paso on the Mexico border, complete with portable toilets.**
- **Electric Gate**
- **Opened in June with 170 minors (13-17), 400 beds**
- **Supposed to close after a month, keeps getting extended**
- **Remains open with 2400 beds; 1400 more projected**
- **No Education or Mental Health Service provided.**
- **Housed in tents, Very hot summer.**
- **Flores Agreement, 1997. Minors cannot be held for more than 20 days. Going around that law.**
- **A permanent HHS shelter costs approximately \$250 per child per day. Weber said that the Tornillo shelter, because of the high cost of its temporary facilities, cost \$700 per child per day.**
- **Projected cost – one hundred million a month**

Quotes: Tornillo Texas Detention Center and other Detention Centers

- “We’re causing irreparable harm to thousands of children and I think it’s deplorable, despicable, inhumane and un-American and we need to put a stop to it,” said David Stout, a member of the El Paso county commissioners court.
- “Unfortunately the attitude towards these migrants has been one of painting them as criminals and a threat to society. That represents a problem because with that you can justify having them in prisons, you justify building walls.” Fernando Garcia, executive director of Border Network for Human Rights, an El Paso-based advocacy organization.
- “It’s hard to believe it’s actually happening,” said Kathleen Bretz, 23, a mother of two boys. “It’s like we’re stepping back a hundred years with people put in this little camp, locking them up like animals. It’s twisted and shameful. It’s not right.”

The Refugee Crises is a Test of our Character

- https://www.ted.com/talks/david_miliband_the_refugee_crisis_is_a_test_of_our_character