

Mainstreaming Hate: The Anti-Immigrant Movement in the U.S.

- Anti-immigrant fervor, once relegated to more extreme quarters, has been increasingly mainstreamed over the last ten years. Over the last two years, with the advent of a new administration focused on much stricter immigration policies and complementary executive actions, anti-immigrant and anti-refugee sentiment has made life substantially more difficult for all immigrants.
- Anti-immigrant groups like FAIR (Federation for Immigration Reform) and CIS (Center for Immigration Studies) have successfully moved the Overton Window – or the boundaries of what’s considered acceptable within political action and public discourse.
- These groups’ ideologies have been brought into the mainstream by policymakers who appear to agree with their rhetoric, and who have sought to institute harsh anti-immigrant laws nationwide.
- The Trump administration includes senior officials such as now former Attorney General Jeff Sessions and Stephen Miller, a senior advisor for policy, who are known for promoting hardline anti-immigrant policies. The Trump administration has also hired people with close ties to well-known anti-immigrant groups like FAIR and CIS throughout the executive branch.
- President Trump has referred to immigrants and refugees as “an invasion” and used language to stoke fears about immigrants, telling the crowd at an October 22 rally in Texas, “They [Immigrants] carve you up with a knife.”
- Anti-immigrant groups and activists use social media to demonize immigrants and get their messages across to the public.

Anti-immigrant ideology has gained mainstream acceptance, infiltrated policy implementation, been used as a wedge issue to scare constituents and become the fodder of media personalities who regularly demonize immigrants to a wide audience. They frame their messages as reasonable and valid but are promoting xenophobia and preventing a reasonable conversation about real reform to address real challenges in the immigration system



- Anti-immigrant groups' bigotry has also been normalized by the media, which provides a context-free platform for anti-immigrant spokespeople and their talking points.
- While white supremacist groups remain on the fringes of society, they share certain beliefs and rhetoric with anti-immigrant groups, and often feed off of the anti-immigrant beliefs of groups like FAIR and CIS.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS:

Before the extreme ideas of the anti-immigrant movement fully take root, the government, media and general public must take intentional steps to remove this ideology from tolerable discourse in America's pluralistic society. The following policy recommendations are explored in depth in our report:

- Enact Policies that Provide Legislative and Legal Protections for Immigrants and Refugees
- Improve Federal Response to Hate Crimes
- Build Trust Between Law Enforcement and Immigrant Communities
- Cities and Towns Should Work to Be More Welcoming for Immigrants
- Denounce Anti-Immigrant Bigotry, Racism and Xenophobia
- Provide Students with Tools to Combat Hatred and Bigotry and Protect Immigrant Students
- Expand Dialogue Between Civil Society and Tech Sector

Read the Full Report online:

<https://www.adl.org/the-anti-immigrant-movement-in-the-us>