



CONVERSATION ★ GUIDE ★

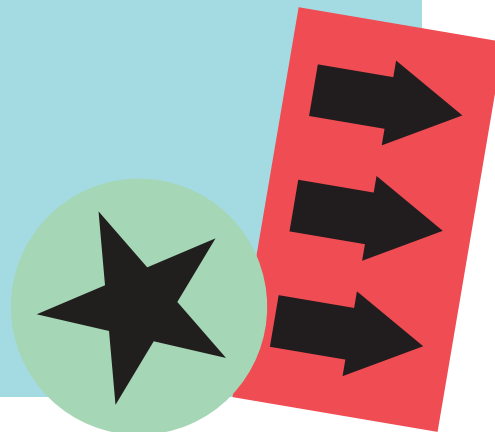
VOTE YOUR
★ RIGHTS ★

ACLU

ACLU 2026 Election Immigrants' Rights Conversation Guide

As this year's election ramps up, many of us would like to talk about the impact of this election on immigrants' rights but don't know where to start. So we want to make it easy for you. But we need your help to ensure everyone votes for their rights.

Just a simple conversation with your friends and family can activate your community during this election. In fact, having a conversation with your network has shown to increase voter turnout. With immigrants' rights on the ballot, the ACLU is here to help you navigate those conversations.



Below you'll find information about immigrants' rights that matters to everyone. We've also included responses to some frequently asked questions, and conversation starters that can help kick-start a dialogue.

In addition, here are some helpful tips to keep in mind when engaging in a conversation:

Helpful Tips

- ★ Create a safe space - A safe conversation is one in which everyone feels comfortable expressing their thoughts and feelings. Offer mutual respect and make the most of common ground.
- ★ Listen - Be interested in what others have experienced and acknowledge their point of view.
- ★ Advocate - Inform yourself about the issues that matter to you, so that you can share the facts. Sharing personal stories can also show what's at stake.



Key Points

- 1 People who are immigrants are integral to the fabric of our nation. For decades, our country has been a beacon of hope for people fleeing violence, persecution, humanitarian disasters, and more.
- 2 Our immigration system is broken, but "tough-on-border" policies that harm people seeking a better life are not the way forward. These policies only cause chaos to residents on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border.
- 3 When anti-immigrant extremists peddle falsehoods and racist tropes about an "invasion" to instill fear and win support for harmful policies, they do nothing to make our communities safer. Instead, they expose people who are immigrants and people of color to violence in our communities.
- 4 In all the partisan politics, we are losing track of the fact that we're talking about people – fathers, daughters, neighbors, and cousins – seeking the welcome, safety, and opportunity our country promises.

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It's time our elected leaders champion policies that will actually meet the needs of the current moment. That includes hiring more immigration judges to address the immigration case backlog, increasing processing capacity at ports of entry, and providing additional resources to cities receiving migrants.

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It also means increasing more legal pathways to the United States and providing a roadmap to citizenship for longtime residents who are undocumented.

FAQ

Q:

What is asylum?

A:

The right to seek asylum — or safety from persecution — in another country was born out of the tragedies of World War II and the horrors of the Holocaust. Today, asylum protections remain critical, with more people forcibly displaced from their homes due to conflict, violence, and human rights violations than at any other point since World War II. Elected officials in both parties have claimed that restrictive asylum policies discourage migrants from coming to the border, but they are wrong: new restrictions sometimes result in a temporary dip, but not a lasting reduction. And ultimately, such policies create more disorder and expose people to serious harm.

Q: Many immigrants have lived in the U.S. for decades. Aren't people seeking asylum cutting the line? Shouldn't they be starting their new lives here the "right" way?

A: Elected officials and news outlets often mischaracterize those seeking asylum at the border as breaking the law or failing to seek protection "the right way." But U.S. law recognizes that a person running for their life cannot wait in danger to schedule an appointment to apply for asylum. Under U.S. law, a person seeking asylum may do so by arriving at the border and asking for protection. At the same time, many immigrants do arrive with prior permission or through another legal pathway and still get caught up in a system that is overdue for fixing.

Q: I've been hearing so much about immigration contributing to the fentanyl crisis and crime in our communities. Shouldn't we have policies that limit immigration to combat these issues?

A: Let's be clear: people seeking a better life are not the ones bringing drugs to our country – drug cartels are responsible for that. At the same time, studies show that immigrants are less likely to commit crimes than U.S.-born citizens. Instead of fear-mongering for political gain, elected officials should work together to solve these problems. We need programs that stop crime before it happens, like treatment for mental health issues and drug addiction. And we need a fair, orderly, and humane immigration system that meets the needs at the border and provides pathways to citizenship

for longtime residents. These proven solutions will keep families together and make our communities safer.

Q: What about other issues affecting Americans, like the economy, public safety, and homelessness? Why should I care about immigrants' rights if I'm not an immigrant?

A: Immigrants are our friends, neighbors, and co-workers. They are integral members of our communities and the backbone of our economy, yet extremist politicians have repeatedly sought to scapegoat migrants to score political points. We cannot allow nativist rhetoric and fear-mongering to shape our immigration policies. For decades, our country has been a safe haven for people seeking refuge and we must not abandon our nation's values or moral commitments to protect people fleeing danger.

Conversation Starters

- ★ Despite conventional political wisdom, “tough-on-border” and “tough-on-immigration” policies are not popular with voters. In fact, the majority of voters agree we need a humane and balanced approach to immigration that manages the border and includes a pathway to citizenship for Dreamers and longtime residents.
- ★ People who are immigrants don’t drain our country – they fuel it. They contribute so much to our communities and nearly saved our economy from a recession following the COVID-19 pandemic.

Time to Fight for Your Rights

This November let’s remind our elected officials that they don’t have the final say when it comes to our rights — we do. We know you’re ready to vote and take action, make sure your friends and family are ready too.

To find out how each elected official plays a key role in defending our rights, visit:

aclu.org/vote

Share this guide with others so that they can engage their circles too.

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The ACLU dares to create a more perfect union — beyond one person, party, or side. Our mission is to realize this promise of the United States Constitution for all and expand the reach of its guarantees.