



Racine  
**Interfaith**  
Coalition



Exploring Immigration Issues

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# Issues we will explore today

- Facts about immigration
- What immigrants contribute to the US and Wisconsin
- DACA and “Dreamers”
- Myths about immigrants
- Hardships immigrants face
- What you can do

Immigrants  
are not  
criminals.  
They are our  
friends and  
neighbors.



Overstaying a Visa or entering the country without documents is a Federal misdemeanor, not a criminal offense



- Most civil offenses are punishable by fines but not arrest and detention
- Could result in detention, but the underlying action is not a violation of a criminal statute

# Today's immigrants come to the US for the same reasons they've always come



- Religious intolerance
- Economic insecurity
- Political instability
- Fear for personal and family safety
- Environmental degradation or natural disaster
- To reunite with family members

*“Give me your tired, your poor,  
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,  
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.  
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me,  
I lift my lamp beside the golden door.”*

For most of our ancestors, all that was required was to simply cross the border or get off the boat

- 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries:** relatively free and open immigration except for Chinese Exclusion Act (1882) and Alien Contract Labor Laws (1887)
- 1892:** Ellis Island opened followed by immigration centers in Philadelphia, Boston and other cities
- 1906:** First rules created to standardize naturalization procedures
- 1918:** Passports are required for the first time to cross the borders with Canada and Mexico
- 1921:** Nationality-based quota system is developed to limit immigration based on the percent of the population already in the US
- 1940s to 1960s:** Several laws were enacted to help refugees including the War Brides Act, Displaced Persons Act, Refugee Relief Act, Hungarian Refugee Act, and Cuban Adjustment Program; Chinese Exclusion Act finally repealed

No major immigration reform legislation has been passed since the 1990s.

- 1965:** Nationality quota system is replaced with a preference system designed to reunite immigrant families and attract skilled immigrants
- 1980:** First general policy governing the admission of refugees is developed
- 1986:** A path to legalization is created for approximately 3 million immigrants already in the US; first sanctions imposed on employers who hired undocumented workers
- 1990:** The number of available immigrant visas is increased and three preference categories are created: family-sponsored, employment-based, and “diversity” immigrants

# Why don't they just "get in line" like everyone else?

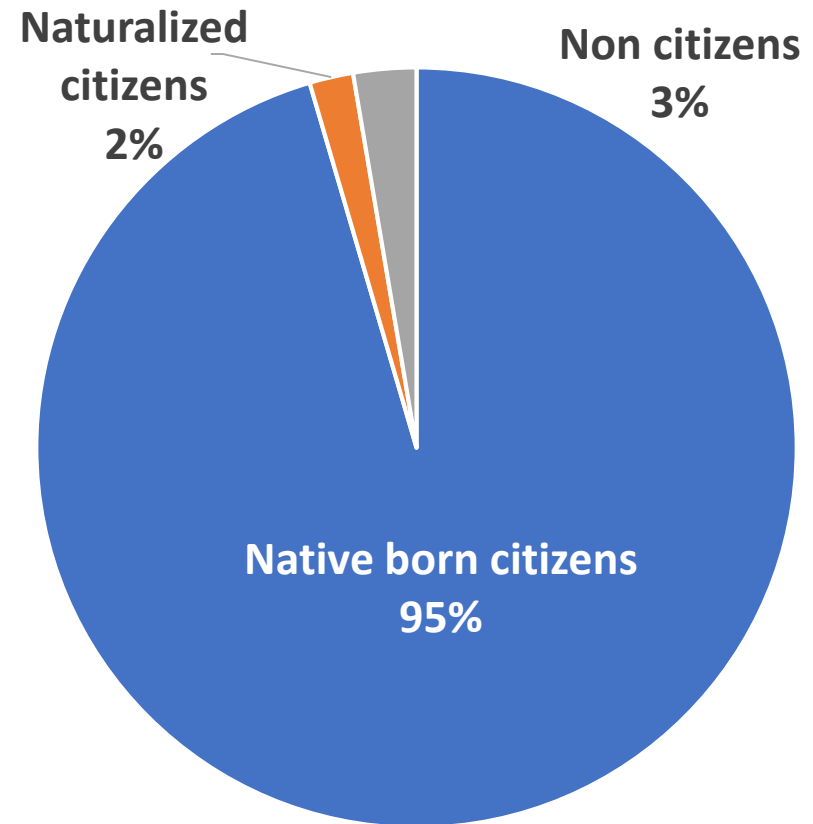


- No “line” is available for the vast majority of immigrants.
  - Employment-based immigration requires a U.S. employer to request a specific individual for a limited time.
  - Family-based immigration is limited to certain close family relationships and is numerically restricted.
  - A “diversity lottery” applicant has a 1 in 4000 chance of winning one of 50,000 such visas granted each year.
  - Most people fleeing their home countries because of violence are not eligible for refugee or asylum status.
  - Many individuals granted Temporary Protected Status (TPS) in the last several years because of war or natural disaster will be required to return to their countries starting in 2019.
- Even those who do get in line face significant costs and wait times as long as 20+ years.

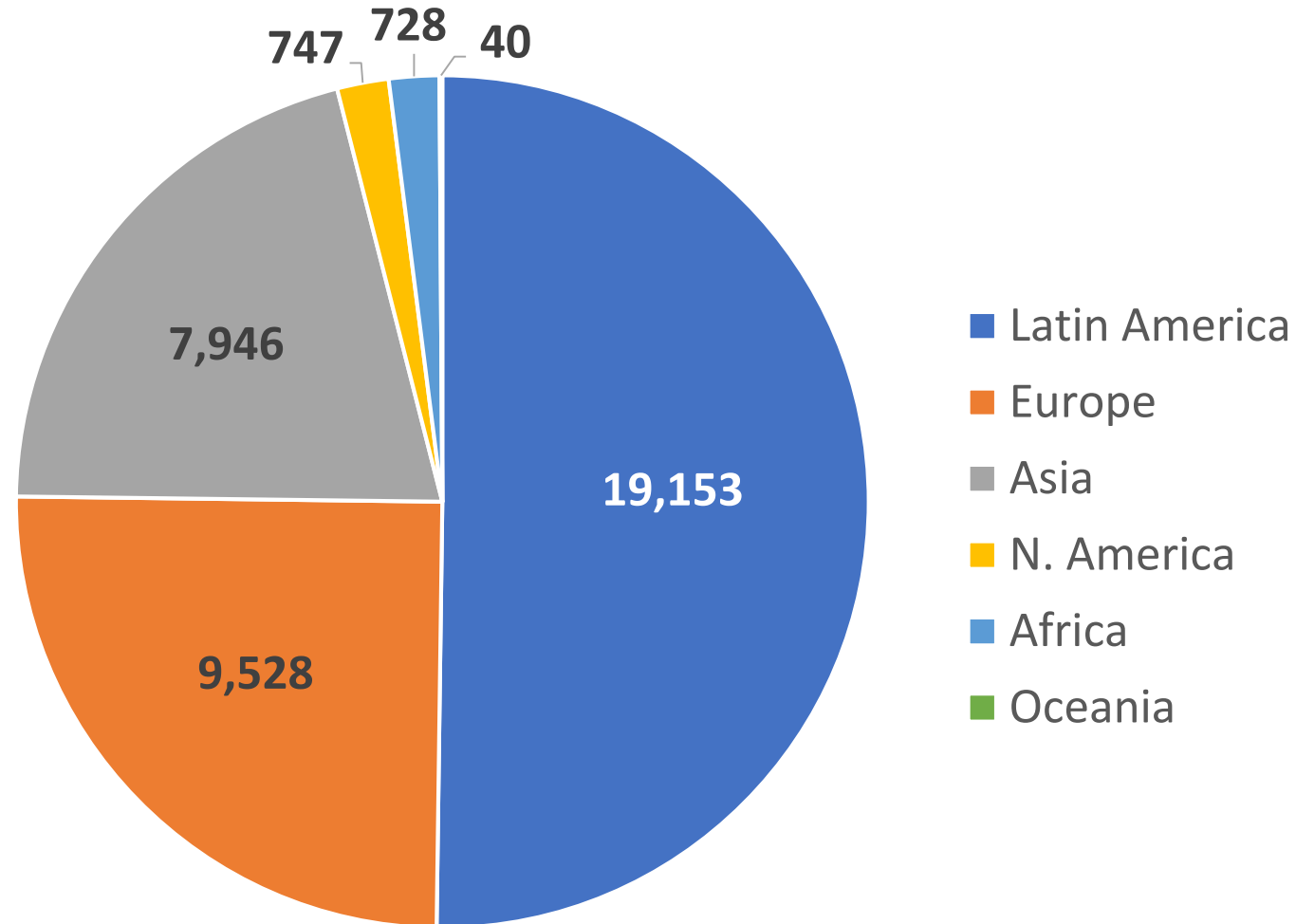


# Wisconsin has fewer undocumented immigrants than the nation at large

- In 2018, approximately 4.6% of all Wisconsin residents were foreign-born
- Of the non-citizens, approximately 85,000, including children, are estimated to be undocumented
- That means that 1.5% of Wisconsin's population is undocumented, compared with the national average of 3.5%



# Foreign-born individuals in Wisconsin's First Congressional District come from many countries



# Immigrants contribute significantly to the US and Wisconsin economies

## National

- \$11.8 billion in consumer spending
- Without guest workers, the US economy would lose as much as \$9 billion a year in agricultural production
- 18% of all small business owners are immigrants
- Foreign-born inventors contributed to more than 75% of patents issued to the top 10 patent-producing universities

## Wisconsin

- An estimated 46,000 to 55,000 Wisconsin workers are undocumented immigrants
- Immigrants account for:
  - 40%+ of dairy farm laborers
  - 16% of all agricultural workers
  - 4% of the manufacturing labor force
  - Immigrants account for:
- More than 57 businesses in the city of Racine are owned by immigrants
- Self-employed immigrant business owners generated \$295.9 million in business income in 2018.

DACA was created in 2012 to protect individuals who entered the US as children

**Requirements to be eligible for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)**

- Entry into the US before age 16
- Graduation from a US high school or GED equivalent
- Good moral character
- Pass criminal background checks and reviews
- Re-apply every two years and pay \$495 each time

**A DACA recipient can...**

- Work legally
- Get a driver's license
- Go to college or trade school
- Serve in the military
- Buy a car or a home
- Open a bank account
- Plan their lives and pursue their dreams for at least two years without fear of deportation

# DACA recipients contribute to our communities and the US economy in many ways



- 89% of all DACA recipients are currently employed
  - DACA recipients are in all professions including healthcare, education, technology and the military
  - Nearly 9,000 DACA recipients are K-12 teachers
  - 72% of the top 25 Fortune 500 companies employ DACA recipients
- 46% have a bachelor's degree or higher
- 79% report that DACA helped them become financially independent
- 60% purchased a car after receiving DACA
- 19% of those 25 or older purchased a home
- 17% have obtained professional licenses
- 5% have started new businesses - nearly half of which have 4+ employees
- Wisconsin DACA recipients and DACA eligible individuals paid an estimated \$15.9 million in state and local taxes in 2018.

Eliminating protected status for “Dreamers” would negatively affect the economy – and our communities

## Nationally

- If DACA recipients lose their work permits and jobs, it is estimated that the cumulative US GDP would be reduced by **\$433.4 Billion over 10 years**



## In Wisconsin

- There are over 7,000 DACA recipients, more than 6,400 of whom are employed
- If these DACA recipients are not allowed to contribute to the state economy, it is estimated that the state could lose **\$418M over 10 years**

# The seven most common myths about immigrants

## 1. We are being overrun by immigrants

- The total undocumented immigrant population is the lowest since 2003 and has fallen each year since 2008, driven primarily by a steady decline in migration from Mexico
- In 2016, the median length of time in the country for adult undocumented immigrants was 14.8 years



## 2. Immigrants are a drain on the US Economy

- The average immigrant pays \$80,000 more in taxes than they collect in government services (\$198,000 for those with college degrees)

## 3. Immigrants take jobs away from Americans

- Rapid increases in the foreign-born population at the state level have not been shown to have any effect on the employment of native workers

# The seven most common myths about immigrants

## 4. Immigrants don't want to learn English

- Similar to all US immigrants in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries...
  - 91% of second generation immigrants are fluent or near fluent English speakers
  - 97% of the third generation speak fluent English



## 5. Immigrants don't pay taxes

- Undocumented immigrants and their employers pay Social Security taxes
- They are also estimated to pay \$6.9 billion in sales and excise taxes, \$3.6 billion in property taxes and about \$1.1 billion in personal income taxes
- If America's 11 million undocumented immigrants were allowed to work legally, the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy estimates that current state and tax contributions would increase more than \$2.1 billion a year



# The seven most common myths about immigrants

## 6. Immigrants increase the crime rate

- An increase in immigrants does not correlate with an increase in crime
- First-generation immigrants are 45% less likely to commit violent crimes than native-born citizens

## 7. Immigrants come here to get government handouts

- Undocumented immigrants cannot get earned income tax credit, education credits, most child tax credits, SNAP, TANF, Medicare, Medicaid, Obamacare, CHIP, housing assistance or Social Security – even though they likely contribute to most of these benefits through their taxes



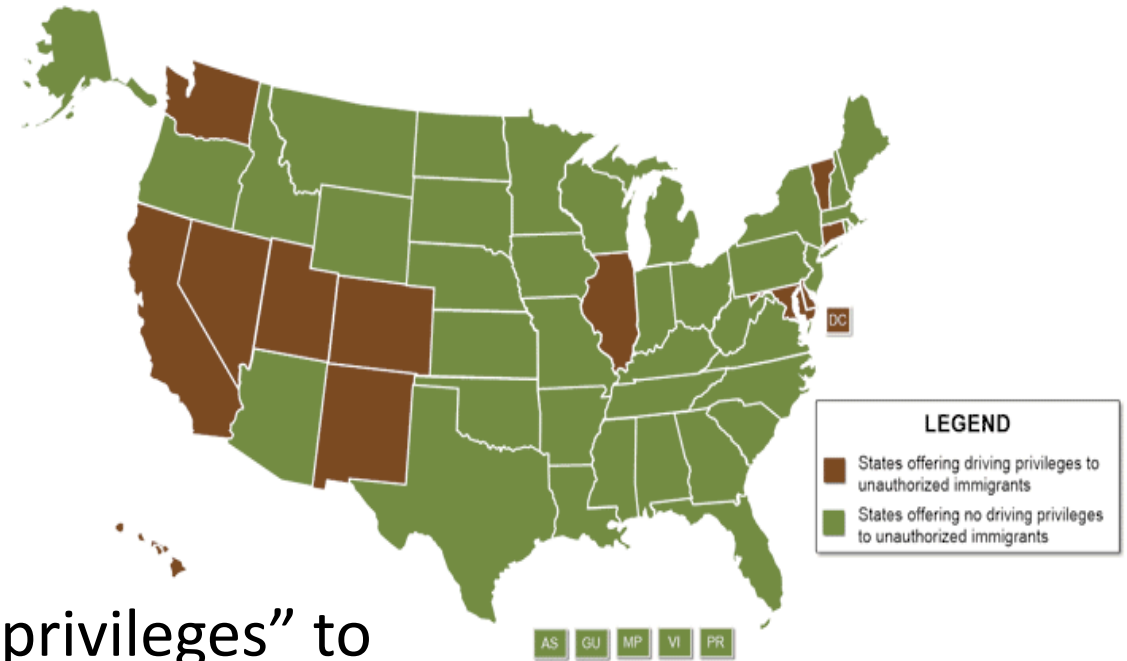
# Despite their contributions, immigrants face major hardships



- Constant fear of detention and deportation
- Issues with daily transportation
- Family separation
- Prejudice and Profiling

# Not allowing undocumented immigrants to legally drive creates issues for us all

- Before 2007 – Wisconsin issued driver licenses to undocumented immigrants
- Real ID act of 2005 created new federal standards for state-issued driver licenses and identification cards
- Law allowed states to still issue "driving privileges" to undocumented residents and 13 states and DC have chosen to do that
- Efforts are currently underway to address this issue in the 2019-2021 Wisconsin budget



# Fixing this issue would have a major positive impact on the community

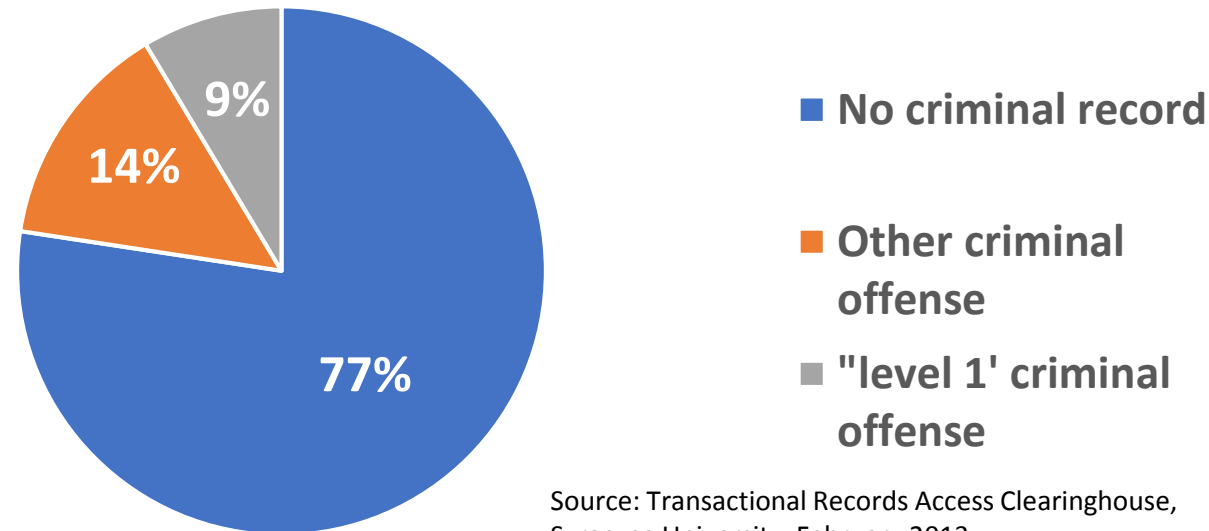
Without a driver's license, undocumented immigrants:

- ✓ Are in constant fear of targeting/profiling
- ✓ Have difficulty getting to work, taking their children to school, going to the grocery store, going to the doctor
- ✓ Are encouraged – by necessity – to break the law and face increased risk of becoming “criminalized”
- ✓ Are potentially less safe on the road because they do not have to pass driver and vision tests
- ✓ Are unable to buy auto insurance



# Detention is often random and driven by corporate interests in private prisons

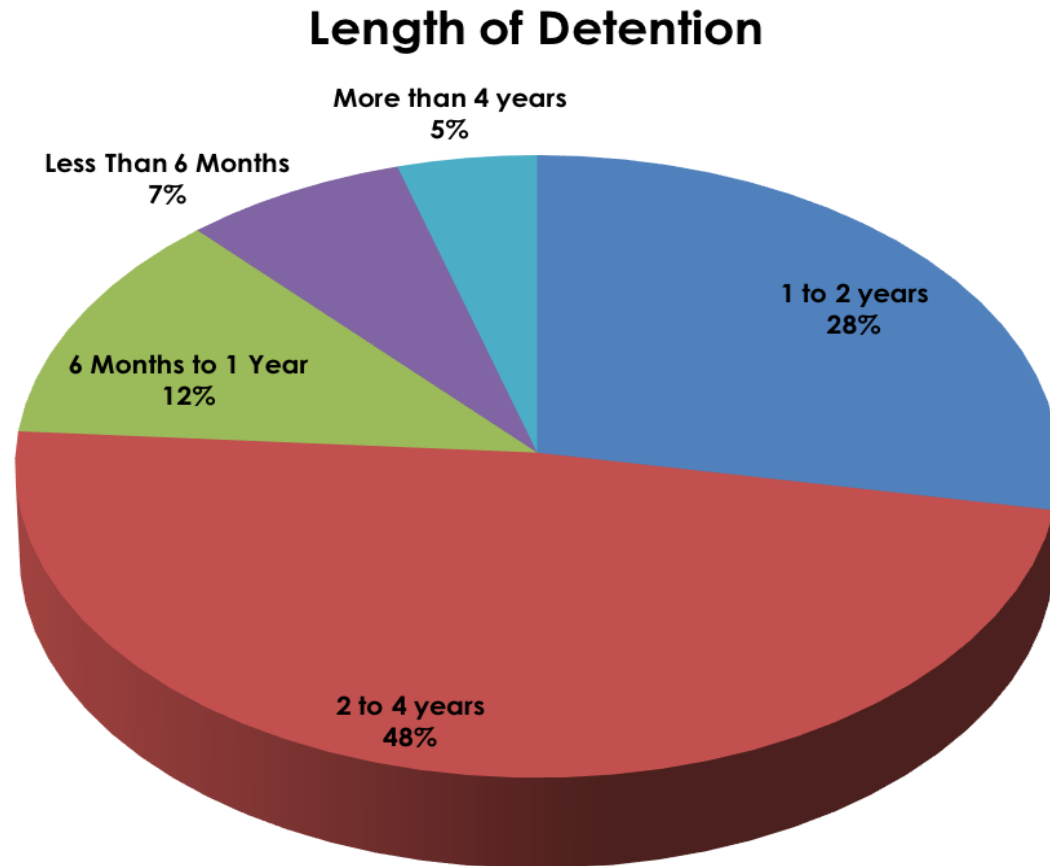
**Targets of ICE Detainers  
FY 2008-2012**



Source: Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse,  
Syracuse University, February 2013

*ICE is now required by law to maintain an average daily population quota of 53,000 detainees*

# EXPLODING DETENTION MACHINE



- 200 total detention centers across the US holding 360,000 people managed by ICE.
- As of January 2020, 81% of detainees are in facilities owned and operated by private companies.
- Taxpayers fund \$2.7 billion to private companies.

# FAMILY SEPERATION TO DETER IMMIGRATION

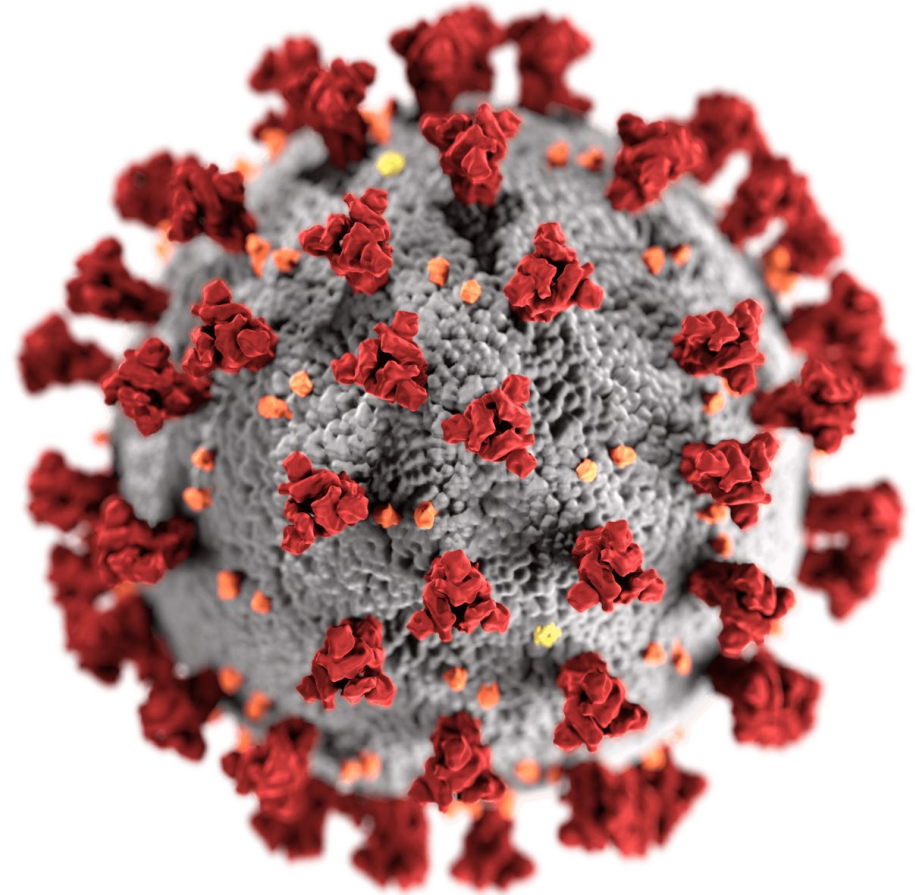
## CHILDREN IN DETENTION

- Between April 2018 and January 2020 at least 5000 children have been separated from their parents or guardians.
- There are many opportunities for children to fall between the cracks.
- Separation has never stopped: parents are deported without their children.
- No plans to reunite placed children.



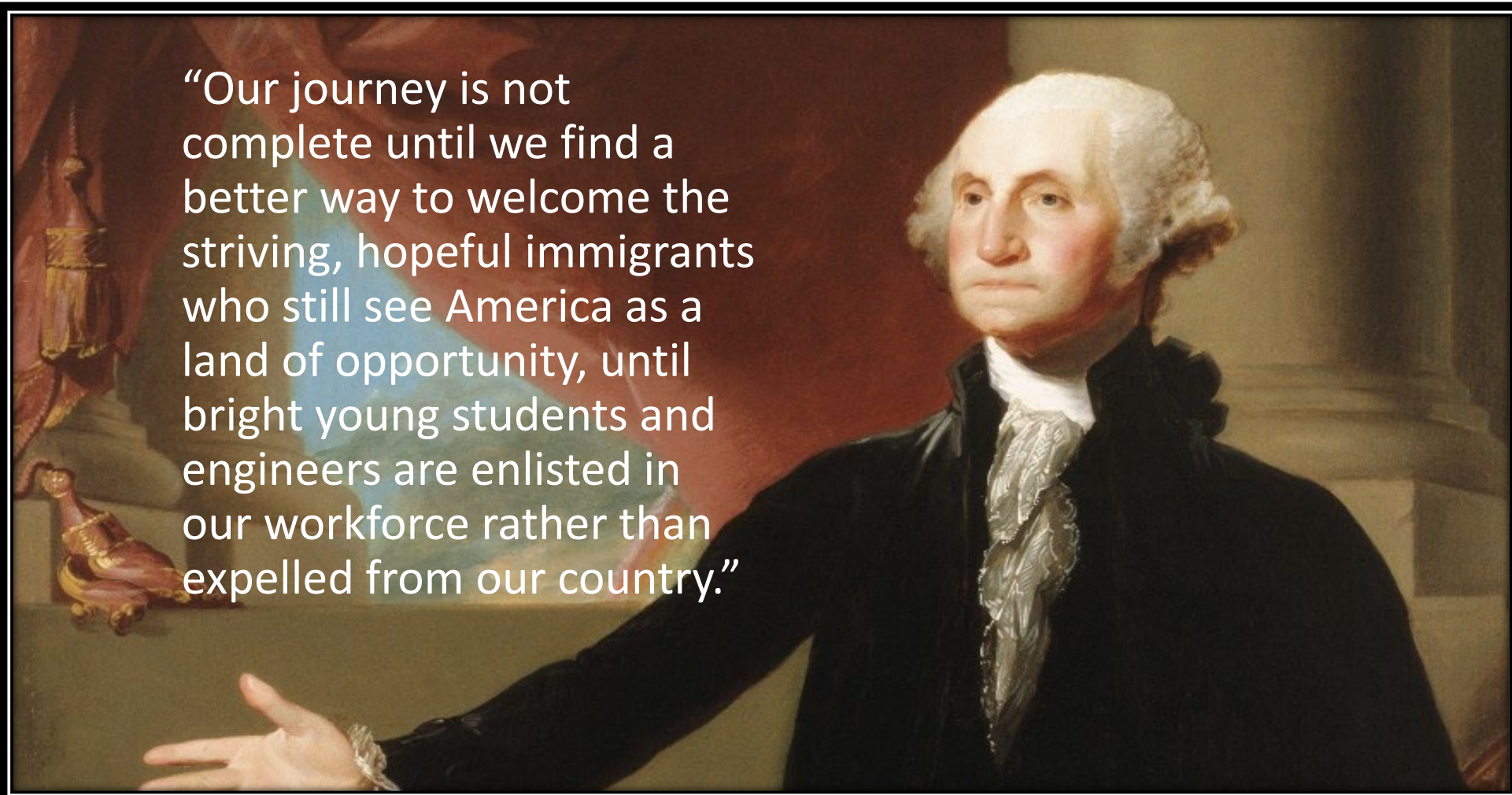
# PANDEMIC CHANGES

- Medical needs are not met.
- Proper protection is not provided.
- Social distancing is almost impossible.
- Detention Centers were only supposed to be 70% full during the Covid 19 Pandemic.
  - They accomplished that goal by direct deportations and placing children and families in hotels and shelters.
- Arrests are continuing but have decreased from the last budget year.



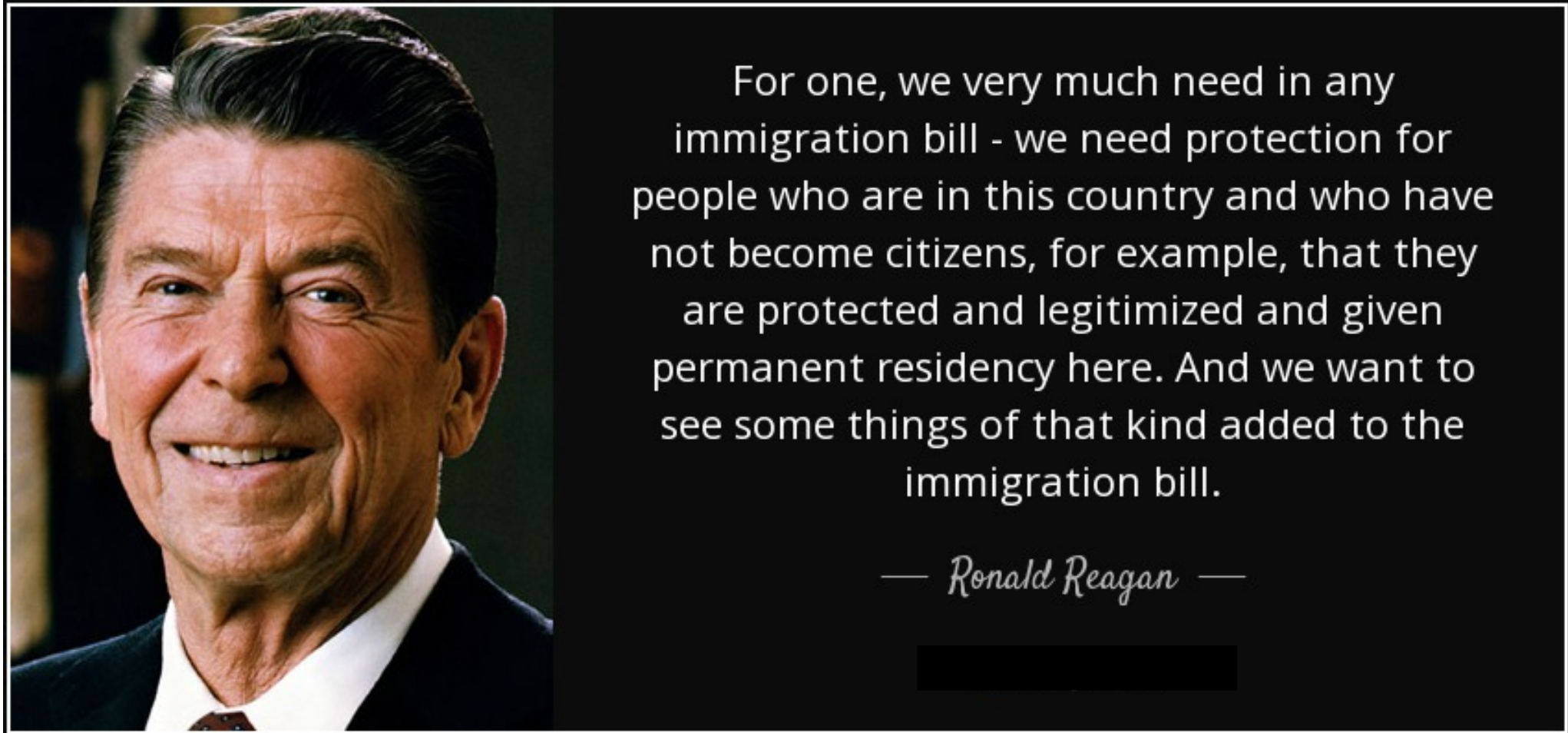


# Welcoming the stranger and the immigrant is a founding principle of our democracy



“Our journey is not complete until we find a better way to welcome the striving, hopeful immigrants who still see America as a land of opportunity, until bright young students and engineers are enlisted in our workforce rather than expelled from our country.”

For most of our history, efforts to reform immigration have been non-partisan



# Welcoming the stranger is also a core tenet of our faith traditions

**The stranger who sojourns with you shall be as a native from among you and you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt. I am the Lord, your God.**

**Leviticus 19:34**

**For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in.**

**Matthew 25:35**

**Those who migrate for the sake of God should find many places for refuge in the land in great abundance.**

**Quran (4:99-100)**

## What you can do as an individual

- Discuss what you learned today with friends and neighbors
- Have a one-on-one conversation with an immigrant
- Continue to educate yourself on immigration issues
  - Pew Research Center, American Immigration Council, Ammparo, National Immigration Justice Center, Justice for Immigrants
- Become involved with RIC or CUSH Task Forces
  - Contact Linda Boyle at [lindayboyle1@gmail](mailto:lindayboyle1@gmail.com)
  - Contact Sue Spicer at [spicersue@Outlook.com](mailto:spicersue@Outlook.com)

## What you can do to affect national policy

- Educate yourself on state and national immigration issues
- Demand unbiased information and fact-based conversations
- Support bipartisan legislation to make DACA permanent
- Advocate for fair and humane immigration reform as a legislative priority