

EW RISINGER

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Week 24

Immigration Reform, Border Security, and the One-Year

1. The Problem

Approximately 11 million undocumented people live in the United States. The immigration court pending caseload stands at approximately 3.5 million cases as of mid-2026 per EOIR data. USCIS processed only 27,569 naturalization applications in April 2026 — down from 97,000 per month a year earlier. The current USCIS system is slow, expensive, arbitrary, and has not been modernized in decades. The same application that takes months at USCIS takes minutes for a background check at any firearms dealer in America. The technology exists. The political will to deploy it has not. The status quo serves no one: 11 million people live outside the legal system, enforcement is impossible at that scale, and legal immigrants wait years for decisions that could be made in days.

2. The Governing Principle

One system. One standard. Everyone goes through the same automated process — whether applying from Manila, Mexico City, or during the amnesty year in Los Angeles. The automated USCIS processing system is not built for the amnesty year and then decommissioned. It is the permanent replacement for a broken manual system that takes months to do what technology does in hours. Clean cases approved in days. Every applicant gets a decision. The same biometric enrollment, the same background check, the same English and civics assessment for every immigration application going forward.

3. The Specific Policy

I. The One-Year Amnesty Application Window

- **One defined year:** beginning January 1 of Year 2, every undocumented person in the United States has 12 months to come forward and apply for legal status. Announced publicly on Day 1 with 12 months advance notice. No deportation proceedings against applicants with pending applications. After the window closes enforcement resumes — prioritized against those who chose not to apply.

- **The contribution and character standard — five requirements:** (1) Clean criminal record. (2)

Biometric identity verification.

(3) English proficiency.

(4) Civics knowledge. (5) Tax compliance.

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Each verified through the automated system. No human adjudicator needed for clean cases.

- **The 3 and 10-year reentry bars waived for window applicants:** bars that currently prevent long-term undocumented residents from leaving and returning legally are waived for people who come forward during the window. A genuine opportunity rather than a trap.

- **After the window:** enforcement focused on people who chose not to apply, people who failed the background check, and new illegal crossings. The government now knows who is here legally.

Enforcement becomes targeted and credible.

II. The Permanent Automated USCIS Processing System

The automated system built for the amnesty year becomes the permanent standard for every immigration application going forward. Green card applications, visa renewals, naturalization, new arrivals — all processed through the same automated pipeline. The \$2-5 billion capital investment is the permanent modernization of USCIS — one of the most chronically underfunded and technologically backward federal agencies in the government.

- **One system for all applications:** whether an applicant is a software engineer from India applying for an H-1B, a family member petitioning for reunification from Mexico, or an amnesty year applicant already in the country — every application runs through the same automated pipeline. One standard. No special track for any category.

- **Biometric identity verification — what it is and how it works:** three components collected at any USCIS Application Support Center, designated enrollment center, or mobile enrollment unit deployed for underserved and rural areas. (1) Ten-fingerprint digital scan — checked automatically against the FBI's Next Generation Identification system (150 million records) and DHS's Homeland Advanced Recognition Technology system (260 million records). Results in hours. (2) Digital photograph — facial recognition matched against federal databases in seconds. (3) Digital signature — links the applicant's biometrics to their application record permanently. Enrollment takes approximately 10 minutes. USCIS Application Support Centers already exist in most major cities specifically for biometric collection. The amnesty year requires expanding their capacity and

deploying mobile enrollment units to reach applicants in areas without a nearby ASC.

- **Automated background check:** criminal history cross-referenced against FBI, DHS, Interpol, and state criminal databases simultaneously. Results in hours. Clean result moves the application forward immediately.

- **Automated tax record check:** IRS database cross-reference. Applicants with filing gaps offered a defined compliance path before final approval.

- **Automated English proficiency:** online AI-proctored assessment. Results within 48 hours. 90-day retest provision. English proficiency is a goal of the process — not a barrier designed to exclude.

- **Automated civics test:** the standard 100-question USCIS civics test online. Results immediately.

Same 90-day retest provision.

- **Clean case automated approval:** all five requirements met, no flags raised — approved automatically. Green Phone: card mailed within 30 days.

No human

adjudicator. No months of waiting. Days
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from application to approval for straightforward cases.

- **Flagged cases:** routed to human adjudicators with a guaranteed 6-month maximum decision timeline. Every applicant receives a decision within 6 months regardless of complexity.

III. Legal Immigration Reform

- **Per-country caps eliminated:** an Indian engineer waits 50+ years for an employment-based green card. A worker from a small country waits 1-2 years. Same qualification, different wait — because of country of birth. Eliminated. Green cards allocated based on qualification, not birth country.

- **Legal visa numbers expanded to match documented labor market demand:** agriculture, construction, healthcare, technology, and skilled trades all have documented shortages. Visa

numbers expanded in shortage categories based on annual BLS labor market data.

- **Immigration court backlog — 500 additional judges:** EOIR pending caseload of 3.5 million cases reduced through 500 additional immigration judges. Target: 90-day hearing timeline for all new cases within 4 years.

- DACA made permanent by statute within 30 days.

IV. Border Security

- 5,000 additional Border Patrol agents concentrated at highest-crossing-volume sectors.

Technology and surveillance where physical barriers are not the most effective tool.

- **Fentanyl interdiction:** 100% scanning of all passenger vehicles and commercial trucks at legal ports. Fentanyl enters through ports — not between them.

- **Asylum processing — 90-day determination:** merit cases fast-tracked for approval. Non-merit cases fast-tracked for removal.

4. Estimated Cost

Automated USCIS processing system build: approximately \$2-5 billion one-time capital — permanent infrastructure serving every future immigration application. USCIS Application Support Center expansion and mobile enrollment unit network: approximately \$300-500 million capital — significantly less than retrofitting 31,000 post office locations, and building on existing USCIS infrastructure that already performs biometric collection. 500 additional immigration judges: approximately \$500 million per year. 5,000 additional Border Patrol agents: approximately \$750 million per year. Application fee revenue from amnesty year: approximately \$700 million to \$1.65 billion. Additional federal tax revenue from converting 11 million undocumented workers to documented taxpayers: estimated \$5-10 billion per year.

5. Year 1 Implementation and Measurable Result

Year 1 measurable result: amnesty application window legislation introduced within 30 days; Phone: 816-674-1686 | Email: ernie@ewrisinger.com automated USCIS processing system contracted within 90 days as permanent replacement for manual system; USCIS Application Support Center expansion contracted within 90 days; mobile enrollment unit network deployment planned within 180 days; per-country cap elimination legislation introduced within 30 days; DACA permanent by statute within 30 days; 500 additional immigration judges hired within 180 days; fentanyl scanning upgraded at top 20 crossing points within 180 days; amnesty window opens January 1 of Year 2. EOIR baseline: 3.5 million pending cases mid-2026 per DOJ data.

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