



Immigration Priorities for a Nation of Immigrants

We are fundamentally a nation of immigrants – a country conceived of and created by those seeking a better life. One in 10 Coloradans were born in another country. There is perhaps no greater example of American values and American strength than our place as this beacon of hope.

President Trump betrays these core values. By stoking our fears with a constant barrage of lies, Trump has tried to make us believe that our diversity threatens our safety, that those who come to our country weaken our American Dream rather than strengthen it. His administration has put children in cages, separated families, denied DREAMers, terrorized immigrant communities, and told us to fear our neighbors and shun those in need. He's weakened our economy, made us less safe, shut down our government, declared a phony emergency, and insulted the essence of who we are. Cory Gardner responded to all of this by endorsing Donald Trump for re-election.

Colorado knows better. We're a state that embraces newcomers and opens our arms to those in need. Our vibrant immigrant communities make us stronger and more dynamic. We're a state that wants to see families stay together, from those crossing the border to those who have lived in our neighborhood as mixed-status families for years. We know that when immigrants thrive, we all thrive.

The fight for immigrant rights brought me into politics. As a high school principal, I saw too many of my own students face undue hardships because of their immigration status. Too many undocumented students could not afford to go to college because they were denied in-state tuition rates. These students were left behind. Because of this, I went to the Senate and sponsored and passed the ASSET bill, extending in-state tuition to undocumented students. This bill had failed 12 times before, but I was able to bring Republicans to the table, share the stories of my students, and convince them that when immigrants win, we all win.

I'm in this race to run at our hardest problems, and this is one we must solve. We need comprehensive immigration reform that does right by our immigrant neighbors, grows our economy, makes us safer, and welcomes those around the world who seek refuge from harm. We can start by providing a path to citizenship for undocumented Americans, building an immigration system that supports our economy and honors our values, treating those seeking

refuge with dignity and open arms, and reforming ICE so we're dealing with actual threats- not Donald Trump's lies.

Provide Our Neighbors a Path to Citizenship

We have an opportunity to bring our undocumented neighbors fully and proudly into our communities. Our first step must be to provide a path to citizenship for all who want to embrace the obligations and benefits of being an American citizen. This must be a reasonable, navigable process, as President Obama proposed. From DREAMers who want a fair shot at an education to longtime residents who want to work legally, we must embrace our undocumented neighbors.

Leaving 11 million undocumented individuals in the shadows hurts those 11 million people. We all know that. But it also hurts all of us. Leaving people in the shadows of our economy prevents businesses from filling empty slots, hurts their growth, reduces our tax base, and makes undocumented workers vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. It's time to welcome them all.

Open Up Opportunities That Help All of us Thrive

Anyone who is a neighbor in our communities and a contributor to our economy and tax base should also access the benefits that help them thrive. Denying our undocumented neighbors access to services doesn't just hurt them, it hurts us all. That's why I fought for the ASSET bill and access to drivers licenses in the State Senate. That's why I called for Medicaid access in my race for Governor. That's why as Senator I will fight to build incentives for all states to expand their programs to undocumented neighbors and ensure federal programs are ready to serve everyone. All states should provide in-state tuition at their colleges. All states should ensure all drivers can get licenses. All states should expand Medicaid to undocumented neighbors. These steps make all of us healthier, happier, and richer; furthermore, it's the right thing to do.

Deny Trump his Useless Wall, Use 21st Century Tech to Fight Actual Threats

President Trump talks a lot about making us safer, but his wall would do nothing to protect our families from the actual threats we face. Trump's manufactured crisis is not a national emergency, and once again Cory Gardner has stood faithfully in line behind a damaging and divisive Trump agenda. We have too many *real* national emergencies in this country. Climate change is a national emergency. Gun violence is a national emergency. Lack of affordable healthcare is a national emergency. Yet Donald Trump and Cory Gardner ignore these problems and waste our country's time and money on an unnecessary project that will do nothing to keep America safe or solve real problems. Trump's new emergency declaration is an illegal power grab and theft of taxpayer dollars. We must fight for our democracy.

There *are* smart investments we can make to stop drug and human trafficking, prevent terrorists from entering our country, ensure other organized crime cannot penetrate our borders, and

make our country safer. But doing so requires solutions made in the 21st century, not walls from medieval times. We know what would help: updated screening and scanning technologies at the ports of entry, expanded processing capacity at the ports of entry, and more inspectors. This is what I will fight for.

Reform ICE

ICE, at the encouragement and direction of Trump, has become a source of terror and pain in communities across this country. Rather than focus on truly dangerous threats to our country, it frequently targets good contributors to communities and families who would like nothing more than to be U.S. citizens. It engages in terrible tactics, from pursuing undocumented families near schoolhouses to punishing women who suffer from domestic abuse and seek help from authorities. And, of course, ICE was at the frontlines of an organized campaign to kidnap children from their parents and separate them from their families, sometimes to die away from their parents' arms.

It's going to be a long, hard process requiring significant change, but we can and must reform ICE so that officers know to prioritize dangerous threats and to always abide by our laws, norms, and values. We can prioritize the actual threats we face by empowering law enforcement to use prosecutorial discretion.

Part of this reform must be eliminating the scourge of for-profit companies from our immigration enforcement. These unaccountable companies house thousands of captured individuals. In 2012 one of our neighbors died in the custody of a for-profit detention center in Aurora operated by The GEO Group: a facility with more than 1,000 people in custody but just one doctor. The GEO Group saw its stock price double in the months after Trump won his election; we can't let these companies get rich by holding community members captive in horrible conditions. Reform must start right here in Colorado with the cancellation of GEO Group's contract in Aurora.

Build an Immigration System that Honors our Values and Serves our Economy

President Trump instituted the vile policy of separating families at the borders to deter others from seeking refuge here. As Senator, I'll work to ensure that no President can ever treat human beings in this cruel way. We will embrace those who come here to flee war, reunite with their families, and seek to contribute.

From children escaping violence in Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador today, to Irish fleeing the potato famine, to Jews fleeing the Holocaust, to the lost boys fleeing Sudan, America has been built and invigorated by generations of immigrants who have come to our shores seeking a life of justice and opportunity that was denied to them in their home countries. Restoring the understanding that America remains a beacon of freedom in a troubled world is how we build our country and lead the world at the same time. This requires restoring our practice of

welcoming refugees and asylees and demanding humane policies for those who show up destitute at America's borders.

Last year we hit a shameful record; we welcomed the fewest refugees we have since we started counting in 1980. We brought in 22,491 refugees, down from 207,116 in 1980. As Donald Trump and Cory Garner have slammed our doors, the need in the world has only increased: there are now more refugees than there were in World War II. In some cases, our foreign policy choices have helped fuel these crises. I propose embracing 200,000 refugees a year once again, which is the ceiling Ronald Reagan set, and scaling our refugee support services accordingly. The judgment of future generations will perhaps be most stark when it comes to how we choose, today, to either welcome or turn away those around the world who are most in need, whether a human facing famine, war, persecution, national disaster, or economic desperation.

In order to right the wrongs of the families we've separated and do right by the mixed-status families here, we will also make it easier for more families to be together. Currently we cap the number of family members who can immigrate to the United States in a given year. This means that too many Americans are waiting for their sisters and brothers, in many cases longer than 20 years. We can't force families to wait a generation to be together. We must give more family reunification visas every year and ensure that country of origin doesn't dictate how long one waits to be with loved ones.

Finally, we can't afford to deny entry to talented, ambitious people from around the world who want to contribute in America. We need to increase visas of all types to enable hardworking people from all across the world who want to make a living in this country to come and do that, whether coding in a tech company or welding on a wind farm. When we do that, we all win. Our current system shows a massive gap between our businesses' demand for labor and our government's allocation of visas. This is the disparity that drives undocumented immigration and it is one that we can remedy. We need to increase our visa allotment to our highest-need sectors and to our highest-supply countries.

We also need to deploy the necessary resources to ensure under-staffing and bureaucratic failures never delay anyone's arrival in our country. Our immigration system is at the core of our values and economy and must be treated as such.

Be a Good Neighbor: Embrace Asylees and Use Foreign Aid to Support Economic Development and Public Safety

The right to seek asylum is a core tenet of international law and basic human decency. We must embrace those who come to our borders with warmth, shelter, and a fair process. This includes providing legal representation for all minors who must present their cases before a judge. Nationally only 14% of detained immigrants get legal representation, and that representation doubles the likelihood of receiving requested immigration relief. All who saw the image of a

three-year-old left to defend herself alone know in their gut that this is not right. We must provide funding for more legal representation in immigration courts.

As long as violence rages in the Northern Triangle -- Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador -- asylees will come to our borders. While immigrants are a source of strength, we should work to stem the flow of those who are fleeing violence and poverty. This means supporting efforts in countries suffering the most and helping build robust economies with livable wages. Right now, in particular, we must provide economic, governance, and security support to Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador as they battle stunning levels of gang violence and associated humanitarian crises. Those countries will only thrive, provide good lives for their citizens, and stop producing an exodus of asylees if they have rule of law that works and economies that can provide employment.

Conclusion

We can build a country that stands as a beacon of freedom for the world once again if we deny Trump and Gardner their policies of pain and division and instead embrace a path of compassion, inclusion, and shared prosperity.