



Press Release

Immigration Provisions in Build Back Better

PAULINA ENCK | NOVEMBER 10, 2021

Immigration reform advocates have continued to attempt to include provisions legalizing undocumented immigrants in the reconciliation legislation—two versions of which have been rejected for inclusion, and a third still under consideration. In a new insight, Director of Labor Policy Isabel Soto, Whitney Appel, and Maya Shanahan walk through the three versions of immigration reform provisions, discuss what we can learn from the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) score for the first version, and argue that legislators should focus future reform efforts on improving problems in the current system.

Key points:

- CBO's cost estimate found that the original provisions to legalize undocumented immigrants would increase the federal deficit by more than \$120 billion over the next decade — nevertheless the provisions were rejected by the Senate parliamentarian as not being primarily budgetary in nature.
- The proposals have been successively revised, however, and now focus on giving work authorization to undocumented immigrants, recapturing employment- and family-based visas, and establishing supplemental fees. These proposals do not result in citizenship and, thus, have significantly less budgetary impact.
- These reforms are unlikely to satisfy the Senate parliamentarian for inclusion in the reconciliation bill; legislators interested in significant and sustainable immigration reform should address more than illegal immigrants and work to improve the existing system with an emphasis on economic growth—and must do so through regular order.

[Read the analysis](#)