



Press Release

The Facts About the Immigration Crisis

ANDREW EVANS | SEPTEMBER 18, 2019

What is driving the immigration crisis at the border? In a new essay for *The Ripon Forum*, AAF's Director of Immigration and Trade Policy Jacqueline Varas explains the two primary facts fueling the crisis and points to a way forward. A surge of asylum seekers fleeing to the United States is driving up the number of illegal border crossings, she notes, while barriers to legal immigration encourage illegal immigration — ultimately requiring reform of the legal immigration system.

An excerpt:

In addition to the failure at the border, the failure of the legal immigration system is also driving illegal immigration. Unless you have a family member in the United States, the current system makes it incredibly difficult to immigrate legally. This is by design: Congress laid the foundation for modern day U.S. immigration policy back in 1965, when the immigration system was designed for family reunification. [As a result](#), two-thirds of green cards given out each year are awarded through family sponsorship. The next-highest number of visas are to asylum seekers and refugees (13 percent), followed by employer-sponsored immigrants (12 percent) and diversity immigrants (5 percent). This stands in stark contrast with nations such as Australia and Canada, where more than half of annual immigration flows is for economic reasons.

[Read the essay.](#)