

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2021

Remarks on Signing Executive Orders on Immigration Reform and an Exchange With Reporters

February 2, 2021

Shooting of Federal Bureau of Investigation Agents in Sunrise, Florida

The President. Well, let me begin by saying, from all three of us—the Vice President, the new Secretary of Homeland Security—that our hearts go out to the families of these FBI special agents and—two of whom were killed and three of whom were injured today in Florida.

I was briefed on this tragedy earlier today, and I know the FBI is gathering information about how this happened, what happened. But I can only imagine how these families are feeling today.

You know, one of the things, when you are in a combat zone of the military or you're a FBI agent or military or a police officer, every family just—when they put that shield on and go out in the morning—dreads the possibility of a call—receiving that phone call. And my heart aches for the families. I've not had an opportunity, nor will I try today, to contact them.

But they put their lives on the line, and it's a hell of a price to pay. And every single day, every single one of these folks get up, and they—by and large, the vast, vast majority of these men and women are decent, honorable people who put themselves on the line, and we owe them.

Senate Confirmation of Alejandro N. Mayorkas as Secretary of Homeland Security

But the purpose of my asking you here today is, I want to congratulate the new Secretary. Secretary Mayorkas is going to take on an easy job—nothing to it: Homeland Security. And going to deal—I'm looking forward to his leadership and working with Congress on a lot of issues, including the immigration bill that has, I think, great support in both Chambers.

Immigration Reform/The President's Use of Executive Actions

Today I'm going to sign a few Executive orders to strengthen our immigration system, building on the Executive actions I took on day one to protect DREAMers and to end the Muslim ban and to better manage of our borders. And that's what these three different Executive orders are about.

And I want to make it clear—there's a lot of talk, with good reason, about the number of Executive orders that I have signed—I'm not making new law; I'm eliminating bad policy. What I'm doing is taking on the issues that—99 percent of them—that the President—the last President of the United States issued Executive orders I felt were very counterproductive to our security, counterproductive to who we are as a country, particularly in the area of immigration.

This is about how America is safer, stronger, more prosperous when we have a fair, orderly, and humane legal immigration system. And with the first action today, we're going to work to undo the moral and national shame of the previous administration that literally, not figuratively, ripped children from the arms of their families—their mothers and fathers at the border—and with no plan, none whatsoever, to reunify the children who are still in custody and their parents.

The second action addresses the root causes of our—migration to our southern border.

And the third action—the third order I'm going to be signing—orders a full review of the previous administration's harmful and counterproductive immigration policies, basically across the board.

And so, with that, I'm going to sign the first order, which is the reestablishment of an Interagency Task Force on the Reunification of Families.

It removes the stain on our reputation for what these separations caused.

[At this point, the President Signed an Executive order titled "Establishment of Interagency Task Force on the Reunification of Families."]

That is the first order.

The second order I'm signing is: "Creating a Comprehensive Regional Framework To Address the Causes of Migration and To Manage Migration Throughout the North and Central America and To Provide Safe and Orderly Processing of Asylum Seekers at the United States Border."

[The President signed the Executive order.]

And the third order I'm signing is: "Restoring the Faith in Our Legal Immigration System and Strengthening Integration and Inclusion Efforts for New Americans."

[The President signed the Executive order.]

As my grandfather would say: By the grace of God and the good will of neighbors, we'll reunite these children and reestablish our reputation as being a haven for people in need.

Thank you very, very much.

Immigration Reform

Q. Mr. President, what's your message to these families who have been separated?

Q. Will you raise the refugee cap, sir, Mr. President?

The President. Thank you.

Q. When will we see action to back up these reviews, Mr. President?

The President. We'll have plenty of time to talk about it.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:25 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Federal Bureau of Investigation special agents Daniel Alfin and Laura Schwartzenberger, who were killed as a team of law enforcement officers executed a Federal court-ordered search warrant as part of a violent crimes against children case in Sunrise, FL.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Immigration reform, signing Executive orders; Interviews With the News Media : Exchanges with reporters :: White House.

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