



What is Happening on Immigration Policy? An Overview of Federal and State Measures



immediately, given that some of them require government agencies to undertake additional steps (which can take days, months, or even years). On the other hand, a bill is not immediately effective, but becomes a law after it goes through the full legislative process and is signed by the Governor.

PRESIDENT TRUMP'S EXECUTIVE ACTIONS AND POLICY CHANGES

President Donald Trump has put into effect a series of executive actions on various topics, including immigration. In addition to executive orders, his administration has also announced migration-related policy changes. Here is a summary of some of the most relevant measures:

Executive Order: "Realigning the United States Refugee Admissions Program" indefinitely suspends the admission of refugees in the U.S. through the Refugee Admissions Program. However, it does provide for exceptions to be made by the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of State on a case-by-case basis.

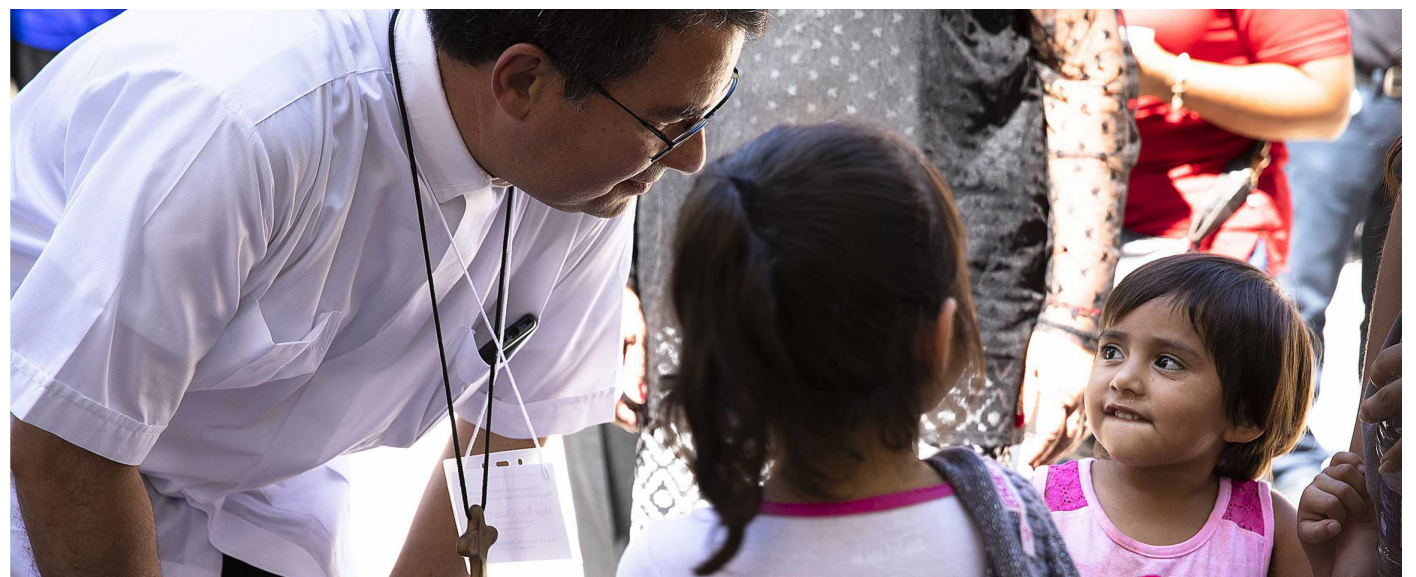
After an election year in which immigration was at the front and center of American political debate, there was substantial speculation about what specific policies would be implemented by the incoming federal and state administrations to address the issue.

On January 13, 2025, Mike Kehoe was sworn in as the 58th governor of Missouri. One week later, Donald Trump's inauguration as the 47th U.S. president took place in the nation's capital. Both of them, along with the Missouri General Assembly, have focused on immigration from day one.

This resource seeks to provide a general overview of the main immigration policies that, as of

February 12, 2025, have been implemented by the federal and state government, as well as of the bills that have been filed in the Missouri House and Senate.

It is important to keep in mind that **an executive action is binding from the moment the president or governor signs the order;** however, that does not mean it will necessarily go into effect



Executive Order:

“Protecting the United States from Foreign Terrorists and Other National Security and Public Safety Threats” provides for enhanced vetting and screening of noncitizens who intend to be admitted, enter, or are already in the country, particularly those from regions or nations with “identified security risks.” Between February and March, additional regulations, policies, and procedures will start to be adjusted.

Proclamation: “Declaring a National Emergency at the Southern Border of the United States” authorizes the deployment of the Armed Forces to the area, including the Ready Reserve and the National Guard, in order to assist the Department of Homeland Security with detention space, transportation, and other logistics in support of law enforcement operations, as well as to impede the “unauthorized physical entry of aliens across the southern border”. The complement to this proclamation is the **Executive Order “Clarifying the Military’s Role in Protecting the Territorial Integrity of the United States.”**

Executive Order: “Securing Our Borders” authorizes measures to deter and prevent immigrants from entering the U.S. illegally, including:

1. constructing a wall and other physical barriers, monitored by personnel and technology;
2. detaining noncitizens apprehended on suspicion of violating state or federal law for the maximum duration permitted by law before their removal, ending what is commonly known as “catch-and-release”;
3. removing all noncitizens who have entered or remain in the U.S. in violation of federal law;
4. pursuing criminal charges against noncitizens in violation



From left - Archbishop Mitchell Rozanski (Archdiocese of St. Louis), Governor Mike Kehoe, and Bishop W. Shawn McKnight (Diocese of Jefferson City)

of immigration laws and against those who facilitate their presence in the country;

5. cooperation with state and local law enforcement.

Proclamation: “Guaranteeing the States Protection Against Invasion” restricts entry to all noncitizens deemed to be engaged in the “invasion across the southern border,” without exceptions of any kind. Access is also restricted to those who do not provide federal officers with sufficient medical information and reliable criminal history and background information.

Executive Order: “Designating Cartels and Other Organizations as Foreign Terrorist Organizations and Specially Designated Global Terrorists” enables the government to take further actions against some drug cartels and criminal organizations to ensure their total elimination from the U.S., including conducting extraterritorial operations.

Executive Order: “Protecting the Meaning and Value of American

Citizenship” seeks to deny “birthright citizenship” to a person born in the U.S. if neither of his or her parents was a U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident at the time of said person’s birth. However, several legal challenges have already been brought against this order and judges have blocked its application for the time being.

Executive Order: “Reevaluating and Realigning United States Foreign Aid” pauses assistance funding to foreign countries, NGOs, and international organizations. Determinations about whether to continue, modify, or cease each assistance program will be by April 20, 2025. Besides the aforementioned executive actions, President Trump signed an order rescinding over 70 executive actions related to immigration that were issued during the last administration.

GOVERNOR KEHOE’S EXECUTIVE ORDERS

To date, Governor Mike Kehoe has issued 17 executive orders, two of which pertain to immigration policy:

Executive Order 25-04 (January 13, 2025) fosters the collaboration between state and federal agencies to share intelligence, coordinate operations, and enforce federal immigration laws.

- The Department of Public Safety (DPS) and the Missouri State Highway Patrol (MSHP) will pursue a collaboration agreement with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, outlining the terms of cooperation concerning the enforcement of federal immigration laws.
- MSHP troopers will undergo training in federal immigration enforcement and, upon successful completion, will be

authorized to enforce federal immigration laws; namely, preventing illegal immigration, apprehending criminal offenders, and preventing drug trafficking.

- The DPS and the MSHP will actively collaborate with federal agencies to share intelligence, coordinate operations, and enhance Missouri’s ability to address criminal threats associated with illegal immigration and narcotics trafficking.

Status: The specifics of the collaboration agreement are still unknown, which makes it difficult to determine its reach. Potentially, Missouri State Highway Patrol troopers would be authorized to enforce federal immigration laws, including detaining undocumented immigrants for being in the U.S. illegally. It is also unclear if every state trooper would be a part of this program or if it would be restricted to a smaller number.

Executive Order 25-05 (January 13, 2025) requires law enforcement

officers in Missouri to include immigration status when filing a crime report.

- The Department of Public Safety and the Missouri Highway Patrol will include immigration status within the required fields of the state's uniform crime reporting system and facilitate the collection of such information across the state.

Status: Currently, there are no statistics on how many crimes are committed by undocumented immigrants in Missouri; this measure will make that information available.

MISSOURI HOUSE AND SENATE BILLS ON IMMIGRATION

January 8 marked the start of the 2025 legislative session in Missouri, with hundreds of bills being filed in both the Senate and the House of Representatives. Although over a dozen of those are related to immigration issues, all of them are still in the earliest stages of the legislative process. Here is an overview of the most relevant bills:

Senate Bill 58 (Sen. Jill Carter - R) would create the offense of "aggravated illegal presence",

making any undocumented migrant who has committed a minor violation of Missouri law, such as running a red light or driving without a license, guilty of a class E felony, punishable by up to 4 years in prison.

It would also create the offense of "improper entry by an alien"¹, making any undocumented migrant who enters the state subject to an order of removal and a fine of \$10,000.

Status: A Senate committee heard the bill on January 27, with the MCC testifying in opposition. On February 5, the committee voted in favor of the bill moving to the Senate floor for debate.

Senate Bill 72 (Sen. David Gregory - R) would implement the "Missouri Illegal Alien Certified Bounty Hunter Program" to certify applicants to be bounty hunters for the purpose of finding and detaining undocumented migrants in the state. Those who are detained under this bill would be guilty of a felony punishable by imprisonment for life without eligibility for probation or parole.

The bill would also create an information system (telephone

hotline and online portal) for people to report those who they think are undocumented migrants, rewarding them with \$1,000 for every person who is deported.

Status: A Senate committee heard the bill on January 27, with dozens of people showing up to voice their concerns about what they perceived as a disproportionate and unfair measure. The MCC testified in opposition. That same week, Speaker Jon Patterson (R) declared that House Republicans were not supportive of the bill and that immigration should remain a federal matter.

Senate Bill 114 (Sen. Rick Brattin - R) would create the offense of "concealment or inducement of an illegal alien." Any person would be guilty of such an offense, punishable by up to 7 years in prison, if he or she knowingly: a) conceals, harbors, or shields an illegal alien from detection; or b) encourages or induces an undocumented migrant to come to or reside in the state. It would also allow local officers to enforce the provisions of federal immigration law that establish criminal penalties.

This bill is particularly problematic, given that the offense of "concealment or inducement" has been broadly interpreted by state officials in Texas to also include providing basic necessities—food and shelter—to migrants, jeopardizing the Church's ability to provide assistance to the poor and vulnerable.

Status: The bill has not been heard in committee. The MCC opposes it.

House Bill 182 (Rep. Cameron Parker - R) would provide translation services for criminal, civil, and juvenile proceedings, payable from state-allocated funds.

Currently, interpreters are only provided for criminal cases but, given that immigration law is an area of civil law, this measure would be beneficial for migrants and refugees in general.

Status: A House committee heard HB 182 on February 11. The MCC testified in support of the bill.

House Bill 540 (Rep. Richard West - R) would create the offense of "trespass by an illegal alien", making any undocumented migrant who violates a state law or county or municipal ordinance, such as running a red light or driving without a license, guilty of a class E felony, punishable by up to 4 years in prison. If an undocumented migrant commits any misdemeanor or felony, the crime would be a class C felony, punishable by up to 10 years in prison.

Status: The bill has not been heard in committee. The MCC opposes it.

For the current status of the bills, visit the House (house.mo.gov) and Senate (senate.mo.gov) websites.

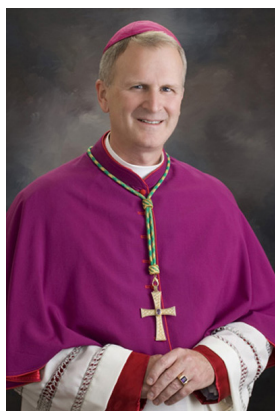
1: Senate Bill 137 (Sen. Curtis Trent - R) and Senate Bill 282 (Sen. Ben Brown - R) would also create the offense of "improper entry by an alien" under similar conditions. These two bills have not been heard in committee. The MCC opposes them.

Sen. Barbara Washington (D-9) questions Sen. Jill Carter (R-32) about SB 58.



For more information regarding legislation and immigration, please scan the QR code to visit the immigration page on the Missouri Catholic Conference website. Thank you.





Bishop Johnston, Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph, urges compassion amid uncertainty

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

In these times of uncertainty, I reach out to you with a heart full of compassion and a steadfast commitment to our shared faith. Recent executive orders have raised concerns within our community, particularly regarding their impact on our immigrant families, our schools and our parishes. As your shepherd, I wish to offer guidance rooted in the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ and the

enduring principles of the Catholic Church.

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) has consistently emphasized the Church's unwavering dedication to upholding the dignity of every human person, regardless of their immigration status. Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio, president of the USCCB, reminds us that our actions as a nation should "demonstrate a genuine care for our most vulnerable sisters and brothers, including the unborn, the poor, the elderly and infirm, and migrants and refugees."

Furthermore, Bishop Mark J. Seitz of El Paso, Texas, chairman of the USCCB's Committee on Migration, has expressed deep concern that certain policies may "subject vulnerable families and children to grave danger."

Nations and communities have a right to protect the common good, but this must not violate the other moral rights attached to the dignity of the human person, nor the moral obligation of Christians to help those in need.

In light of these developments, I call upon all members of our diocesan family—parishioners, educators, students, and clergy—to embody the Gospel values of love, mercy, and justice. Let us:

- **Pray Fervently:** Seek divine guidance for our nation's leaders, that they may enact policies reflecting compassion and respect for human dignity.
- **Educate Ourselves:** Understand the teachings of the Church on migration and the rights of individuals, articulated in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* #2241, and as outlined by the USCCB's Migration and Refugee Services.
- **Extend a Hand of Welcome:** Offer support and solidarity to migrants and refugees within our communities, recognizing Christ in the stranger among us.
- **Advocate for Justice:** Engage in peaceful and constructive dialogue, urging our policymakers to consider the moral implications of their decisions and to work for comprehensive immigration reform.

Additionally, I want to reassure you that we treat the names and identities of our school students, families, and parishioners as confidential information. We will not voluntarily release this information to anyone, including law enforcement, absent an obligation to do so by court order or subpoena.

As we navigate these challenges, let us remember the words of our Lord: "Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me." (Matthew 25:40). Together, anchored in faith and united in love, we can be beacons of hope and instruments of God's peace.

May the Holy Family of Nazareth, themselves once refugees, guide and protect us all.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+Bishop James V. Johnston, Jr.



Bishop McKnight, Diocese of Jefferson City: Our faith calls us to pursue humane and just solutions to the challenges of immigration

The people entrust our elected leaders with the responsibility to enact policies that promote the safety and well-being of all. Securing our nation's borders is essential as we seek to protect our communities and maintain societal order. At the same time, immigrants deserve a fair, transparent, and efficient process as they seek entry — a standard our current immigration system

regrettably fails to meet.

As people of faith, we must advocate for solutions rooted in compassion rather than fear or unnecessary harshness. While I support the deportation of violent criminals who are unlawfully present, I stand firmly against enforcement measures that instill fear or disrupt the stability of peaceful communities. These actions violate our moral principles.

Our faith calls us to pursue humane and just solutions to the challenges of immigration. We must uphold our own dignity by treating the most vulnerable among us with respect and care. Those who come to our churches, volunteer beside us, and make great sacrifices for their families embody the very values that define the American Dream.

As we navigate these complex issues, I pray for our public leaders to be guided by wisdom and courage. I urge them to craft policies that balance the need for secure borders with fundamental human rights and dignity of all individuals.

+Bishop W. Shawn McKnight

RESOURCES

- **Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph:** [Statement of Bishop James V. Johnston on Immigration](#) (January 25, 2025)
- **Diocese of Jefferson City:** [Statement of Bishop W. Shawn McKnight on Immigration](#) (January 26, 2025)
- **Missouri Catholic Conference:** [Catholic Teaching on Immigration: Clearing Up Common Misconceptions](#)
- **Missouri House of Representatives:** [Legislation for the 2025 Regular Session](#)
- **Missouri Senate:** [Legislation for the 2025 Regular Session](#)
- **Missouri Secretary of State:** [Governor's Executive Orders 2025](#)
- **Pope Francis:** [Letter to the Bishops of the United States](#) (February 10, 2025)
- **The White House:** [Presidential Actions](#)
- **USCCB:** [Statement of Archbishop Broglio on Executive Orders Signed by the President](#) (January 22, 2025)
- **USCCB:** [Statement of Bishop Seitz on Executive Orders Signed by the President](#) (January 22, 2025)
- **USCCB:** [Statement of Bishop Seitz on Executive Orders Signed by the President](#) (January 23, 2025)
- **USCCB:** [Initial Migration-Related Executive Actions of the Second Trump Administration](#) (January 24, 2025)