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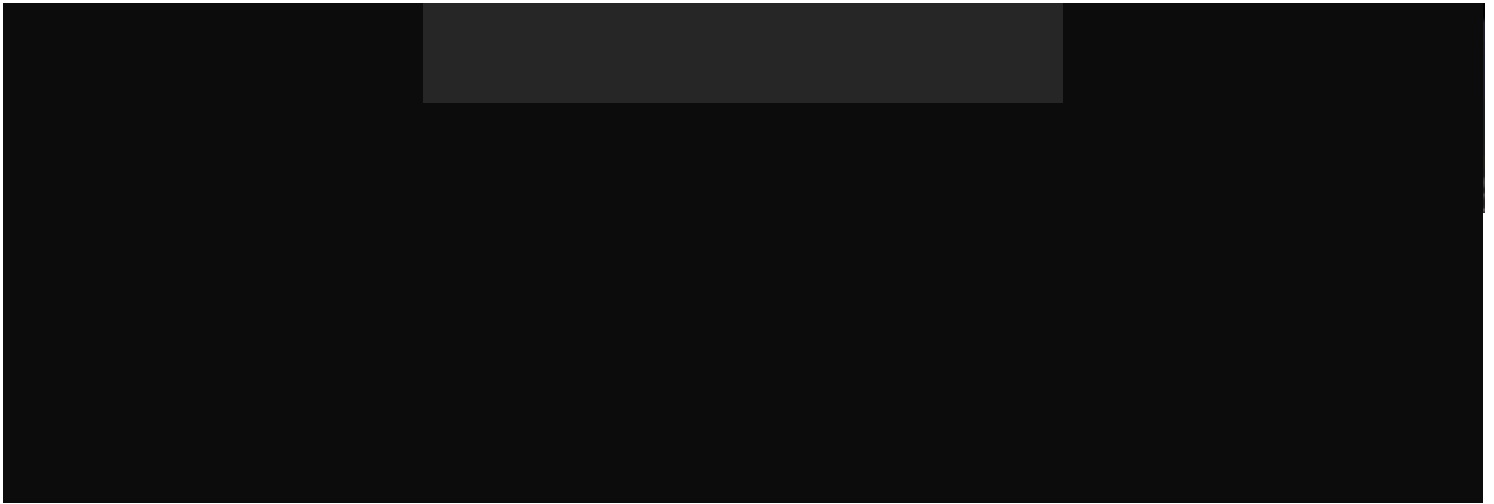
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Ahead of Trump 2.0, lawyers have advice for immigrants — even if they're here legally

By [Catherine E. Shoichet](#), CNN

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“In all honesty, it’s the worst I’ve ever seen it,” says Stump, president of the American Immigration Lawyers Association.

Since the election, she says, both new and longstanding clients have been reaching out and asking for help. And Stump says she can understand their concern.

President-elect Donald Trump has made it clear that major immigration crackdowns will be a focal point of his administration when he returns to power.

His top advisers’ promises of mass deportations and “turbocharged” denaturalizations are making many immigrants anxious — even those who have legal status in the US.

Stump says she’s advising clients to stay calm and do what they can now to prepare.

Here are some things she and other attorneys have been telling those with concerns:

This attorney says people should plan, but not panic

In response to a reader’s question to CNN last month about the risks ahead, Lisa Graybill of the National Immigration Law Center stressed the importance of having plans in place.

“I don’t think anyone can assume that they are safe from (Trump’s) proposals, unless they have a legal basis to be in this country,” says Graybill, the center’s vice president of law and policy.

Undocumented immigrants should be meeting with immigration attorneys now, she says, to see if there are any pathways for them to adjust their legal status. Those who live in states where they can get driver’s licenses legally should do that, she says, and “make sure your car and everything is in good working order, and make sure you’re staying in compliance.”

Her advice: Take what the incoming administration has promised seriously.

“Prepare for the worst,” Graybill says, “and hope for the best.”



Incoming Border Czar Tom Homan, right, speaks before helping to serve meals to state troopers and National Guard troops on November 26 in Eagle Pass, Texas, along the US-Mexico border. At left is Texas Gov. Greg Abbott, who's made immigration enforcement a top priority of his administration. Eric Gay/AP

In a recent interview with NBC, Trump said his administration's mass deportation efforts will target people with criminal histories. But he also indicated officials could go beyond deporting criminals — without specifying what criteria would be used. Asked whether he plans to deport every person who has entered the country illegally, he said, “I think you have to do it.”

Trump also echoed earlier comments made by his designated “border czar,” Tom Homan, noting that deporting families together would be a way to avoid separating them.

Advocates caution that even those who aren't the intended targets of an enforcement operation can end up in the wrong place at the wrong time. They're urging those with concerns to consult with immigration attorneys now about their cases, to connect with local immigrant advocacy organizations and to put plans in place for their families — including documentation designating who would care for any children or property if someone is detained or deported.

“We are certainly hopeful that many of these threats won’t come to pass,” Graybill says, “but based on the appointments Trump has made, and the rhetoric, we are preparing.”

Undocumented immigrants aren’t the only ones who should be worried, according to an ACLU lawyer

Homan, Trump’s border czar, has said talk of mass deportation should only “be threatening to the illegal immigrant community.”

But immigrant and civil rights groups also say immigrants who are legally in the US have reasons to be concerned.

“It would be a mistake to assume that you will be spared if you are here legally,” says Lee Gelernt, deputy director of the American Civil Liberties Union’s Immigrants’ Rights Project.

The ACLU has warned that hundreds of thousands of immigrants with temporary legal protections could lose them, and that the rhetoric around mass deportation could lead to racial profiling and wrongful arrests.

Each individual case is different, and Gelernt says he can’t give legal advice en masse. But the ACLU attorney says immigrants should carry proof of legal status and — regardless of their legal status — documentation showing how long they’ve been in the US.

He also suggests they carry phone numbers of people in their community they can call if they’re detained.

Some lawyers are sharing ‘know your rights’ cards

Some lawyers are sharing “know your rights” cards, Stump says, outlining what to do in different scenarios.

“All people in the United States, regardless of immigration status, have certain rights and protections under the U.S. Constitution,” the Immigrant Legal Resource Center says on a website sharing its version of the cards. The organization’s guidelines advise people not to open the door to immigration agents who don’t have warrants signed by a judge, not to answer questions and not to sign anything without consulting an attorney.





A participant holds a "rights card" during a bilingual workshop for immigrants on December 4 at the office of the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights in Los Angeles. Jae C. Hong/AP

"If somebody comes up to you on the street and says, 'Hey, show me your papers,' you don't have to talk to them. You can keep walking. ... Ask, 'Am I under arrest? Do you have a warrant?'" Stump says. "These are just cards that people can keep with them to memorize."

An attorney is telling businesses to prepare for travel bans and processing delays

Companies with foreign employees are also concerned about what's coming, according to Jeff Joseph, a Denver attorney with corporate clients across the country and around the world. But exactly what challenges they'll face varies, depending on factors like their foreign employees' nationalities and what their business does.

To help clients plan, Joseph says his firm has been referring to what happened during the past Trump administration and what's been proposed in Project 2025, the controversial blueprint for a reimagined federal government in a second Trump term. Trump tried to distance himself from the proposal during the campaign, but many people who worked in his first administration are associated with it. And Trump has already tapped some of them, like Homan, for leadership roles in the incoming administration.

Travel bans are likely, Joseph says, which means he's been weighing different options to help corporate clients prepare.

"We look at (employee) populations and look to see if they draw from Middle Eastern countries or from China, with the expectation that we're going to see the travel bans come back into play," Joseph says. "(We're asking), what can we do to triage the populations from certain Middle Eastern countries or from China? Can we get them here before the election? Can we fast-track their cases in any way? Or do we look at placing them in another country outside the United States?"

The end of programs that have provided legal work authorization and deportation protections, including Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and Temporary Protected Status (TPS,) is another possibility Joseph is trying to prepare some clients to face.



Immigrants, rights groups and citizens attend a meeting in Stamford, Connecticut, on November 12 to discuss the uncertain future for the state's immigrants following President-elect Donald Trump's election win. State and local officials sought to address high levels of anxiety in the immigrant community, especially among undocumented people. John Moore/Getty Images

"We're having individualized consults," Joseph says, adding that he's meeting with employees

currently protected by TPS or DACA to see if there are other immigration pathways available for them.

He's also encouraging companies to budget more time and money for any legal immigration petitions they plan to file. In the past Trump administration, he says, officials regularly requested additional evidence, which delayed processing times. Denial rates also increased, he says.

Legal battles are coming and likely to impact what happens

Joseph, who will take office as the American Immigration Lawyers Association's president next June, says it's important to keep things in perspective.

"If we look back to Trump 1.0, Stephen Miller had a very aggressive, anti-legal immigration agenda. But a lot of it got tied up in litigation. And I anticipate the same thing will happen now," he says.

Legal challenges to new immigration policies are likely, he says, and something attorneys are prepared to pursue.

"What I keep telling my clients is, 'Yes, there's a reason to be concerned. Yes, there's a reason to have some foresight and forethought into how you're going to approach this. But also, we're prepared ... to take these things to court,'" he says.

California Attorney General Rob Bonta offered a similar assessment earlier this month.

"Are we reaching a point that we have to carry proof that we're citizens?" a reporter asked Bonta during an event aimed at advising immigrants of their rights under the state's laws.

"I don't think we're at that point," Bonta said. "We are at a point of preparation and readiness, anticipation of what's to come. We have in place a full set of laws, some of which were put in place during Trump 1.0."

Bonta said California sued the prior Trump administration more than 120 times, and officials are once again ready to take their fight to court.

"He wants to do what he wants when he wants, and he will break the law, and we'll stop him," Bonta said.

Some of her clients are afraid of losing their citizenship

Stump says the incoming administration's threats to ramp up denaturalization efforts are raising

Stump says the incoming administration's threats to ramp up denaturalization efforts are raising alarm for some of her clients.

"People are now coming to me who are scared, even if they don't have a reason to be," she says. "They want me to go review everything and make sure that they're safe, just so they can sleep at night."

How concerned should naturalized citizens be? It depends on their particular cases, Stump says.

She starts with a key question to help clients sort out next steps: Was their immigration case connected with other family members in the past?



Members of the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights join migrant workers and others in a march on the "International Day of Action and Solidarity with Migrants" in downtown Los Angeles on December 18. Damian Dovarganes/AP

It's possible, Stump says, that dependents' cases could be impacted years later by issues in earlier applications.

Then, Stump says she asks: "Did you lie about anything? Did you tell the truth on all your

applications? Did you read everything before you signed it?”

Some cases are simple, she says, while others are more concerning.

“I’m just advising people to stay calm. If there’s something you’re worried about, now’s the time to tell me. If you still have copies of everything you filed, just gather those copies and keep them in a file. ... It will be easier to have those now than to be trying to track all of that stuff down in an emergency.”

In some cases, she says ‘it’s OK to just kind of wait and ride it out’

Stump says she’s recommending taking action now to:

- Undocumented immigrants who haven’t yet spoken with an attorney
- Anyone who’s in the US on a nonimmigrant visa who has the possibility of applying for a permanent legal status
- Permanent legal residents who are concerned about “anything that you may or may not have done, or can be accused of doing, to get that taken away from you”

In those cases, Stump says conversations with immigration attorneys now make sense.

“But otherwise,” she says, “if your concerns are just fear, but you don’t think there’s anything you’ve done wrong, I think it’s OK to just kind of wait and ride it out and see what happens.”

CNN’s Aaron Pellish and Zachary B. Wolf contributed to this report.

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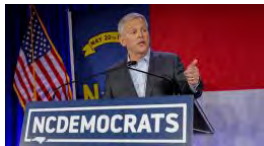


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