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Introduction

What is preventing the U.S. to allow more immigrants into the U.S? The United States has always been a country that views itself as helping other countries in need of help. However, when it comes to immigration certain laws were put in place to dramatically reduce the number of people that can come here legally and made it so the process is prolonged and takes up to a couple of decades. As of 2020, fifty-one million immigrants were reported living in the United States. These people try to come here because they are left with no choice and coming here legally is impossible for them with their current living conditions.

I became interested in immigration because I was born in the U.S. to immigrant parents that had me sent to Colombia when I was little. I always wondered why my mom could not just simply become a citizen when I came here. After growing up and learning more about the situations in the U.S. I learned that the citizenship process is really difficult to get for people that want to come so it results in people coming to the U.S. illegally in order to try and have a better life.

In my research, I expect to find out why the U.S. put in place laws that are preventing access to immigrants able to come here to the United States legally. Focusing on how they are restricted in the number of people that can be citizens and then hopefully coming up with ideas in order to help the process be faster and fair for thousands of families who just want better for themselves and their loved ones.

Source Entries

Citation #1

Konczal, Lisa. "Immigration Laws and Policing." *Crime and Punishment in America: An*

Encyclopedia of Trends and Controversies in the Justice System, edited by Laura L. Finley, vol. 1, ABC-CLIO, 2017, pp. 269-275. *Gale eBooks*, link.gale.com/apps/doc/CX7123200085/GVRL?u=cuny_nytc&sid=bookmark-GVRL&xid=833c8605. Accessed 11 Apr. 2022.

Summary

The article went over the different laws that were put in place in order to restrict the number of people able to come here from other countries. The first law was the naturalization act of 1790 which naturalized only white people who were free and of “good character.” Right after the fourteenth amendment was added in 1868 it extended it to people born in the United States as well as to previously enslaved African Americans. Several other laws like the Chinese exclusion act of 1882 restricted access to the number of people able to be citizens and as well prohibited them from being able to buy property. Nowadays legislation passed in certain states allow police to use “reasonable suspicion” in who they can approach and in states like Arizona people caught helping immigrants are also targeted by police.

Reflection

The laws and acts discussed in the article that was put in place make it difficult for people already to become citizens. These restrictions limited the amount to only allow as little as seven percent of the people trying to get citizenship. In order to get citizenship, they would need to have a family already in the United States with full citizenship to apply or be a professional in a field or business that no one in the United States already is in order to get temporary visas. Since most people come to the United States for economic reasons like finding work opportunities they are already unqualified to apply for citizenship.

Quotation

In the article, the author states “Quotas based on national origins were replaced in 1965 with a system allowing limited numbers of people from various categories, such as family members of U.S. citizens and certain individuals who serve U.S. business and professional interests. The definition of legal refugee status was expanded in 1980 to allow those fleeing persecution in their homeland due to race, religion, nationality, or political beliefs.” (Laura 271)

Citation #2

“U.S. Immigration | Let's Talk | NPR.” Performance by Tom Gjelten, *Youtube*, NPR News, 24

May 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m9zf8hkCqIg>. Accessed 11 Apr. 2022.

Summary

The United States has always been trying to determine which people we allow in and which to not let in. The first law in 1790 was implemented only for white people who came from Europe and excluded African Americans and Native Americans already living here for centuries. Then in 1882 the U.S. prohibited Chinese from coming here and then congress introduced the immigration act of 1924 that reserved the majority of visas for people from Europe and

Reflection

After watching the video and looking at these laws that the United States have put in place one can clearly see that the U.S. has always had issues with foreigners getting citizenship and had no issues for people in Europe which was made up of white people. Even if people born in the United States like the Native Americans and African Americans who were living here for centuries. It wasn't until the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 that the U.S. got rid of those racist and discriminatory quotas. Doing so allowed for immigrants to get legal status if they had spouses, siblings or parents already in the United States.

Quotation

The Immigrant Quotas act of 1952 had 154,657 total visas and Europe had the majority with 96.7% of the visas reserved, unlike Asia which only had 1.9% and Africa and Oceania with only 1.3%.

Citation #3

“Why Don't Immigrants Apply for Citizenship?” *American Immigration Council*, 9 Oct. 2021,

<https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/why-don%E2%80%99t-they-just-get-line>.

Summary

Many immigrants who have lived in the United States for more than 10 years won't be able to become citizens for as long as they stay here. As stated before there are only three ways for them to get citizenship either employment, family reunification, or humanitarian resources. Those Immigrants who don't have any of those options even if they pay their taxes and work hard won't be able to get legal status. The only other way for them to get a visa is through the annual diversity which only makes about 50,000 visas a year.

Reflection

This situation is a disaster because someone who would want to get citizenship legally is not able because of the options they have. The United States makes this process hard for people to get it fairly resulting in people coming here illegally. People who are struggling with their living situations cannot wait 10 or more years. The U.S. should make the process easier for people who want to work hard and make living for themselves.

Quotation

“People from countries with high levels of immigration to the United States—Mexico, China, India, and the Philippines—generally have the longest waiting times for immigrant visas. For example, the married and unmarried adult children of U.S. citizens from Mexico, and the Filipino siblings of U.S. citizens, must wait between 19 and 24 years for visas to become available.” (Paragraph 10)

Conclusion

In conclusion, after doing research and finding out why the U.S. is preventing more immigrants from getting citizenship I have found that the laws put in place have made it difficult for people nowadays to get citizenship the right way. The process that the U.S. has implemented made it so immigrants who want to enter the country and try and have a better life, are not able to enter for more than 10 years as a result of current living conditions. After doing the research I have found these statistics and the current process for citizenship shocking. Knowing this has made me think it might be possible for people like my mother to get her citizenship even though she works hard and pays her taxes. Learning about this situation is important because it does not only affect my family but millions of other families going through the same problems we are going through. I believe that the people who need to know this research are immigrants who are trying to get their citizenship and also policy makers to try and make it easier since it's already impossible for people to get it legally.