

THE HINGHAM UNITY COUNCIL PRESENTS



LET'S TALK: IMMIGRATION

MONDAY, MARCH 2 AT 7PM VIA ZOOM
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS, COMMON MYTHS,
AND HOW YOU CAN HELP
REGISTER AT HINGHAMUNITY.ORG

Overview of what we will cover

Part 1 - HPD Chief David Jones re: police and immigration

Part 2 - FAQs and Myths about immigrants and immigration including:

- What “coming here the right way” really means
- Recent detention statistics
- Financial facts about the actual ‘cost’ to the US of immigrants
- Safety check - note: overview only
 - Advice for immigrants
 - Advice for Bystanders

Part 3 - Ways to Help

- Support the PROTECT Act
- Representative of La Colaborativa, Chelsea
- Courtney Orwig, volunteer at My Brother’s Keeper, Brockton

Part 4 - Q&A

Facts & Myths: the “Right” Way to Become a Citizen

Humanitarian Relief (some of these are temporary only)

- Asylum & Refugee Status: Protection for people fleeing persecution based on race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group. We personally know of folks waiting <10 years for their asylum hearing.
- Temporary Protected Status (TPS): Allows individuals from countries experiencing armed conflict, environmental disasters, or extraordinary, temporary conditions to live and work in the U.S. temporarily.
- U Visa (Victims of Crimes): For victims of specific, serious crimes who have suffered mental or physical abuse and are helpful to law enforcement.
- T Visa (Human Trafficking Victims): For victims of severe forms of trafficking (sex or labor) present in the U.S..
- VAWA Self-Petition: Allows victims of battery or extreme cruelty committed by a U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident spouse, parent, or child to apply for status without the abuser's knowledge.
- Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS): Provides protection to foreign children in the U.S. who have been abused, neglected, or abandoned by one or both parents.
- Humanitarian Parole: A temporary, discretionary authorization for individuals to enter the U.S. for urgent, compelling humanitarian reasons, such as medical treatment or visiting a dying family member.

Facts & Myths: the “Right” Way to Become a Citizen

Other Pathways:

- Employment based visas (skilled professionals and workers in shortage occupations) - costly, slow and complicated and you must have an employer sponsor
- Family sponsored migration - for direct relatives only (spouses, unmarried children, parents if citizen is over 21); backlogs of 2-25 years however
- Green card lottery - very low odds (paused as of 12-25)
- Investor program: for employers who invest \$\$ in US and create jobs

***NOTE: There is no “10 year” rule - merely being in the US for a long time does not qualify someone for status. This is a common misconception.

Facts & Myths: Hiring immigrants right now

The difference between “undocumented” and “immigrant”: only immigrants who have no authorization to work, study or otherwise live in the US are “undocumented” (or “illegal”). Merely being an immigrant should not be cause for concern.

- Merely being undocumented is NOT a criminal offense.
- Examples of undocumented: crossed a border without processing, overstayed visas, overstayed TPS



Facts & Myths: Hiring immigrants right now

- Valid work authorization is available even prior to becoming a permanent resident. For each of the various forms of relief available, there are usually rules that can allow for work authorization. Checking the validity of work authorization is easy.
 - Permanent resident (green card holder) - the green card means the person is legally in the US via one of the methods discussed above.
 - Must be renewed every 10 years
 - No right to vote
 - May enter and leave US
 - must hold a green card for five years before applying for citizenship
- Abuse reported directly to me (more than once):
 - Employers withholding pay and blackmailing immigrants with ICE threats.

Facts & Myths: Recent Detentions

Some statistics concerning recent detentions

- Of those booked into ICE custody since October 1, 2025:
 - 73% had no criminal conviction
 - Nearly half had no conviction nor ANY pending criminal charges
 - 5% had violent criminal convictions
 - A majority of the criminal convictions were for vice, immigration or traffic.

[Source: CATO institute]

- Anecdote: a citation for driving (as opposed to just passing) in the left hand lane of the MA turnpike is classified as a "criminal conviction" in DHS statistics even though it is a misdemeanor.

Facts & Myths: Recent Detentions

A few personal notes/observations based on my interviews in Plymouth & Suffolk:

- I have personally interviewed dozens of detainees in the last 9 years and **not one** of them has had a criminal conviction.
- Many of the detained immigrants I've interviewed have been here for well over a decade, have tax-paying jobs and families they were supporting. One young man had missed the birth of his second child while being driven from New Hampshire to Texas to Boston in the back of an airless van.
- Data from detentions is difficult to obtain, but it is worth noting that anecdotally we are seeing many people detained who have a current application in process or a current immigration case pending. (i.e., they are entering “the right way” and still being incarcerated.)

Facts & Myths: The “Cost” of Immigrants

- Undocumented immigrants do not have (and have not historically ever had) access to federally funded social services coverage, including SNAP, Medicaid, Medicare, CHIP and the Affordable Care Act Marketplace. [Source: Congress.gov]
- In 2022, undocumented immigrants paid \$96.7 billion in federal, state, and local taxes. [Source: Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy]
- In 2024, the total amount of SNAP funds paid by the US government was \$100.3 billion. [Source: USAFacts.org]
- The “One Big, Beautiful Bill” passed in July 2025 allocated an ADDITIONAL \$170.7 billion to border and immigration enforcement. [Source: Congress.gov]

Facts & Myths: The “Cost” of Immigrants

In other words:

Undocumented immigrants pay roughly the same amount of money in taxes that the government pays out in SNAP benefits – benefits undocumented immigrants don't qualify for.

AND the US has recently approved spending another \$170.7 billion dollars to stop this.

Safety: Immigrants

This is NOT a full Know Your Rights presentation - we have given these and many other fantastic nonprofits are doing so too (MIRA Coalition). Visit MIRA or HUC website.*

- ✓ Carry proof of documentation
 - Even US citizens! ICE can stop based on probable cause and the Supreme Court has now deemed probable cause to include accents, appearance, vocation.
 - Proof: Visa, Global Entry Card, Passport, Green Card
 - A Real ID is NOT proof of citizenship!
- ✓ Exercise your right to remain silent. Hand over a red card if you are stopped. Put the burden of all proof on ICE.
- ✓ Keep your hands where they can see them and do not run or struggle.
- ✓ Ask to see a judicially signed warrant before allowing ICE to enter private spaces (currently a legal gray area due to 5th circuit decision, which will likely be challenged).

Know Your Rights Cards

- Asserting the right to remain silent can be difficult.
- It's helpful for people to have a rights card in their wallets that they can pull out and give to immigration agents.

Order or print cards:

<https://www.ilrc.org/red-cards>

[Multilingual Infographic for Using Rights Card](#)



Bystander Best Practices - Overview only

Be safe. Don't make a bad situation worse for everyone.

- ✓ If you are an immigrant, please exercise extreme caution
- ✓ Call LUCE hotline 617-370-5023 (visit LUCE website to sign up to be an ICE watcher or hotline operator) <https://www.lucemass.org/>
- ✓ Do not physically interfere
- ✓ DO record!



LUCE

IMMIGRANT JUSTICE NETWORK
OF MASSACHUSETTS

Bystander Best Practices



- ✓ Record (video) if you can
- ✓ Keep a safe distance, move back further if asked
- ✓ Do narrate your recording: where you are, time of day, number of officers, etc.
- ✓ Do not ask detainee their name
- ✓ Do ask detainee for the name of someone you can call for them
- ✓ Get as much info as possible about the arresting officers and, especially, **where they are taking the detainee**

THANK YOU!

Full slide show will be posted at
hinghamunity.org

