



UNITED STATES SENATE

Topic A: Immigration: Forging a Path to Legal Citizenship

Is America a nation of immigrants? As of 2018, the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services says it is not. In its revised mission statement, the federal agency that grants visas and green cards has ceased to employ the phrase that confirms “America’s promise” as a nation of immigrants. This committee will look into why details such as these have changed as attitudes toward immigration have evolved.

Unequipped to deal with an influx of migrants, border facilities and migrant shelters are dangerously overcrowded and overburdened. Dysfunction, disease, and even death are a growing reality. In 2017, President Trump ended Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA, stripping protection from deportation from many immigrants who were brought to the United States illegally as children. The number of refugees afforded entry into America has drastically dwindled, perhaps a reflection of new American wants and needs in the coming decade. At all ends, the question of whether the current immigration system violates constitutional rights remains unanswered. Because it taps into something quintessential to American history and values, immigration remains one of the most salient issues within American politics. It has an endless number of nuances and corner cases; in this committee, we will be discussing the rights of workers, the role of ICE and border patrol, immigrants’ rights and detention, deportation and due process, the clash between state and federal policy, and much more. Who gets to decide who comes to the United States? It will be up to the discretion of each senator to define which aspects will matter most during debate. The goal is that senators will pass bipartisan legislation that outlines a welcoming roadmap to citizenship for aspiring Americans.

Please consider the varying jurisdictions and powers that each branch of the federal government has over immigration when conducting your research. Recall what’s worked in the past, as well as what hasn’t. Moreover, think critically about the implications of different policies not only for hopeful American citizens but for the American spirit. We recommend that senators enter the chamber with knowledge of the constitutional and ethical questions raised when discussing this delicate topic. Indeed, when the government has the ability to deny the constitutional protections of due process and equal protection to one group, everyone’s rights are in danger.

BMUN 68 will also be taking place during a presidential election year, which means some senators will be taking on the roles of candidates in this committee (this is exciting). The U.S. Senate will also be fast-paced and challenging, for the issue of who to let into

America and who not to let into America is about as old as America itself.

Topic B: Climate Change and the Clean Economy

At its core, climate change is also an issue of economic justice. This topic can be thought of as the intersection between addressing climate change and strengthening the U.S. economy. In particular, delegates will bring innovation to the table while they are introducing transitional pathways for Americans. Such a transition is and will be simultaneously cultural and economic; similar to upheavals that occurred during the Industrial Revolution, America must cope with new ideas and guidelines that must be put in place in order to ensure the prosperity of the nation.

Interestingly, different senators view the issue of climate change through different lenses. Some see climate change legislation as necessary because the fate of humanity relies on it; others seek to downplay climate science. Still others see climate change through the lens of money in politics, through which large corporations and interest groups are able to line the pockets of senators in exchange for resistance against any progress for environmental conservation and protection. Each senator has a unique and viable reason for the decisions that they make. It's undeniable that representatives ultimately hope to protect their states' economic livelihoods. The committee will allow each of these viewpoints to clash, mingle, and intertwine.

Overall, just as the government of the United States was founded as an institution "of the people, by the people, and for the people," the challenges of addressing climate change and its consequences, at the end of the day, affect the fundamental component of our democracy: the people. Our atmosphere is rapidly changing and our oceans are rising, impacting not only those in island territories in the decades to come, but also the prosperity of the human race in the near future. Regardless of whether senators believe these developments are truly a result of climate change, better policies must be put in place to protect Americans.

By the same token, we must think about those within nonrenewable energy and coal-based industries; without a sufficient framework for a transition towards a green future, the backbone of our domestic industries, our labor sector, will end up disenfranchised and unemployed. There's no easy answer to the challenge of reconciling our country's environmental and labor-based interests, which makes it that much more important that we face and attempt to solve these issues in the present, and without impunity.

A little bit about me—my name is Laura Nguyen, and I'll be your head chair for BMUN 68's U.S. Senate. I'm a sophomore at UC Berkeley majoring in Sociology with minors in Data Science and Human Rights. I love coming-of-age films and hummus. I also love America! Which is why I want to tell the truth about it. In this committee, I hope you'll feel the same.