What Is “Executive Action”?  

- Executive order: formal presidential order, based on constitutional or delegated authority, with force of law
- (Other) executive action: any policy enacted by the executive branch, based on constitutional, statutory, or delegated authority, including e.g.-
  - Regulations
  - Statements of policy
  - Agency guidelines
  - Enforcement priorities
Executive Actions on Immigration

• Historical examples
  • Humanitarian Parole: discretionary authority for Attorney General (now DHS) to permit the temporary entry of individuals into the United States for urgent human reasons or significant public benefit (INA §212(d)(5))
    • 1956 Hungarians
    • 1959-72 Cubans
    • 1962-65 China
    • 1975-79 Vietnamese, Cambodians, Laotians
    • 1977-80 Soviets
    • 1980 Cubans and Haitians
    • 1989 Soviets
• Historical examples
  • Extended Voluntary Departure: temporary suspension of removal of people from a particular country because of political strife, natural disasters, or other crises (prior to 1990, pursuant to president’s constitutional authority and INA §103)
    • 1960 Cubans
    • 1976 Lebanese
    • 1977-82 Ethiopians
    • 1978 Ugandans
    • 1979 Nicaraguans
    • 1979 Iranians
    • 1980 Afghans
    • 1981-87 Poles
Executive Actions on Immigration

• Historical examples
  • Temporary Protected Status (TPS): Since 1990, DHS may designate nationals from a country for temporary relief from removal and work authorization on the basis of ongoing armed conflict, natural disaster, or other “extraordinary and temporary” conditions (INA §244)
    • 1991 Somalia
    • 1997 Sudan
    • 1998 Nicaragua and Honduras
    • 2001 El Salvador and Southern Sudan
Executive Actions on Immigration

• Historical examples
  • Deferred Enforced Departure: Since 1990, similar to Extended Voluntary Departure, pursuant to executive order or formal presidential memorandum
    • 1990 Chinese
    • 1991 Kuwaitis
    • 1992 Salvadorans
    • 1997 Haitians
    • 1999-2009 Liberians
Executive Actions on Immigration

• Historical examples
  • Deferral of Deportation/Deferred Action: administrative policy (agency guidance or statement of policy) to not pursue deportation proceedings against a particular individual
    • 1987 Nicaraguans
    • 1987-90 IRCA families
    • 1989 Chinese
    • 1997 VAWA beneficiaries
    • 1998 Central Americans affected by Hurricane Mitch
    • 2005 Foreign students affected by Hurricane Katrina
Executive Actions on Immigration

- Obama administration
  - DED extension for Liberians (2009 and 2011)
  - TPS for Haitians affected by 2010 earthquake (60,000) + parole for Haitian orphans being adopted by U.S. citizens
  - Parole in place for parents, spouses, and children of U.S. citizens in the military
  - Formalization of DHS enforcement priorities and grounds for prosecutorial discretion
    - DHS-DOJ review of removal docket (38,000)
  - Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program (590,000)
Additional Possible Scenarios

- Changes to DHS enforcement priorities
  - Focus on serious criminals instead of noncitizens convicted of any crime
  - Restrict the definition of recent entrants and “immigration obstructionists”
  - Could reduce removals by 10,000 – 30,000 people per year (or more if changes to CBP border removal policies)
Additional Possible Scenarios

- Expansion of existing DACA program
  - 1.2 million currently eligible
  - 1.9 million arrived as children prior to 2011 and meet education requirement
  - 3.1 million arrived as children prior to 2011
Additional Possible Scenarios

- **New DACA-style program for other groups**
  - 3.6 million unauthorized parents of U.S. citizens or LPRs
    - 3.3 million here > 5 years
    - 2.5 million here > 10 years
  - 1.5 million unauthorized spouses of U.S. citizens or LPRs
    - 1.2 million here > 5 years
    - 900,000 here > 10 years
Parole in place for immediate relatives of U.S. citizens

- Potentially eligible for non-preference visas, but may be blocked by 3- and 10-year bars
- 770,000 unauthorized spouses of U.S. citizens
- 560,000 unauthorized parents of adult (over 21) U.S. citizens
For more Information

Marc Rosenblum
Deputy Director,
U.S. Immigration Policy Program
MPI

mrosenblum@migrationpolicy.org

(202) 266-1919

www.migrationpolicy.org

© 2014 Migration Policy Institute