

ADVOCATING FOR IMMIGRATION REFORM:

WORDS MATTER

The specific words we use are extremely powerful at evoking emotions and images. Think carefully about the words you use, and what they mean for who you are talking to.

Don't say

Say

"Illegal Immigrant"

"Immigrant families" / "Undocumented families" / "Aspiring Americans"

"Amnesty"

"Path to Citizenship"

"Deporting detainees"

"Separating families by deporting parents"

"Racist" / "Bigot"

"Those who are afraid of their neighbors"

ATTACKS & RESPONSES

Opponents of immigration rely on several common arguments to make their case. Here's how to respond.

"People who broke the law to come here shouldn't be rewarded with citizenship. Permanent legal status is a reasonable middle ground solution."

- People who are eager to come out of the shadows, get right with the law, and work toward an earned path to citizenship shouldn't be permanently trapped in second class status. That's not the American way.

"'Immigration reform' really means amnesty for illegal immigrants"

- Every single proposal for a roadmap to citizenship includes penalties and background checks, and requires aspiring citizens to fulfill numerous requirements like learning English before they take the oath of citizenship.

"It's not fair to let illegal immigrants cut to the front of the line ahead of law-abiding immigrants who wait their turn."

- Everyone agrees that immigrants who have legal status and have waited for years to become citizens should have their shot first. We need to get these hardworking immigrants on the road to citizenship right now, and also give the 11,000,000 who are trapped in the shadows a fair chance.