

OMUN V



US Senate



Delegates,

Welcome to the United States Reform Committee at OMUN V.

My name is Kene Ochuba and I will be the head chair for this committee. I am a grade 11 student at Upper Canada College (UCC) and I have been doing Model United Nations since 2018. I attended OMUN III in 2018 and I had a great experience at the conference. Last year I was fortunate enough to be a vice chair in the INTERPOL committee at OMUN IV. Most recently I have attended the SSUNS Conference at McGill University and Harvard Model United Nations. I am also club president of the DECA club at UCC, where I compete in the marketing event. I play trumpet and many sports including rugby, basketball and volleyball. I am very interested in computer science and programming, as I have knowledge mainly on website development programs such as HTML and CSS, as well as Java as I have learned to program games.

My co-chair is Eugene Ye, a fellow grade 11 student at UCC. He is quite a big music guy, who has played locally, nationally and internationally on the Cello. He enjoys listening to classical music from all different kinds of artists. He also founded the Musicians Without Borders Club at UCC and enjoys participating in other clubs such as Math Society.

This year you'll have the opportunity to discuss two topics including immigration and climate change. The latter is especially pertinent as we have seen the impacts of climate change in recent years and climate change marches have occurred such as the one recently in Queen's Park.

Preparing for the conference I suggest that you use the background guide as a starting point for your research and that you expand your knowledge firstly by looking at the further reading links. You should then conduct more external research where you look into other sites for more research. As well, try to gain a scope of the senator you are representing and the stance they represent for their respective state. As you enter into OMUN V I hope that you will come in with an open mind, to learn and debate with others whether you are a veteran delegate or if this is your first committee. If you are a first time delegate, my advice would be to enter the conference with a good base of knowledge on the US Senate and a well written position paper that can guide you throughout the conference; if you have any questions on the conference or Model United Nations feel free to email us with the email below and we would be happy to give you suggestions.

Kene Ochuba
Head Chair

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Topic 1: Immigration

The United States Senate is one of the two houses of the legislature (Congress) of the United States, established in 1789 under the Constitution. They congregate and meet to discuss many issues regarding the USA. The idea of the United States Senate was brought to life by the Founding Fathers in order to counterbalance the power of the House of Representatives. Each state is equally represented in the Senate regardless of size, and since the Seventeenth Amendment, are elected directly by the voters of each state. They are responsible for all of the lawmaking in the US and as stated in the Constitution vote on treaties in order for them to be ratified. Many regard the USA as a beacon of hope or a place where people can come to live the American Dream, which is regarded as a dream where people can get a fresh start. The American Immigration system has evolved over the years and acts as a way for the US. to regulate people entering their country. The main way for immigrants to enter the USA are through visas, which are permits that allow a person to travel, enter and remain in the US. They do not guarantee entry into the US, but do indicate that the individual is eligible to enter the country. Immigrants seeking to become permanent residents must first apply for a green card. Once a green card is obtained, these residents can apply for citizenship after a five year period where they do not commit a crime. Recently, the United States has granted about 1 million green cards per annum. About half end up in the hands of immigrants already in the country, such as students and temporary workers and the rest for applicants that are outside of the United States. The majority of visas require sponsorship through a family member or an employer.





Immigration History

Immigration is believed to have come in three waves: The Great European Wave (1880-1930), Retrenchment (1930-1970) and Rebound (1970-2010). The core of law for immigration is the Immigration and Naturalization Act (INA), which was enacted in 1952 to regulate immigration policies to reduce discrimination based on race and other factors. The Act has been amended multiple times, with one amendment in 1965 that got rid of the practice of quotas for certain nations. The 1980 Refugee Act laid down terms for refugees and the REAL ID Act of 2005 bolstered the restrictions on applications for asylum in the USA. The Immigration Act of 1990, established that no country could receive more than 7 percent of the employment and family sponsored visas per year. The Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 drastically changed the INA as it added consequences for undocumented immigrants who commit crimes, enhanced the definition of an aggravated felony and set down guidelines that allowed for deportation of criminal immigrants. The Comprehensive Reform Act of 2007 is a bill that combined border security with workplace enforcement measures in order to legalize 12 million unauthorized immigrants. The bill was supported by President Bush, however it did not pass due to Republican disapproval. This is an example of an act that would have increased immigration into the US, and allowed for an easier process for immigrants.

Governmental Bodies for Immigration

Department of Homeland Security (DHS): The DHS is a cabinet department that looks after the federal agencies that secure the US from the many threats they face.

Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE): ICE is a newly founded federal agency that works under the Department of Homeland Security. The agency carries out immigration enforcement in the interior of the United States. ICE was founded after 9/11 and contains four sub-agencies that carry out three main tasks: immigration enforcement, investigation of illegal movement of people and goods and the prevention of terrorism.

Custom and Border Protection: Customs and Border Protection is in charge of stopping unauthorized persons and harmful or illegal goods from entering into the US. They act as a middle man for trade and enforce custom regulations. The job for border patrol is generally unsought after as they face harsh conditions, low funding and resources, as well as standard benefits.

United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS): The USCIS is an agency that is responsible for sorting through and caching immigration and naturalization applications and setting policies for immigration services. They safeguard national security and eliminate immigration case backlogs.

Executive Office for Immigration Review: This office is responsible for acting as judges and a reviewal committee for immigration cases. They also are the parent organization of the Board of Immigration Appeals that reviews resolutions and arrests from multiple immigration agencies and delivers the final decision on cases.



Immigration Issues

The United States immigrants are seen in more of a negative light and with recent moves by Donald Trump have been outright banned in some instances and from certain countries. The main problem we have seen with immigrants is that they have a higher propensity to commit crimes. As well, due to the integration system they are more likely to work in low-wage and low-status job sectors. The policies that Trump has strived for and has implemented give more power to federal immigrant agents. This includes an upgrade of the fast-track deportation process to a new system where ICE agents can question, arrest, detain and deport undocumented immigrants, with less than two years of residence anywhere in the country. Another issue that has arisen are sanctuary cities, which have brought along a battle between the federal government and local governments. Sanctuary cities have limited cooperation with the federal government to circumvent immigration law and shield its citizens from these laws.



Libby Schaaf, the mayor of Oakland CA in 2018 warned the Oakland general public of ongoing immigration operations, that recognized the potential dangers to members of the community. She provided hotlines to immigrant resources and sent out helpful materials on how to deal with ICE agents. She received a great deal of criticism from the ICE and Republican lawmakers, as it makes their jobs harder and endangers federal agents and the public. More discrepancy between state and federal governments continued as the speaker of the Florida House of Representatives scorned Congress for not being able to ban sanctuary cities. One of the main problems is partisanship regarding immigration as each state is different and in Virginia for example they introduced House Bill 1257 that would restrict local governments from passing sanctuary city policies and would ensure that local governments cooperate with federal agents and the federal law. The federal government has not taken a unified stance on immigration in the United States and needs to find one in order



to properly regulate immigration in the United States. As well, there has been inactivity on the legislative front, as no concrete laws have been put into place to combat sanctuary cities. Overall there must be cooperation between state and federal governments to find a policy that works for all.

Questions to Consider

1. Should sanctuary cities be outright banned, and should more power be given to federal agencies regarding immigration matters?
2. How can the United States ensure there are less undocumented immigrants in the country and that their processes are more streamlined?
3. Should immigration policies be left for the state governments to resolve, or should federalism, a partnership of parity between multiple levels of government, remain?
4. What possible threats are posed from allowing people to work, live and enter the United States without proper documentation to the citizens of the United States?

Further Reading

<https://www.usa.gov/immigration-and-citizenship>

<https://www.ice.gov/>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/05/us/ICE-BORTAC-sanctuary-cities.html>

<https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/how-united-states-immigration-system-works>

<https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/06/17/key-findings-about-u-s-immigrants/>

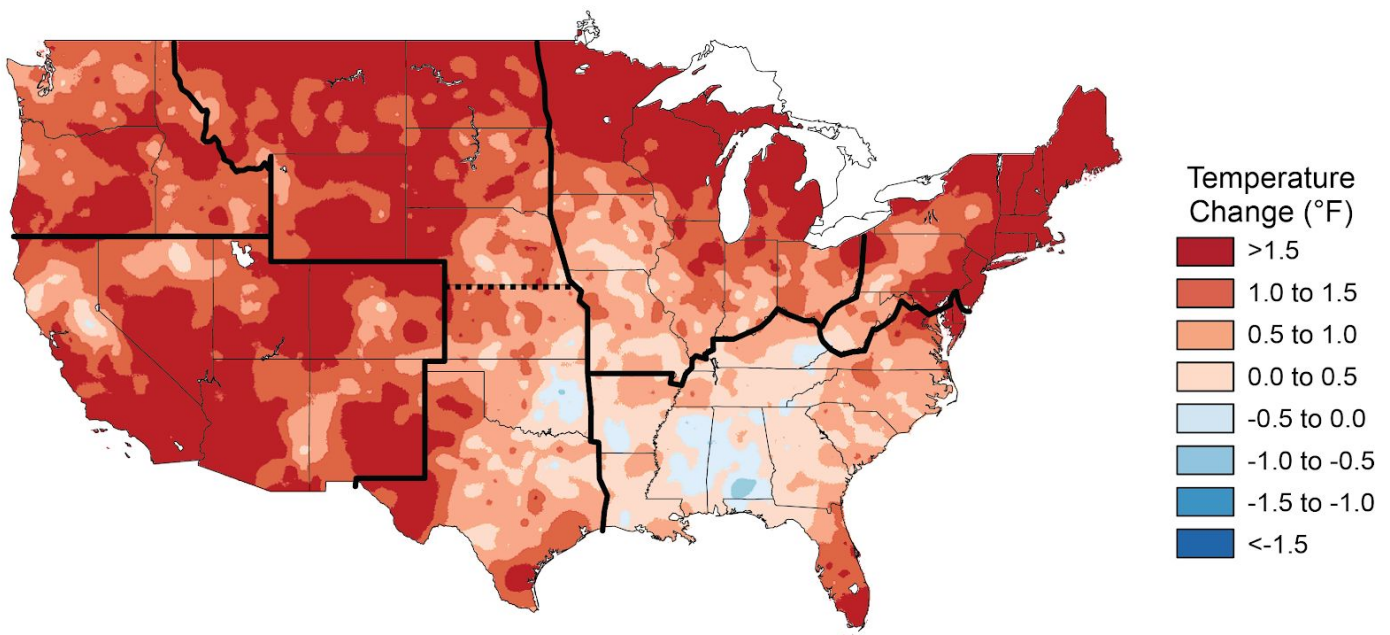
<https://www.cfr.org/backgrounders/us-immigration-debate-0>



Topic 2: Climate Change

Energy in the United States, as in many other countries, is vital to the economy and to national security. American Political conversation about energy has been restricted to tax breaks for increased production, access to public lands. These are essential conversations, however, do not look to tackle the immense challenge of climate change in the United States. Most of the warming on earth has occurred within the past 35 years, with the five warmest years taking place since 2010. Some of the negative effects of climate change could include longer periods of drought, famines in certain areas, more frequent wildfires and an increase in the intensity of tropical storms.

Observed U.S. Temperature Change



Labour Market

The labour market will be especially affected in order to decrease the United States' effect on climate change. Some job losses are inevitable especially in carbon intensive industries switching to more sustainable businesses. However, this switch could result in creating more industry leading jobs and strengthening the economy. In recent years the US population has expressed interest in turning protecting the environment and dealing with climate change into a top priority. The National Climate Assessment report argues that damages incurred by climate change could decrease the American Economy by as much as 10 percent by the end of the century. This report also states that climate change would also incur many costs, such as \$141 billion for heat related deaths and \$118 from sea level rise. A main focus should be on making owners and businesses aware of the long term and short term effects of climate change and their actions that cause it. One solution that came was Project 88, which was a report that brought forward the idea that there were major environmental consequences that could be reduced by making consumers and producers face the effects and social costs of their decisions. The report brought forth a tradeable permit strategy for major pollutants,

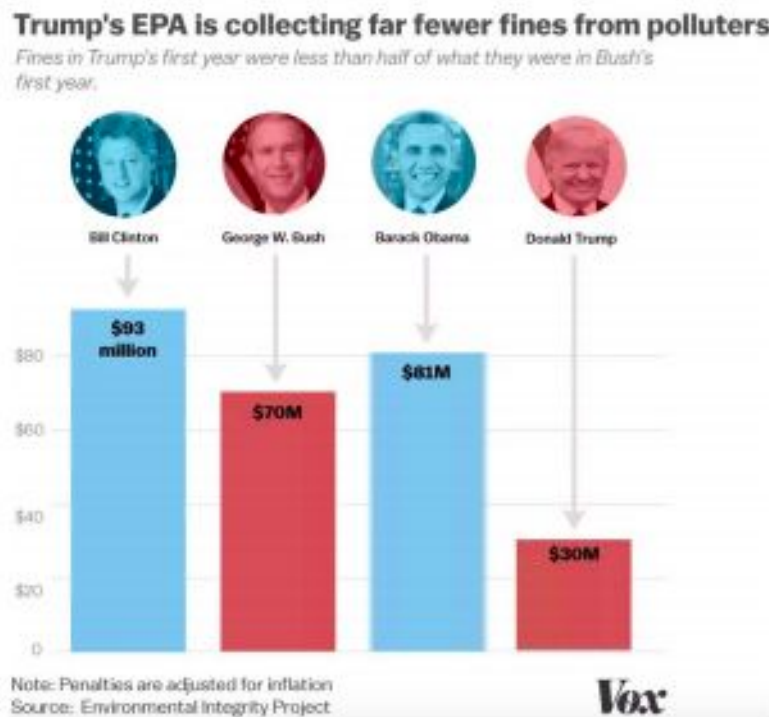


especially those who create sulfur-dioxide emissions, which leads to acid rain. Under the power of George H. W. Bush, the US Congress implemented a market based cap and trade system. This was one of the first steps in over a decade to help with environmental protection. A lot has been said about climate change recently with a Modern American Environmental Movement underway. A main focus has been on promoting more than just beneficial consumer habits like veganism and sorting trash, but also for producers and their businesses. The 2014 People's Climate March, was organized by the People's Climate Movement, where 400,000 activists protested for action against climate change by global leaders who were meeting for the 2014 U.N. Climate Summit. In recent months we have also seen the activism of especially Greta Thunberg, along with other school students to lead school strikes, in over 270 cities globally.

Key Organizations

Department of Energy: This department manages nuclear infrastructure and administers the country's energy policy. In a recent move they granted \$110 million in federal funding to capture carbon, utilize and store it.

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA): The EPA works to protect human health and the environment. The EPA under the rule of Trump has rolled back many protections put in place during previous years. In September of 2019 they changed what can be considered as the waters of the United States in order to put into place a policy that would reduce the amount of water that needs federal protection.



Department of Agriculture: This is a federal executive department that creates and carries out federal laws for farming, forestry and food. It manages the Food and Nutrition Service program, that oversees the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.



Department of Transportation: This a federal Cabinet department that is under the Secretary of Transportation.

Department of the Interior: The Department of the Interior looks after natural resources and cultural heritage. The Department goals are to promote energy security and increase conservation stewardship.

Climate Change Policies

The Energy Policy Act of 2005 provides loans for organizations that develop or use innovative technologies that aim to reduce the amount of greenhouse gases emitted. It also increased the quantity of biofuel that was sold in the USA combined with gasoline. As well, the Department of Energy now has the ability to implement consequences to prevent market manipulation, and give out incentives for better environmental practices. The Green New deal is a plan that lays out American solutions in order to tackle climate change. The plan was introduced by Ocasio-Cortez and Senator Markey and urges the federal government to get rid of greenhouse gas emissions in the economy by reducing their reliance on fossil fuels and to support more jobs in clean energy industries. There are five main goals of the plan that would be tackled in a 10 year mobilization effort. The first goal is to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions. This is where there is zero emission, which is found by summing up all of the gases emitted and subtracting the amount that has been gotten rid of. The second goal is to create millions of high-paying and well benefited jobs to ensure economic stability. The third would be to insert money into cleaner industries. The fourth is to secure clean air and water, healthy food and a healthy environment for all. The final goal is to promote justice and equality by repairing the oppression of marginalized groups, such as indigeneous peoples and people of color.

Climate Change Problems

The main problem that has been faced with transition into cleaner energy sectors are the jobs and unions. Incentivising more green jobs leads to lessened income for workers in nonrenewable energy industries. The unions believe that international organizations need to invest not only into improving green industries, but also for transitioning job skills into these industries to ensure that domestic jobs are protected. These environmental reforms that have happened in the USA have left unions without the ability to project job interests. There has been very little cooperation between climate change reformists and unions, as the reformists work to protect the environment, while unionists try to defend their jobs. The New Green Deal as discussed above also has a step that helps union laborers, by increasing the wages they pay to workers. However, many labour unions are left unhappy such as the United Mine Workers of America and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, as they were not a part of the union transition negotiations. Overall more must be done to ensure that the United States of America can reach their goals regarding climate change to not only secure their long term future, but also to do their part with the sustainable development goals.



Questions to Consider

1. Who should take a lesser stance on the climate change problem, the unions or governments who make environmental policy?
2. How can proper transition occur between nonrenewable energy industries and cleaner ones and at what rate should they occur?
3. Should the Federal government do more to combat climate change and how much funding should be allocated to these programs?
4. Should the United States of America prioritize material gains now or look out for the future generations and the earth that they will inhabit?

Further Reading

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/memberstates/usa>

<https://www.democrats.senate.gov/climate>

<https://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2019/07/senate-democrats-are-getting-head-start-climate-change/593824/>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/10/us/politics/climate-change-filibuster.html>



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"Evolution of the Clean Air Act." EPA. Environmental Protection Agency, 03 Jan. 2017. Web.
08 Sept. 2019. <<https://www.epa.gov/clean-air-act-overview/evolution-clean-air-act>>.

"Family Case Management Program." Women's Refugee Commission, www.womensrefugeecommission.org/images/zdocs/Backgrounder-FCMP.pdf.

"Five Things You Should Know about the DREAM Act." National Immigration Law Center, [www.nilc.org/issues/immigration-reform-and-executive-actions/dreamact/dream-justfacts-2010-11-23/#targetText=The%20DREAM%20Act%20\(S.%203992,way%20to%20obtain%20legal%20residency](http://www.nilc.org/issues/immigration-reform-and-executive-actions/dreamact/dream-justfacts-2010-11-23/#targetText=The%20DREAM%20Act%20(S.%203992,way%20to%20obtain%20legal%20residency).

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