

American Immigration Laws Timeline

1788 The U.S. Constitution restricts the presidency to native born citizens and gives Congress the authority to establish a uniform rule on naturalization.

1798 Alien Act, an attempt to control French radicals after the revolution, stipulates residency and deportation; regulation repealed 1801

1808 U.S. forbids the importation of slaves

1812 Ship's captains must provide a list of all passengers including age, sex, occupation, country of origin and deaths on route

1875 No prostitutes or convicts allowed to enter the U.S.

1876 U.S. Supreme Court declares state laws on immigration unconstitutional

1882 Chinese Exclusion Act

1882 No lunatics, idiots, convicts, or public charges allowed to enter the U.S.

1885 No contract laborers allowed to enter the U.S.

1892 Ellis Island opens. Other federal immigration stations set up in Boston, Philadelphia, and San Francisco

1903 Secretary of Labor and Commerce assume control over immigration until 1940; anarchists excluded

1907 Head tax on immigrants raised; No persons with physical or mental defects, tuberculosis, children not accompanied by a parent.

1917 Immigrants over 16 must be literate in a language; virtually all Asians banned,

1921 Quotas established

1924 National Origins Law (Johnson-Reed Act)

1929 Quotas of 1924 are made permanent

1939 Refugee bill defeated that would allow admittance of 20,000 children from Nazi Germany

1940 Attorney General given control of immigration

1942 Bracero program begun

1943 Repeal of Chinese Exclusion Laws

1946 War Brides Act

1948 Displaced Persons Act

1950 Internal Security Act

1952 The Immigration and Nationality Act (McCarran-Walter Act)

1957 Refugee Escape Act

1960 Cuban refugee program

1964 Bracero program ended

1965 Immigration and Nationality Act

1975 Indochina Refugees Resettlement Program

1976 Immigration and Nationality Act amendments

1980 Refugee Act

1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act