

Obama's Sweeping Immigration Reform: Compassionate or Unconstitutional?

President Obama on Thursday night pushed out what will go down in U.S. history as the most sweeping immigration reform in decades. The move essentially allows about 4.7 million undocumented immigrants to stay in the nation.

"Amnesty is the **immigration** system we have today, millions of people who live here without paying their taxes or playing by the rules," Obama said.

The American Center for Law & Justice (ACLJ), which focuses on constitutional law, argues that Obama's Executive Order on immigration reform is unconstitutional.

"The action is an unconstitutional power grab of historic proportions by a president whose tenure has centered on governing by overreach," says Jay Sekulow, Chief Counsel of the ACLJ. "The president is treading on very dangerous ground by issuing an Executive Order on immigration where there is underlying law in place."

Obama disagrees. In his speech, he said, "The actions I'm taking are not only lawful, they're the kinds of actions taken by every single Republican president and every Democratic president for the past half century."

As Sekulow sees it, the president is changing the law by executive fiat—something that he does not have the power to do. By granting substantive rights, such as work permits, Sekulow says the president is exceeding his authority—a move that is unconstitutional and violates the rule of law.

"While we support comprehensive immigration reform—which must

begin with border security—such immigration reform must be done lawfully and with the participation of Congress,” Sekulow says. “We’re now discussing options with members of Congress—including the possibility of litigation—to challenge the president’s unconstitutional action.”

Samuel Rodriguez, president of the NHCLC/Conela, the largest Hispanic Christian organization, has a different perspective. He argues that the president’s executive action, although not the preferable delivery mechanism, initiates a reconciliatory prescription necessary in addressing a de facto humanitarian crisis within our borders that is witnessing millions of God’s children created in his image living in the shadows.

“This action takes place because for years our government, under the leadership of both parties, failed miserably as it pertains to immigration. For years, our elected officials sacrificed lives on the altar of political expediency. For years, rhetorical articulation fell short of redemptive action. For years, we as a nation stood by while families experienced separation, children suffered and national unity laid shattered,” Rodriguez says.

“As an organization committed to both Christian compassion and the rule of law, we call upon Congress and President Obama to immediately work together in passing legislation that will permanently secure our borders, protect our values and facilitate a platform upon which once again we can shine as a “city upon a hill.” By coming together on immigration we can—better yet, we will—shine again.”