

Is Just in Bieb er An Exam ple of Immi grat ion Laws that “Dis crim

Canadian pop sensation Justin Bieber has recently drawn attention to himself due to an arrest and release in Miami Beach, Fla. While fans pledge their unconditional support, others have created petitions urging the Obama administration to deport Bieber. Still others urge the attention to be shifted from the celebrity to other immigrants who face deportation due to “lesser offences.” In this podcast [immigration attorney Paula Joachin](#) who practices law in the city of San Diego, Calif., explains why this celebrity case is an example of what Milli Atkinson of *Centro de Ayuda Legal Para Inmigrantes* referred to as laws that “are written to really discriminate against Mexico and Central America,” in October of 2013 as a part of [The Conversation on Immigration Reform](#).

On Sunday, January 23, 2014, Canadian pop sensation Justin Bieber was [arrested](#) on charges of driving under the influence, resisting arrest without violence and driving with an expired driver’s license in Miami Beach, Fla. Since the day of his arrest, several petitions have been created on the website [We the People](#) seeking supporting signatures in a petition to the Obama Administration asking to both deport and protect Bieber from deportation.

One [petition](#) in particular seeks to “Deport Justin Bieber and revoke his green card” on the grounds that “he is not only threatening the safety of our

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people but he is also a terrible influence on our nations youth." The goal of the petition was to receive 100,000 signatures, as of Wednesday, January 29, 2014; the petition had 170, 973 supporting signatures.

The American Civil Liberties Union has published a brief [article](#) titled "What Justin Bieber's Arrest Would Mean for Another Non-Citizen." Through this article, they urge readers that "While the media is focused on what will happen to Bieber, let's instead focus on what will happen to all of the other immigrants who are detained and deported for lesser offenses than his." According to Joachin during the Obama administration, the amount of immigrants who have been put into detention for being undocumented, without a prior history of violation of laws, "sky rocketed."

Joachin remains hopeful that a "comprehensive and holistic" immigration reform will pass. "We want the legalization of the people who are already here, whose only offense is a civil one, and that is entering the U.S. without 'proper documents.'"

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[The Desert Angels](#) are a non-profit, humanitarian group of volunteers, based out of San Diego, Calif. They conduct search and rescue missions of lost people in the desert areas near the United States and Mexico border. Rafael Larraenza is the

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organization's director. He has helped in not only finding undocumented immigrants who become lost in their journey to the United States, but also in recovering bodies of those who have lost their lives along the way.

More from Larraenza on Sunday, Dec. 22, 2013, in regards to the proposed immigration reform.

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Migrants ride on top of a northern bound train toward the US-Mexico border in Juchitan, southern Mexico, Monday, April 29, 2013. Migrants crossing Mexico to get to the U.S. have increasingly become targets of criminal gangs who kidnap them to obtain ransom money. (AP Photo/Eduardo Verdugo)

The pro-immigration magazine [CultureStrike](#) in collaboration with [Verso Books](#) and [Impact Hub Oakland](#) will be hosting "Before the Destination: Migrations from Central America to the United States," in an effort to shed light on the dangers that Central

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American immigrants face on their journey to the United States. The multidisciplinary event scheduled for Saturday, December 7, 2013 will feature the work of award winning journalist Óscar Martínez, photographer Edu Ponces and artist [Favianna Rodriguez](#).

Martínez, author of “The Beast: Riding the Rails and Dodging Narcos on the Migrant Trail,” will be doing a reading from his book. In October 2013 he was featured in NPR’s [Alt.Latino](#) show for his work in documenting the story of Central American’s who travel through Mexico to the U.S. border on freight trains known as *La Bestia*.

Ponces is an award winning, Spanish, photojournalist whose work has centered largely on the topic of migration. He co-authored the book “*En el Camino: Mexico, la Ruta de los Migrantes Que no Importan* (On the Way: Mexico, The Route of the Migrants Who do Not Matter).” Ponce’s exhibit will focus on the experiences of women on the Train, who face additional risk factors.



Artist Favianna Rodriguez at the pro-immigration event “Face to Face: Action. Healing. Solidarity” in collaboration with French artist JR and his project Inside Out, on Thursday, July 25, 2013 in Oakland,

Calif. (Photograph by: Natalie Rodriguez)

Rodriguez is an interdisciplinary artist and activist. She is an international lecturer, coordinator of CultureStrike and co-founder of the national organization, Presente.org. Her work will be present via an art installation.

Despite the many dangers of making the trip from Central America to the U.S. through Mexico via freight train, according to [The New York Times](http://TheNewYorkTimes.com), the number of American arrests of undocumented immigrants from Central American countries increased from 46, 997 in 2011 to 94,532 in 2012.

The event will take place at The Hub Oakland located at 1423 Broadway Ave., Oakland, Calif.; from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Admission will be free. Register for the event via the [Facebook Event](#) page or through [Eventbrite](#).



A group of Central American migrants read the news of their ordeal from a local newspaper outside of a shelter after they were attacked on the freight train they were riding through Mexico, in Acayucan, Mexico, Thursday, May 2, 2013. The United States-bound migrants had hopped on the train in southern Mexico and were traveling through the Gulf Coast state of Veracruz when attackers shot and cut them with

machetes. Some jumped from the train to escape and others were thrown off, said migrants' rights activist Tomas Gonzalez Castillo. At least 10 Honduran migrants are recovering from wounds suffered in the attack. (AP Photo/Felix Marquez)

Not all Supporters of Immigration Reform Support

In a recent anonymous survey conducted by NatyRockdriguez.com, results demonstrate that while Californian's who participated may be in favor of immigration reform, not all are in favor of guest worker programs. Social media conversations through [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) shed light on the fact that not all supporters are aware that the immigration reform bill that passed the Senate, [S. 744](#), includes guest worker programs.

Guest Worker Programs



Infographic by Natalie Rodriguez

While the majority of participants in the survey are have never been undocumented, the majority have family members who are either currently undocumented or who have been. All are in favor of immigration reform; agree that a reform would strengthen the economy, and that that the reform should be a priority.

When asked about what makes an immigration reform plan comprehensive, some of the more popular responses included: taking into account family unity, length of time in the country, criminal backgrounds, and equal opportunities for all.

Responses on guest worker programs as a part of the reform showed concern for the families of the workers and the workers themselves. One anonymous response was “I feel the guest worker program should not be included because what would happen if workers find someone here in the states and then form a family, would the government then separate families just like what’s happening currently?” In a [Twitter conversation](#), one response was that “It’s the problem of people overstaying and becoming undocumented in the process.”

[[View the story “Support for Immigration Reform” on Storify](#)]

This week, President Obama has once again called on the House to pass a reform before the end of the year and encouraged the public to petition. [FWD.us](#), the pro-reform organization, led by technology industry leaders, continues hosting events and social media campaigns in support. The [survey](#) will remain open until the end of the year as the conversation on immigration reform continues.

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Immigration reform continues to gain momentum with the government reopening, however there is still much debate not only in regards to whether or not there should be an immigration reform, but also in regards to what makes a reform plan comprehensive. President Obama has [urged House Republicans](#)

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to support a reform plan before the end of 2013 and during the government shutdown the House Democrats introduced an immigration reform plan on October 2, 2013. Mark Zuckerberg's organization FWD.us recently announced that in collaboration with LinkedIn and its founder Reid Hoffman, it will be hosting a [DREAMer Hackathon](#) in which undocumented students will work hand in hand with top Silicon Valley programmers in an effort to draw attention to the need for Immigration Reform. Meanwhile, political movements such as [Yo Soy 132 Bay Area](#) and [By Any Means Necessary](#) (BAMN) continue to take action in marches asking Obama to end deportations and demand full citizenship rights for all.

According to the Pew Research Center, California is the state with the [largest population of undocumented immigrants](#). This survey is an opportunity for you to express your thoughts and opinions on immigration reform and what makes a plan comprehensive or not. Where do you fall in the immigration reform debate, and would an immigration reform affect you?

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey on immigration reform. Your insight will be compiled into an article in which any questions and concerns that arise will also be addressed. Stay tuned for more on immigration reform at NatyRockdriguez.com.