

# 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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[Milli Atkinson](#) of [Centro de Ayuda Legal para Inmigrantes \(CALI\)](#) from [Natalie Rodriguez](#) on [Vimeo](#).

Milli Atkinson is an [Immigration Attorney](#) for the *Centro de Ayuda Legal para Inmigrantes*, [CALI](#), who

# Atkinson : Immigration Attorney for CALI

believes that although the proposed immigration reform [S. 744](#) is not perfect, it is a start to give undocumented immigrants an option to legalize their status in the United States. To her, the idea of having an open border is unrealistic, yet she believes that “we created a system that businesses welcome [undocumented immigrants] and then the government turns a blind eye, and then we’ve kind of created our own problems.”

Through her career as an immigration lawyer Atkinson has been able to reunite families who had not seen each other in up to ten years as well as work in removal defense. Through Governor Jerry Brown’s recent signing of [AB 60](#) and the [Trust Act](#) in California, she believes that undocumented immigrants will be more willing to collaborate with law enforcement when they are victims of crimes and be less likely to become involved in deportation procedures. According to Atkinson, “a lot of people got caught up in the deportation process just for stupid things and some times even when they weren’t charged with anything.” Being able to drive legally in the state will change that for some of the more than two million [undocumented immigrants in California](#).

Atkinson obtained her Bachelor of Science degree from [Pepperdine University](#) in accounting in the year 2000. In 2003 she obtained her Juris Doctor degree from the University of California, [Hastings College of the Law](#). In 2009 she began practicing full time immigration law through a

private practice. Four years later, in February of 2013 she became CALI's lead attorney.

Before becoming a full time immigration lawyer Atkinson was working in finance and volunteering and interning part time in immigration law. She interned at the [International Rescue Committee](#) and the [Office of Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi](#).

It was learning about human trafficking and international human rights that led to her interest in immigration law. While interning at non-profits, she learned about [U-Visas](#), which are specifically for victims of human trafficking and other crimes. She found immigration law to be rewarding and personal. "You kind of get involved in someone's entire family and their life history, in their story in a way that other areas of the law is not." Originally, Atkinson wanted to be a tax accountant.

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