

NUMBERSUSA

IMPACT: NumbersUSA is a nonprofit grassroots organization of nearly 1.1 million members that describes itself as a group of “moderates, conservatives, and liberals working for immigration numbers that serve America’s finest goals. Founded in 1996, NumbersUSA advocates numerical restrictions on legal immigration, an elimination of undocumented immigration, an elimination of the visa lottery, reform of birthright citizenship, and an end to “chain migration.” The organization was founded by author and journalist Roy Beck, and has ties to anti-immigration activist John Tanton’s network of anti-immigration organizations. The organization has expressed support for individuals with anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant views, such as former U.S. Senator and Attorney General Jeff Sessions, Senator Tom Cotton, and anti-Muslim activist Frank Gaffney.

- NumbersUSA is a nonprofit, nonpartisan grassroots organization that advocates numerical restrictions on legal immigration and an elimination of undocumented immigration. **It favors “removing jobs, public benefits and other incentives that encourage people to become illegal aliens and remain in the U.S.”** The organization promotes the influx of immigrants who are part of the nuclear family of an American citizen, refugees with “no long-term prospects of returning home,” and immigrants with “truly extraordinary skills in the national interest.”
- The organization was founded in 1996 by author and journalist Roy Beck. Prior to the establishment of NumbersUSA, Beck worked for ten years at U.S. Incorporated, an organization founded by anti-immigration activist John Tanton. Beck also served as an editor for the Social Contract Press, a Tanton publication notorious for its promotion of white nationalist and anti-immigration views. Tanton is known for his roles in founding the Center for Immigration Studies (CIS) and the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR), both designated by the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) as hate groups for their anti-immigration stances. NumbersUSA remained part of the larger U.S. Inc. network until 2001, when Beck reorganized the group as its own entity.
- **Although Beck has attempted to publicly distance himself from Tanton’s network of anti-immigrant organizations, the connections between the two are evident in NumbersUSA’s funding sources.** In 2018, NumbersUSA received at least \$50,000 from the Colcom Foundation, a group that has “donated massive amounts of money over several decades to the various anti-immigrant institutions created by John Tanton.” The Colcom Foundation has been accused of advocating for anti-immigration policies, and financially supporting Trump-era initiatives such as placing hard caps on immigration and militarizing the U.S. border.
- **Since its reorganization in 2001, NumbersUSA has impacted U.S. immigration policy by emphasizing the supposed negative impacts of increasing immigration, such as overpopulation and adverse environmental impacts.** The organization influences the immigration debate through its lobbying, public mobilization, and assessments of Congress members’ immigration stances as a means of advocating for immigration quotas that will “restore immigration numbers ... in the United States to traditional levels in order to ensure long-term U.S. sustainability.”
- NumbersUSA claims that it has promoted “the immigration recommendations of the bipartisan U.S. Commission on Immigration Reform” since its founding. The commission, created by the 1990 Immigration Act, was chaired by civil rights leader Barbara Jordan (1936–1996), the first African American congresswoman from the deep South and the first woman ever elected to the Texas Senate. In 2015, the organization ran an advertisement featuring the late congresswoman releasing a recommendation from the commission to cut legal immigration to 550,000. **As noted by the Boston Globe in February 2016, the ad did not “include any date references and fail[ed] to mention that Jordan died 20 years ago.”** In November 2015, Beck released a statement defending the ad: “The most vulnerable Americans whom Jordan mentions are people of all races and national origins. It is difficult to think of a voice more forceful and more unapologetic than Jordan’s in favor of this country’s immigration policies serving the interests of this country’s workers.”
- According to the SPLC, the small immigration reduction called for by Jordan in the ad “was recommended to accommodate an accompanying proposal to increase the number of visas for nuclear family members of legal permanent residents something NumbersUSA along with CIS and FAIR would call ‘chain migration’

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and bitterly oppose.” In December 2016, Congressman Bruce Morrison, a member of the U.S. Commission on Immigration Reform from 1992 to 1997, [wrote](#) in the Washington Post that NumbersUSA **“seeks to claim [Jordan] advocated for cuts in legal immigration that neither she nor the commission supported.”** He further [clarified](#) that the commission proposed “a small increase in family immigration” and “Jordan’s actual testimony to Congress urged ‘150,000 [more] visas annually for the admission of the spouses and minor children of legal permanent residents who have been awaiting entry until such time as this backlog is eliminated.’”

- NumbersUSA has attempted to pit Black Americans against immigrants by blaming Black unemployment rates on excessive immigration. A June 2011 article titled [“Unemployment Among Black Americans”](#) on its website states, “Illegal immigration is not the sole or primary cause of these horrendous [Black American] unemployment rates. But millions of these unemployed Americans—both U.S.-born and foreign-born—would cease to be jobless if illegal foreign workers were moved out of their non-agricultural jobs.” In an August 2013 article titled [“Deep immigration reductions helped pave way for civil rights gains in 1960s.”](#) Beck argued that “it is a time to acknowledge how the economic, political and social advances of Black Americans in general accelerated when annual immigration numbers were reduced throughout our history.”
- In an October 2012 [television advertisement](#) aired before the first presidential debate between Barack Obama and Mitt Romney, the organization featured an unemployed Black American man tying high levels of immigration to job scarcity. Think Progress [condemned](#) the ad for erroneously tying unemployment rates to immigration: “Persistently high unemployment rates for African Americans is a systemic problem that cannot be addressed simply by reducing the number of immigrants. Instead of getting rid of work permits, lawmakers should focus on programs for job training and job creation as well as vigorously enforcing policies that stop labor market discrimination in order to help African American workers.” **The idea that immigrant workers take jobs from American citizens has been challenged and referred to as “the Lump of Labor Fallacy: the erroneous notion that there is only so much work to be done and that no one can get a job without taking one from someone else.”**
- **In 2015, the organization alleged that the introduction of refugees into the United States, namely those from the Middle East, is a form of “big business” utilized by volunteer organizations as a means of increasing their funding.** Discussing the threats posed by Syrian refugees entering the country, NumbersUSA [stated](#), “Concerns about terrorists infiltrating the refugee program, or refugees becoming radicalized once in the United States are legitimate, and Americans should not be hectorred into remaining silent about these concerns.”
- In January 2017, Eric Ruark, director of research at NumbersUSA, published a [blog post](#) stating that President Trump’s first iteration of the Muslim Ban **“is not a Muslim ban” and “major media outlets ... continue to tout this falsehood, even though the [executive order] affects individuals who seek to enter from a total of only seven countries, and makes no reference to any particular religion.”** Although refugees must [undergo](#) an intensive, multi-step process in order to gain visa entrance into the United States, NumbersUSA’s anti-refugee slant echoes [statements](#) made by prominent anti-Muslim figures such as [Sebastian Gorka](#) and [Steve Bannon](#) about the dangers posed by “unvetted” Muslim refugees.
- **NumbersUSA has established connections with other proponents of anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant views.** In 2008, the organization [awarded](#) former U.S. Senator and Attorney General [Jeff Sessions](#) with the “Defender of the Rule of Law” b award for his work to curtail immigration into America. In 2015, Sessions [warned](#), “It is clear that we are seeing a resurgence of militant Islam ... This strain that has been in Islam for years that advocates conversion by the sword, in fact, finds much support in the Koran. Most Muslims are truly people of peace, are faithful people in their daily activities. But there is a sizable minority that oftentimes seeks dominance and achieves dominance, that finds a basis in the Koran for their violent Jihad against those they describe as infidels.”
- In February 2019, Rosemary Jenks, director of Government Relations for NumbersUSA, participated in a radio [interview](#) with anti-Muslim activist [Frank Gaffney Jr.](#) **Gaffney has propagated theories that**

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Muslims are attempting to infiltrate the U.S. government to “destroy Western civilization from within,” and has advocated for the protection of the Constitution and the U.S. government from sharia law. Gaffney’s Center for Security Policy has been described by the Center for American Progress (CAP) as one of the “main organizations fueling the Islamophobia network.” In 2018, Deputy Director of NumbersUSA Chris Chmielenski spoke at an annual conference hosted by ACT for America, the largest anti-Muslim organization in the United States, which has led campaigns to ban sharia. Its founder, Brigitte Gabriel, has stated that the United States is facing a “religious war declared by devout Muslims” and alleged that practicing Muslims cannot be loyal citizens to the United States.

- **NumbersUSA has expressed support for Congress members who have promoted anti-Muslim policies and rhetoric.** One of the largest beneficiaries of this support is Senator Tom Cotton (R-AR), who has stated that “we shouldn’t allow political correctness to get in the way of recognizing that there are a large number of radical Muslims around the world who would like to come to the United States and attack Americans.” In August 2019, the NumbersUSA Facebook page reposted a Center for Immigration Studies video featuring Sen. Cotton discussing immigration reform, captioning the video, “Everyone in America needs to see this.” **On NumbersUSA’s grading cards, Cotton received a B+ for his actions to both reduce “chain migration” and refugee asylum and fraud.**
- NumbersUSA supported the Immigration Reduction Act of 1994 (H.R. 4934), a bill which sought “**to end Birthright Citizenship for any child born to a mother who is not in the country legally or a legal permanent resident ... [and] would block U.S. citizenship for approximately 1,876,875 children over 10 years.**”
- **In March 2017, NumbersUSA expressed support for the RAISE ACT, which was introduced by Cotton and Senator David Perdue (R-GA). The legislation received criticism for discriminating against non-white immigrant groups and closing off immigration pathways for immigrants from Africa, Asia, and Latin America.** In August 2017, the Trump Administration also expressed its support for the legislation and cited Beck, who claimed that it would “do more than any other action to fulfill President Trump’s promises as a candidate to create an immigration system that puts the interests of American workers first.”
- In September 2018, NumbersUSA expressed support for the Fund and Complete the Border Wall Act. **The bill included measures such as creating a fund to build the wall and penalizing foreign aid to Mexico and other countries by \$2,000 for every “illegal alien” that is apprehended.** The bill was introduced by Congressman Andy Biggs (R-AZ), who has received an A+ on his NumbersUSA immigration reduction report card.
- **During the novel coronavirus pandemic, NumbersUSA continued to support stances that would decrease immigration and disenfranchise undocumented immigrants.** In April 2020, Beck published a blog post titled “Despite hype, DACA health-care workers not vital in Covid-19 fight” in which he claimed “the nation’s ability to survive the Covid-19 pandemic does not depend on continuing the DACA amnesty, despite a major attempt to suggest otherwise in the elite East Coast media this week.” The post was published in response to a CAP study that revealed “**202,500 DACA recipients are working to protect the health and safety of Americans as the country confronts COVID-19**” and “**an estimated 29,000 health care workers are DACA recipients.**”
- In May 2020, NumbersUSA published an article titled “House Passes Legislation to Grant Amnesty & Stimulus Checks to Illegal Aliens” that erroneously claimed the Heroes Act (H.R. 6800) would grant amnesty to undocumented immigrants. In a statement, Beck further argued, “Instead of focusing on helping 33 million unemployed Americans get back to work, the so-called Heroes Act uses the COVID-19 pandemic to give amnesty—and cash payments—to illegal aliens working in the United States.” **According to fact checking by USA Today, “NumbersUSA’s use of the term ‘amnesty’ in the article is misleading. The HEROES Act would only temporarily protect certain immigrant workers.”** It further reported that “The bill would allow workers who are in the country illegally and working in jobs the local government deems ‘essential critical infrastructure’ to pursue protections that expire 90 days after the public health emergency terminates.”