

BASH: We're going to move on to the issue of immigration now. There is widespread agreement on this stage on the need for immigration reform, a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants, including dreamers. But there are some areas of disagreement.

Mayor Buttigieg, you're in favor of getting rid of the law that makes it a crime to come across the U.S. border illegally. Why won't that just encourage more illegal immigration?

BUTTIGIEG: When I am president, illegally crossing the border will still be illegal. We can argue over the finer points of which parts of this ought to be handled by civil law and which parts ought to be handled by criminal law. But we've got a crisis on our hands. And it's not just a crisis of immigration; it's a crisis of cruelty and incompetence that has created a humanitarian disaster on our southern border. It is a stain on the United States of America.

Americans want comprehensive immigration reform. And frankly, we've been talking about the same framework for my entire adult lifetime, protections for DREAMers; making sure that -- that we have a pathway to citizenship for the undocumented; cleaning up lawful immigration.

We know what to do. We know that border security can be part of that package and we can still be a nation of laws. The problem is we haven't had the will to get it done in Washington. And now we have a president who could fix it in a month, because there is that

bipartisan agreement, but he needs it to be a crisis rather than an achievement. That will end on my watch.

BASH: But just a point of clarification, you did raise your hand in the last debate. You do want to decriminalize crossing the border illegally?

BUTTIGIEG: So in my view, if fraud is involved, then that's suitable for the criminal statute. If not, then it should be handled under civil law. But these show of hands are exactly what is wrong with the way that this race is being covered.

BASH: Well, we're not -- we're not doing that here.

BUTTIGIEG: And we appreciate that.

BASH: Congressman, thank you. Congressman O'Rourke, you live near the U.S.-Mexico border in El Paso. You disagree with Mayor Buttigieg on decriminalizing the border crossings. Please respond.

O'ROURKE: I do, because, in my administration, after we have waived citizenship fees for green card holders, more than 9 million of our fellow Americans; freed DREAMers from any fear of deportation; and stopped criminally prosecuting families and children for seeking asylum and refuge; end for-profit detention in this country; and then assist those countries in Central America so that no family ever has to make that 2,000-mile journey, than I expect that people who come here follow our laws, and we reserve the right to criminally prosecute them if they do not.

BASH: Thank you, Congressman. Senator Warren, you say the provision making illegal border crossings a crime is totally unnecessary. Please respond.

WARREN: So the problem is that, right now, the criminalization statute is what gives Donald Trump the ability to take children away from their parents. It's what gives him the ability to lock up people at our borders.

We need to continue to have border security, and we can do that, but what we can't do is not live our values. I've been down to the border. I have seen the mothers. I have seen the cages of babies. We must be a country that every day lives our values. And that means we cannot...

BASH: Thank you, Senator Warren.

WARREN: ... make it a crime...

BASH: Just to clarify...

WARREN: ... when someone...

BASH: Thank you, Senator. Just to clarify, would you decriminalize...

WARREN: Yes.

BASH: ... illegal border crossings?

WARREN: The point is not about criminalization. That has given Donald Trump the tool to break families apart.

BASH: Thank you, Senator.

BASH: Governor Hickenlooper, your response?

HICKENLOOPER: I agree that we need secure borders. There's no question about that. And the frustration with what's going on in Washington is they're kicking the ball back and forth. Secure the borders, make sure whatever law we have doesn't allow children to be snatched from their parents and put in cages. How hard can that be?

We've got -- I don't know -- on the two debate nights, we've got 170 years of Washington experience. Somehow it seems like that should be fairly fixable.

WARREN: Well, and one way to fix it is to decriminalize. That's the whole point. What we're looking for here is a way to take away the tool that Donald Trump has used...

BASH: Thank you, Senator Warren.

WARREN: ... to break up families.

BASH: Thank you, Senator Warren. Senator Klobuchar, your response?

KLOBUCHAR: I would say there is the will to change this in Congress. What's missing is the right person in the White House. I believe that immigrants don't diminish America; they are America. And if you want to do something about border security, you, first of all, change the rules so people can seek asylum in those Northern Triangle countries.

Then, you pass the bill. And what the bill will do is, it will greatly reduce the deficit and give us some money for border security and for border processing the cases. And most of all, it will allow for a path to citizenship.

Because this is not just about the border...

BASH: Thank you.

KLOBUCHAR: ... Donald Trump wants to use these people as political pawns, when we have people...

BASH: Thank you, Senator Klobuchar.

KLOBUCHAR: ... all over our country that simply want to work...

BASH: Thank you.

KLOBUCHAR: ... and obey the law.

BASH: Senator Sanders, you want to provide undocumented immigrants free health care and free college. Why won't this drive even more people to come to the U.S. illegally?

SANDERS: Because we'll have strong border protections. But the main point I want to make is that what Trump is doing through his racism and his xenophobia, is demonizing a group of people. And as president, I will end that demonization.

If a mother and a child walk thousands of miles on a dangerous path, in my view, they are not criminals.

They are people fleeing violence. And I think the main thing that we've got to do -- among many others, and Beto made this point -- we've got to ask ourselves, "Why are people walking 2,000 miles to a strange country where they don't know the language?"

So what we will do, the first week we are in the White House, is bring the entire hemisphere together to talk about how we rebuild Honduras...

BASH: Thank...

SANDERS: ... Guatemala and El Salvador so people do not have to flee their own countries.

BASH: Thank you, Senator. Governor Bullock, about two-thirds of Democratic voters and many of your rivals here for the nomination, support giving health insurance to undocumented immigrants. You haven't gone that far. Why not?

BULLOCK: Look, I think this is the part of the discussion that shows how often these debates are detached from people's lives. We've got 100,000 people showing up at the border right now. If we decriminalize entry, if we give health care to everyone, we'll have multiples of that. Don't take my word, that was President Obama's Homeland Security secretary that said that.

The biggest problem right now that we have with immigration, it's Donald Trump. He's using immigration to not only rip apart families, but rip apart this country. We can actually get to the point where we

have safe borders, where we have a path to citizenship, where we have opportunities for Dreamers.

And you don't have to decriminalize everything. What you have to do is have a president in there with the judgment and the decency to treat someone that comes to the border like one of our own.

WARREN: You know, I just wanted to...

BASH: Senator...

WARREN: ... add on this...

BASH: ... he just said your plan is unrealistic. How do you respond?

WARREN: You know, I think that what we have to do, is we have to be an America that is clear about what we want to do with immigration. We need to expand legal immigration. We need to create a path for citizenship, not just for Dreamers but for grandmas and for people who have been working here in the farms and for students who have overstayed their visas we need to fix the crisis at the border. And a big part of how we do that, is we do not play into Donald Trump's hands.

BULLOCK: But...

WARREN: He wants to stir up the crisis at the border because that's his overall message. It's -- if there's anything wrong in your life, blame them.

BASH: Thank you, Senator Warren. Governor Bullock, your response?

BULLOCK: But you are playing into Donald Trump's hands. The challenge isn't that it's a criminal offense to cross the border. The challenge is that Donald Trump is president, and using this to rip families apart.

A sane immigration system needs a sane leader. And we can do that without decriminalizing and providing health care for everyone.

And it's not me saying that, that's Obama's Homeland Security secretary...

WARREN: No.

BULLOCK: ... that said you'll cause further problems at the border, not making it better.

WARREN: What -- what you're saying is ignore the law. Laws matter. And it matters if we say our law is that we will lock people up who come here, seeking refuge, who come here, seeking asylum, that is not a crime. And as Americans, what we need to do is have a sane system that keeps us safe at the border, but does not criminalize the activity...

BASH: Thank you, Senator Warren.

WARREN: ... of a mother fleeing here for safety.

BULLOCK: Dana, I must correct the record

BASH: Congressman Ryan, are Senator Sanders' proposals going to incentivize undocumented immigrants to come into this country illegally?

RYAN: Yes. And right now, if you want to come into the country, you should at least ring the doorbell. We have asylum laws. I saw the kids up in Grand Rapids, not far from here. It is shameful what's happening. But Donald Trump is doing it.

And even if you decriminalize, which we should not do, you still have statutory authority. The president could still use his authority to separate families. So we've got to get rid of Donald Trump. But you don't decriminalize people just walking into the United States. If they're seeking asylum, of course, we want to welcome them. We're a strong enough country to be able to welcome them.

And as far as the healthcare goes, undocumented people can buy healthcare too. I mean everyone else in America is paying for their healthcare. I think - I don't think it's a stretch for us to ask undocumented people in the country to also pay for healthcare.

BASH: Senator Sanders, your response?

SANDERS: Well, I have two things. A sane immigration policy moves the comprehensive immigration reform. It moves to a humane border policy, and which, by the way, we have enough administrative judges, so that we don't have incredible backlogs that we have right now.

But to your answer your question, I happen to believe that when I talk about healthcare as a human right that applies to all people in this country, and under a Medicare for All single payer system, we could afford to do that.

BASH: Senator Sanders, thank you. And Ms. Williamson, your response?

WILLIAMSON: Everything that we're talking about here tonight is what's wrong with American politics, and the Democratic Party needs to understand that we should be the party that talks, not just about symptoms, but also about causes. When it - when we're talking about healthcare, we need to talk about more than just the healthcare plan.

We need to realize, we have a sickness care rather than a healthcare system. We need to be the party talking about why so many of our chemical policies and our food policies and our agricultural policies and our environment policies and even our economic policies are leading to people sick to begin with.

LEMON: Thank you --

WILLIAMSON: That's what the democratic -- but I want to say more --

LEMON: Thank you, Ms. Williamson.

WILLIAMSON: -- about. OK.

LEMON: Thank you, Ms. Williamson.

WILLIAMSON: I hope you'll come back to me this time.