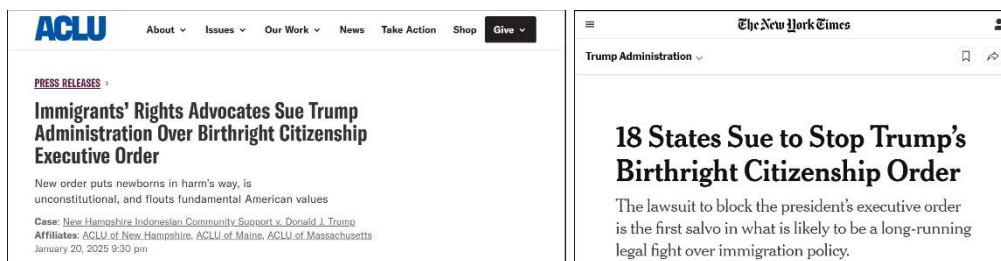


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Protect Birthright Citizenship



On January 20, 2025, The Trump Administration issued an executive order seeking to strip certain babies born in the United States of their U.S. citizenship.

During his first administration in October 2018, President **Donald Trump** [announced his intention](#) to issue such an executive order to end birthright citizenship for children born in the U.S. to non-citizen parents, but legal experts and lawmakers, including Speaker of the House **Paul Ryan**, contended that such a change would require a constitutional amendment.

Immigrants' rights advocates promptly filed a lawsuit on the same day the executive order was released. The case was filed by the American Civil Liberties Union, ACLU of New Hampshire, ACLU of Maine, ACLU of Massachusetts, Asian Law Caucus, State Democracy Defenders Fund, and Legal Defense Fund on behalf of organizations with members whose babies born on U.S. soil will be denied citizenship under the order, including New Hampshire Indonesian Community Support, League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), and Make the Road New York. The lawsuit charges the Trump administration with flouting the Constitution's dictates, congressional intent, and long standing Supreme Court precedent. Read the press release by [ACLU](#) and the [Legal Defense Fund](#).

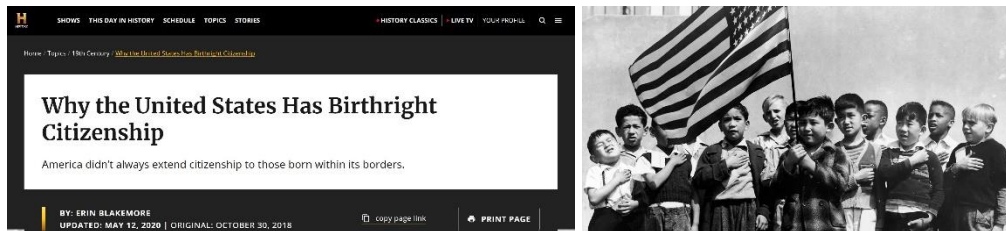
On January 21, 2025, media outlets including [AP News](#), [Bloomberg](#), [the Guardian](#), and [New York Times](#) reported that attorneys general from 22 states filed lawsuits against the executive order. Two separate cases aim to block the directive. One, led by 18 state attorneys general and joined by San Francisco and Washington, D.C., was filed in Federal District Court in Massachusetts. The second was [filed](#) in Seattle federal court by Washington State Attorney General **Nicholas Brown** and three other states.

New Jersey Attorney General **Matt Platkin** said that presidents might have broad authority but they are not kings. Connecticut Attorney General **William Tong**, a U.S. citizen by birthright and the nation's first Chinese American elected attorney general, said the lawsuit was personal for him. The 18 states involved in the Massachusetts case include California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Wisconsin.

Birthright citizenship, rooted in the 14th Amendment, guarantees U.S. citizenship to nearly all children born on U.S. soil, with the narrow exception of children of foreign diplomats. Ratified in 1868, the amendment overturned the Dred Scott decision, which had denied Black Americans the rights of citizenship. In 1898, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld this principle in *United States v. Wong Kim Ark*, affirming that children born to immigrant parents in the U.S. are entitled to citizenship—a precedent that has stood for over a century.

Norman Wong, 74, the great-grandson of **Wong Kim Ark**, denounced the executive order in an interview with [NBC News](#), calling it “troubling” and divisive. “He’s feeding off the American mindset, and it’s not a healthy one,” Wong said. “We can’t build the country together and be against everybody. ... If we have good thoughts and work from that, we’ll get a better world. But it’s not going to be easy in this country.” Watch the *NBC News* report: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZMpC2amB_L8 (2:30)

Why the United States Has Birthright Citizenship



[The complaint](#) filed in Massachusetts argues that "birthright citizenship embodies America's most fundamental promise: that all children born on our soil begin life as full and equal members of our national community, regardless of their parents' origins, status, or circumstances. This principle has enabled generations of children to pursue their dreams and build a stronger America."

According to [History.com](#), birthright citizenship was initially limited to free white people. In 1790, the nation's first naturalization law stated that “free white persons” could gain citizenship if they had lived in the U.S. for two years and had a good character. The new citizens' children under the age of 21 were given citizenship. But the new naturalization law ignored massive swaths of American society, including enslaved people and Native Americans, neither of whom were

considered citizens.

In 1857, as arguments about slavery roiled, the U.S. Supreme Court further entrenched racial exclusion with [its ruling](#) in [Dred Scott v. Sandford](#). The court declared that Scott, an enslaved man seeking his freedom, was not a citizen because of his African descent. It also concluded that no person of African descent, even if born in the U.S., could be considered a citizen.

After the Civil War, the abolition of slavery spurred a redefinition of citizenship. [The 14th Amendment](#), ratified in 1868, proclaimed that “all persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof,” are citizens. This sweeping declaration fundamentally reshaped the concept of birthright citizenship.

Still, the rights of children born to immigrant parents remained uncertain until Wong Kim Ark, a Chinese American, [challenged the system](#)—and won. Born in 1873 in the U.S. to Chinese immigrants, Wong’s claim to citizenship was complicated by the [Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882](#), which barred Chinese nationals from becoming naturalized citizens.

In 1898, Wong faced his defining legal battle after being denied reentry into the U.S. following a trip to China. Stranded on a ship in San Francisco harbor, Wong’s case became [a test](#) for the Department of Justice, which sought to prove that individuals of Chinese descent were not entitled to citizenship.

The case reached the U.S. Supreme Court, where Wong won. Associate Justice **Horace Gray**, writing for the majority, [affirmed](#) that the 14th Amendment “includes the children born, within the territory of the United States, of all other persons, of whatever race or color, domiciled within the United States.” Gray warned that denying citizenship to Wong would set a precedent that could strip citizenship from thousands of individuals of European descent, including those of English, Irish, German, and other ancestries, who had long been recognized as citizens.

Gray’s reasoning underscored the broader implications of Wong’s victory: allowing a Chinese American to claim birthright citizenship did not endanger the rights of white Americans but rather safeguarded the foundational principles of equality and citizenship for all.



APA Justice will monitor and track the development of [New Hampshire Indonesian Community Support v. Trump \(1:25-cv-00038\)](#), [Doe v. Trump \(1:25-cv-10136\)](#), and [State of Washington et al v. Trump et al \(2:25-cv-00127\)](#).

Happy New Year of The Snake!



January 29, 2025, marks the beginning of the Year of the Snake in the Chinese Zodiac. The Year of the Snake occurs every 12 years, and individuals born in the following years are considered to have Snake as their zodiac sign: 1929, 1941, 1953, 1965, 1977, 1989, 2001, 2013, and 2025. Since the Chinese New Year typically falls in late January or early February, those born early in the year should check the specific start and end dates for the Year of the Snake.

Also known as Lunar New Year, the festival is celebrated across Asia with diverse and vibrant traditions rooted in themes of family reunions, renewal, and good fortune. In China, it is known as Spring Festival and features family gatherings, red envelopes, and lion dances. South Korea's Seollal includes ancestral rituals, folk games, and rice cake soup symbolizing longevity. In Vietnam, Tết celebrations center around ancestor worship, house cleaning, and the exchange of red envelopes. Mongolians observe Tsagaan Sar with milk-based dishes, meat dumplings, and visits to elders, emphasizing renewal and purification. Ethnic Chinese communities in Southeast Asia, including Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, and Thailand, also celebrate with their unique cultural traditions.

This year invites us to sharpen our focus and pursue shared goals with precision and intuition, much like the snake navigating its path. May we embrace challenges with courage, transforming uncertainties into opportunities for growth.

Let the Year of the Snake inspire us to strengthen our bonds, celebrate our diversity, and uphold the values of fairness and inclusion. Together, we can make this year a time of renewal,

progress, and shared prosperity.

Wishing you a year filled with wisdom, health, and success. Happy Year of the Snake!

CSIS: Advancing U.S.-China Coordination amid Strategic Competition



In November 2022, the CSIS Freeman Chair in China Studies and the Brookings John L. Thornton China Center initiated a project to identify safe and effective methods for collaboration among nonstate actors on critical challenges facing the United States and China. On January 15, 2025, the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) released a three-part report, *Advancing U.S.-China Coordination amid Strategic Competition: An Emerging Playbook*, exploring opportunities for collaboration on transnational issues despite the ongoing rivalry between the two nations.

Part I: Scoping the Challenge

The U.S.-China relationship, dating back to 1844, has alternated between cooperation and conflict, with the current era defined by intense strategic competition across military, economic, technological, and diplomatic domains. This rivalry is exacerbated by a weakening post-World

War II international order, rising nationalism, and mutual distrust. Both nations struggle to coordinate efforts on global issues like climate change, food security, and public health. The U.S. increasingly aligns with democratic allies like the G7, while China emphasizes its role within BRICS+ and the Global South. Without collaboration, growing competition threatens the international order and increases the risk of global conflict.

Part II: Insights from Case Studies and Track 2 Dialogue

Joint research by CSIS and Brookings, including a 2024 track 2 dialogue on climate-smart agriculture, highlights three key lessons for collaboration:

1. Geopolitical context shapes collaborative opportunities, often guided by national interests.
2. Nonstate actors should align initiatives with the national priorities of both countries.
3. New approaches to track 2 dialogues, such as longer, informal meetings in neutral venues, foster more effective cooperation.

These insights underscore the importance of working on shared challenges like food security and sustainable agriculture.

Part III: Recommendations for Advancing Collaboration

The report calls for proactive U.S.-China collaboration on shared global challenges, arguing that waiting for reduced competition is not a viable strategy. Key recommendations include:

- Normalizing coordination amid competition.
- Securing high-level commitment from both governments.
- Prioritizing specific, manageable issues.
- Identifying neutral venues for cooperation.
- Leveraging track 2 dialogues to explore innovative solutions.

While mutual mistrust persists, the report emphasizes the urgent need for collaboration on critical issues like pandemics, food insecurity, and environmental degradation to safeguard global security and prosperity.

Read the CSIS report: <https://bit.ly/40IIIUc>

University of Michigan Ends Joint Program with Chinese University



On January 10, 2025, the University of Michigan (UM) announced the termination of its longstanding partnership with Shanghai Jiao Tong University (SJTU), marking the end of a two-decade academic collaboration.

The decision, confirmed by UM President **Santa J. Ono**, follows concerns raised by the U.S. House Select Committee on Strategic Competition with China, chaired by U.S. Representative **John Moolenaar**. The UM-SJTU partnership, which included the UM-SJTU Joint Institute and facilitated dual-degree programs and international exchanges, will allow current students to complete their degrees without disruption. UM emphasized its commitment to international education, balancing national security concerns with fostering global academic partnerships.

“International experiences are vital for our students in this interconnected world,” Ono said. “We remain committed to supporting UM’s international students and will continue to foster international partnerships that advance knowledge and cross-cultural understanding and ensure our campus remains a vibrant community where scholars from around the world can thrive.”

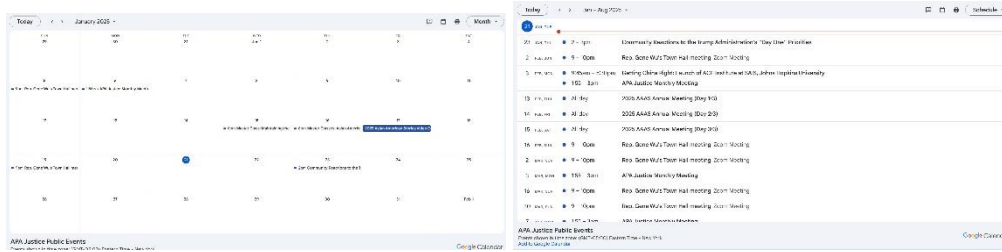
According to *Science* on January 13, 2025, the termination of the UM-SJTU partnership reflects broader tensions between U.S. and Chinese academic collaborations. The joint institute, which engaged in biomedical and energy research, faced scrutiny for potential links to China’s defense advancements. This move follows similar actions by other U.S. institutions, such as Georgia Tech and UC Berkeley.

Tony Chan, a mathematician at UCLA and former president of the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, described the trend as indicative of the “deep and steep downturn” in U.S.-China scientific relations. “The message is very clear to universities: Don’t have anything to do with China,” said Chan, who also led the King Abdullah University of Science and Technology from 2018 to 2024. He warned that the academic “decoupling” between the two nations will harm both countries. “It’s not good for science,” Chan added. “And it doesn’t look like things are going to get better anytime soon.”

Read the UM announcement: <https://bit.ly/4g6Xv95>. Read the *Science* report: <https://bit.ly/4jrh6DR>

News and Activities for the Communities

1. APA Justice Community Calendar



Upcoming Events:

- 2025/01/23 Community Reactions to the Trump Administration's "Day One" Priorities
- 2025/02/02 Rep. Gene Wu's Town Hall Meeting
- 2025/02/03 APA Justice Monthly Meeting
- 2025/02/03 Getting China Right: Launch of ACF Institute at SAIS, Johns Hopkins University
- 2025/02/13-15 2025 AAAS Annual Meeting
- 2025/02/16 Rep. Gene Wu's Town Hall Meeting
- 2025/03/02 Rep. Gene Wu's Town Hall Meeting
- 2025/03/03 APA Justice Monthly Meeting

Visit <https://bit.ly/3XD61qV> for event details.

2. Get Help Today on LA Fires

Californians can go to [CA.gov/LAfires](https://www.ca.gov/LAfires) – a hub for information and resources from state, local and federal government.

Individuals and business owners who sustained losses from wildfires in Los Angeles County can apply for disaster assistance:

- Online at [DisasterAssistance.gov](https://www.DisasterAssistance.gov)
- Calling 800-621-3362
- By using the [FEMA smart phone application](#)
- Assistance is [available in over 40 languages](#)
- If you use a relay service, such as video relay service (VRS), captioned telephone service or others, give FEMA the number for that service.

Please share with your families, friends, and colleagues in the Los Angeles area.

3. Vincent Chin Institute: First Executive Director Job Announcement



First Executive Director Job Announcement

The Vincent Chin Institute (VCI) builds solidarity against hate and division through organizing, education and narrative change. We are seeking nominations and applications for our first Executive Director who will inspire and equip the next generation of Asian American and Pacific Islander leaders through the Vincent Chin movement's legacy of multiracial, multicultural, intergenerational solidarity and community empowerment.

The Vincent Chin Institute (VCI) is seeking its inaugural Executive Director to lead efforts in combating hate through organizing, education, and narrative change. This full-time, remote position offers a salary range of \$125,000 to \$150,000, depending on experience, and includes comprehensive benefits. The ideal candidate will have a deep understanding of Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) experiences, a proven track record in organizational leadership, fundraising, and program development, and the ability to build cross-sector partnerships. Applications are being reviewed on a rolling basis, with early submissions encouraged by January 24, 2025. For more information, visit <https://bit.ly/4jmFFSi>

4. OPM Revises Executive Core Qualifications



On January 17, 2025, *Government Executive* reported that "[Senior Executive Standards Get first Update in More Than 15 Years.](#)"

The Senior Executive Service (SES) was created under President **Jimmy Carter** as part of the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978. The SES was designed to establish a cadre of high-level federal managers who would provide leadership across agencies and ensure the continuity of expertise in the federal government. Its creation aimed to increase the flexibility and

accountability of senior federal executives while fostering efficiency and effectiveness in public administration.

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM)'s updates to the SES executive core qualifications will take effect on July 1, 2025. As part of the updates, OPM added data literacy and systems thinking as new sub-competencies and modified the name of the technology management sub-competency to leveraging technology. The agency also included interpersonal skills, building workplace culture and strategic communication as new sub-competencies.

#

APA Justice Task Force is a non-partisan platform to build a sustainable ecosystem that addresses racial profiling concerns and to facilitate, inform, and advocate on selected issues related to justice and fairness for the Asian Pacific American community. For more information, please refer to the new APA Justice website under development at www.apajusticetaskforce.org. We value your feedback. Please send your comments to contact@apajustice.org.

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