

Hillary Clinton outlines immigration reform plan

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New York: Democratic presidential front-runner Hillary Clinton proposed Monday that people applying to be U.S. citizens should get a break in fees and lamented complex immigration laws that she said can tear families apart.

In a speech to the annual National Immigration Integration Conference in Brooklyn, the former secretary of state said she wants to give more help to people eligible for citizenship. She said she would waive the fees, increase access to language programs and close privately run detention centers as part of a plan to create a "path to full and equal citizenship."

"If you work hard, if you love this country and want nothing more to build a good future for you and your children, we should give you a way to come forward and become a citizen," she said.

She described the uncertain fate of one family living under the threat of deportation. Prior to the speech, she met with the Suarez family, who fled Honduras and now lives on Long Island. The five members of the family have four different immigration statuses, the father, Osman Suarez, explained to Clinton.

"I want to put an end to families being torn apart," Clinton said.

She also took aim at some of her Republican rivals' anti-immigration rhetoric. Without directly naming him, Clinton cited GOP front-runner Donald Trump's campaign slogan.

"I disagree with those who say, 'make America great again' because we are great and we're going to stay great and we're going to be greater," she said, adding that "mean-spirited" comments about building walls and closing borders would cause the nation to "lose talented people."

Trump's spokeswoman responded with a quote from the candidate saying that if he is elected, the U.S. "will be greater than ever before!"

"If Hillary Clinton is elected president our country is doomed," Trump said in the statement.

Two hecklers shouted at Clinton in the closing moments of her speech, angry at the links between major banks and private detention centers. Clinton did not acknowledge either protester.

She was introduced by Rep. Luis Gutierrez, the Illinois congressman who is one of the House's loudest voices calling for immigration reform. Gutierrez announced his endorsement of Clinton earlier Monday. She is expected to deliver a speech on terrorism in Minnesota on Tuesday.

- AP