

# IMMIGRATION: MYTHS VERSUS FACTS

## **Myth # 1**      ***Immigrants Take Jobs Away From Americans***

Immigrants work in niche occupations; including many areas U.S. workers don't choose to work in. One recent study showed NO correlation between high unemployment and counties with large numbers of immigrants.

"Not in Competition." [Immigration Policy Center](http://immigrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/docs/Not_In_Competition_3.pdf). 2010. American Immigration Council. 29 Sept. 2011. <[http://immigrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/docs/Not\\_In\\_Competition\\_3.pdf](http://immigrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/docs/Not_In_Competition_3.pdf)>. Immigration Reform and Job Growth. 2011.

Immigration Policy Center. 29 Sept. 2011. <<http://immigrationpolicy.org/just-facts/immigration-reform-and-job-growth>>.

## **Myth # 2**      ***Immigrants Increase Crime***

New immigrants are *less* likely to commit crimes than native-born Americans. While immigration has increased since 1994, including doubling undocumented populations, violent crime rates fell by 34.2%. This question has been studied for over 100 years and the findings consistently show that new immigrants commit fewer crimes than native born residents.

Jacoby, Jeff. "Immigration and Crime." The Boston Globe. 2008. 29 Sept. 2011. <[http://www.boston.com/bostonglobe/editorial\\_opinion/oped/articles/2008/03/05/immigration\\_and\\_crime](http://www.boston.com/bostonglobe/editorial_opinion/oped/articles/2008/03/05/immigration_and_crime)>.

Immigrants and Crime. 2011. Immigration Policy Center. 29 Sept. 2011. <<http://immigrationpolicy.org/just-facts/immigrants-and-crime-are-they-connected-century-research-finds-crime-rates-immigrants-are>>.

## **Myth # 3**      ***Immigrants Don't Pay Taxes***

All immigrants pay taxes, whether income, property, sales, or other. As far as income tax payments go, immigrants pay \$90-\$140 *billion* a year in federal, state, and local taxes. Even undocumented immigrants pay income taxes, as evidenced by the Social Security Administration's "suspense file" (taxes that cannot be matched to workers' names and social security numbers). In 2002, this suspense file grew by \$56 billion in reported earnings, with \$7 billion in Social Security taxes and \$1.5 billion in Medicare taxes largely paid by immigrants who will *never* enjoy these programs. Immigrants contribute \$611 billion to our Social Security system; a moratorium on legal immigration would devastate the system by raising the deficit 31% over 50 yrs.

## **Myth # 4**      ***Immigrants Don't Contribute Economically to Society***

The immigrant community is not a drain on the U.S. economy but, in fact, proves to be a net benefit. Research reported by both the CATO Institute and the President's Council of Economic Advisors reveals that the average immigrant pays a net 80,000 dollars more in taxes than they collect in government services. For immigrants with college degrees the net fiscal return is \$198,000. Furthermore, The American Farm Bureau asserts that without guest workers the U.S. economy would lose as much as \$9 billion a year in agricultural production and 20 percent of current production would go overseas. In the Philadelphia region, immigrants have accounted for nearly 75



percent of the area's labor growth since 2000 and, when compared to native born, more are employed (73 percent versus 71.5 percent) and self-employed (10.7 percent versus 7.9 percent). In addition, immigrants have a high rate of entrepreneurship, opening businesses and creating jobs. And new groups have tremendous buying power. The growth of the Latino press is an example; at a time when newspapers are struggling for readership, Latino radio and T.V. offerings are increasing. Since 1990 Latino purchasing power has increased by 349% and Asian buying power by 92%.

Singer A., Vittielo, D., Katz, M., Park D., (2008) *Recent Immigration to Philadelphia: Regional Change in a Re-Emerging Gateway*. Brookings Institute. 29 Sept 2011.

<[http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/reports/2008/1113\\_immigration\\_singer/1113\\_immigration\\_singer.pdf](http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/reports/2008/1113_immigration_singer/1113_immigration_singer.pdf)>.

CATO Institute, *CATO Handbook for Congress: Policy Recommendations for the 108th Congress*. 29 Sept.

2011. <<http://www.cato.org/pubs/handbook/hb108/hb108-63.pdf>>.

Jackson, Derrick Z. "Undocumented Workers Contribute Plenty." *The Boston Globe*. 12 Apr. 2006. 29 Sept. 2011.

<[http://www.boston.com/news/globe/editorial\\_opinion/oped/articles/2006/04/12/undocumented\\_workers\\_contribute\\_plenty](http://www.boston.com/news/globe/editorial_opinion/oped/articles/2006/04/12/undocumented_workers_contribute_plenty)>.

#### **Myth # 5      *Immigrants Don't Want to Learn English***

Immigrants and their children learn English today at the same rate as Italian, German, and Eastern European who emigrated in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. There are not enough English classes to accommodate all the immigrants who want to learn English. Nevertheless within 10 years, 75% of immigrants are able to speak English well. 91% of second generation immigrants are fluent or near fluent English speakers. By the third generation, 97% speak English fluently or near fluently.

Murguia, J. & Munez, J.. "From Immigrant to Citizen." *The American Prospect*. 23 Oct. 2005. Accessed 29 Sept. 2011.

<<http://www.prospect.org/cs/articles?articleId=10487>>.

Hakimzadeh, S. & Cohn, D. "English Usage Among Hispanics in the United States." *Pew Hispanic Center*. 2007. Accessed 29 Sept. 2011.

<<http://pewhispanic.org/reports/report.php?ReportID=82>>.

Myths and Fact. National Immigration Forum. 2003. Accessed 29 Sept. 2011.

<<http://www.immigrationforum.org/images/uploads/MythsandFacts.pdf>>.

#### **Myth # 6      *Immigrants Have a Way to Immigrate Legally; They Just Need to Wait Their Turn***

There are no legal possibilities for many immigrants. Visa caps, complex laws including 1996 changes in the law means if an immigrant leaves and tries to apply to re-enter, they could be separated from their family for 10 years or more. There are virtually no permanent employment visas for unskilled immigrants; the wait is 8 years and no employer will hold a job open that long. **Immigrants can't wait in line, because there is no line.**

