



The Truth About Immigration

Myth: Many immigrants cross the border illegally and are overrunning the country.

Fact: Actually, most of the immigrants living in the United States have legal status in the U.S.; 72% of the foreign-born population is authorized immigrants, including naturalized citizens, legal permanent residents, and legal temporary residents. Of the 43 million foreign-born individuals living in the United States, 44 percent are naturalized U.S. citizens and 27 percent are lawful permanent residents, known as green-card holders. Additionally, of the 11 million undocumented immigrants living in the U.S., approximately 40 percent came to the United States legally but have remained in the U.S. after their authorized stays.

[https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/mexican-immigrants-united-states-2019;](https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/mexican-immigrants-united-states-2019)

[https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/06/12/5-facts-about-illegal-immigration-in-the-u-s/;](https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/06/12/5-facts-about-illegal-immigration-in-the-u-s/)

<https://www.learningforjustice.org/magazine/spring-2011/ten-myths-about-immigration>

Myth: Immigrants take jobs and opportunity away from Americans.

Fact: Immigrants stimulate economic growth and there is no evidence that growth takes place at the expense of US workers. States with large numbers of immigrants report lower unemployment rates for everyone. Approximately 45% of Fortune 500 companies were founded by immigrants or their children. Congressional Budget Office analysis shows that offering a pathway to legalization for the undocumented would strengthen the economy by creating certainty, stability, and opportunity — not the opposite.

<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/the-avenue/2017/12/04/almost-half-of-fortune-500-companies-were-founded-by-american-immigrants-or-their-children/>

Myth: Immigrants bring crime to US communities.

Fact: Even though the past two decades have shown increases in immigrant populations, crime rates have dropped in the same period. Immigrants are less likely to commit crimes than native-born American citizens. <https://www.pnas.org/content/117/51/32340>

Myth: Immigrants don't pay taxes.

Fact: Immigrants pay taxes, including income, property, sales or other. All undocumented immigrants pay sales taxes that stimulate our state and local budgets, and many pay federal taxes as well. Each year immigrants in the U.S. pay between \$90 and \$140 billion in taxes, and a recent study found that undocumented immigrants alone pay approximately \$11.74 billion in taxes every year. Despite this, undocumented immigrants are not eligible for most public welfare benefits, so they contribute more to our public budgets than they receive, creating a positive net fiscal impact. Additionally, throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, although many undocumented immigrants were on the front lines working in precarious situations, they were excluded from all federal forms of relief, including stimulus checks. Mixed-stated families with citizens children and spouses suffered under this exclusion, and only citizen spouses were given a check during the second round of stimulus checks.

<https://www.adl.org/resources/fact-sheets/myths-and-facts-about-immigrants-and-immigration-en-espanol>; <https://www.learningforjustice.org/magazine/spring-2011/ten-myths-about-immigration>

Myth: Deporting all undocumented immigrants will strengthen our economy.

Fact: Removing millions of long-term members of our communities from the United States would cost an estimated \$600 billion and substantially harm our productivity, particularly in industries such as agriculture, construction, and hospitality. It would also require the creation of a huge deportation force that would sow fear and guarantee an increase in racial profiling and incarceration of people of color.

<https://theglobalamericans.org/2017/02/deporting-11-3-million-undocumented-immigrants-wont-cheap/>

Myth: Giving legal status to undocumented immigrants would ruin the U.S. economy.

Fact: The legalization for the almost 11 million undocumented immigrants living in the United States would enable these immigrants to produce and earn significantly more than they do now. Providing a pathway to legal status would take undocumented immigrants from the economic sidelines and fully incorporate this group into the American economy. As workers, consumers, and taxpayers, undocumented immigrants could potentially add \$90 to \$210 billion to the U.S. GDP--up from the current \$21.43 trillion--in the next ten years and raise \$3 billion in payroll taxes in the first year.

<https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/immigration/reports/2013/03/20/57351/the-economic-effects-of-granting-legal-status-and-citizenship-to-undocumented-immigrants/>

Myth: We have no idea who is coming into our country as a refugee.

Fact: The screening done for our national refugee resettlement program is extremely rigorous. On average, candidates wait over two years for approval of their applications to enter through our humanitarian programs. <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/asylum-united-states>

Myth: Most of the immigrants coming to the U.S. are from Mexico.

Fact: The foreign-born population in the U.S. is a diverse pool of individuals from all over the world. There were 44 million foreign-born people living in the United States in 2018, around 13.7% of the U.S. population. Only about 25 percent of foreign-born individuals in the U.S. were born in Mexico. American immigrants come from almost every nation in the world. China, India, the Philippines, and El Salvador are some of the top countries of origin for immigrants in the United States. Net migration from Mexico has been negative since 2009, and the number of undocumented migrants in U.S. peaked in 2007.

<https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/08/20/key-findings-about-u-s-immigrants/>

Myth: People send their children to the U.S. illegally to take advantage of the U.S. immigration system.

Fact: The vast majority of unaccompanied children, adolescents, and young families that arrive in the U.S. as undocumented immigrants each year have fled violence and persecution. The majority of children who fled Central America have viable asylum claims. Many of these children are then exposed to harsh and punitive immigration policies in the U.S. Immigration detention, family separation, and other policies often compound existing trauma and threaten the health and well-being of child migrants. It is important to protect child migrants and unaccompanied minors fleeing violence in their home country. Providing physical and mental healthcare for youth seeking asylum and ensuring they are well taken care of will benefit the U.S. by creating stability in local communities in which these children live and uplifting the United States' national reputation. <https://phr.org/our-work/resources/there-is-no-one-here-to-protect-you/>