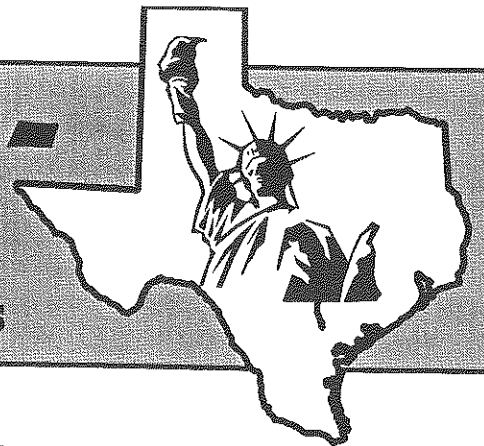


IMMIGRATION- AN AMERICAN PARADOX

Facts & Issues on Immigration in Texas



A Study by the League of Women Voters of Texas Education Fund

INTRODUCTION

According to polls, Americans like immigrants; they just don't like immigration. Americans empathize with immigrants they know personally and pity the plights of individuals as portrayed by the media. At the same time, Americans are troubled about immigration issues and many worry that present rates of both documented and undocumented immigration threaten the country's economy and culture. In light of these perceptions, this country's immigration policy through the years has reflected a struggle to balance humanitarian and political goals with concerns about a growing population consuming limited resources. Over the course of United States history, sometimes the scales have tipped one way, sometimes the other, but currently the majority of Americans appears to be in a "don't like immigration" mode, advocating limitations on immigration.

Recognizing public interest in the subject, delegates to the 1995 state convention of the League of Women Voters of Texas adopted a study of the impact and effects of immigration laws and policies on Texas.

Focusing on the impact of immigration on Texas as much as possible, this *Facts and Issues* includes national data, along with the somewhat elusive state data. A national perspective is necessary because immigration is regulated almost exclusively at the federal level.

The scope of the study is to review and evaluate:

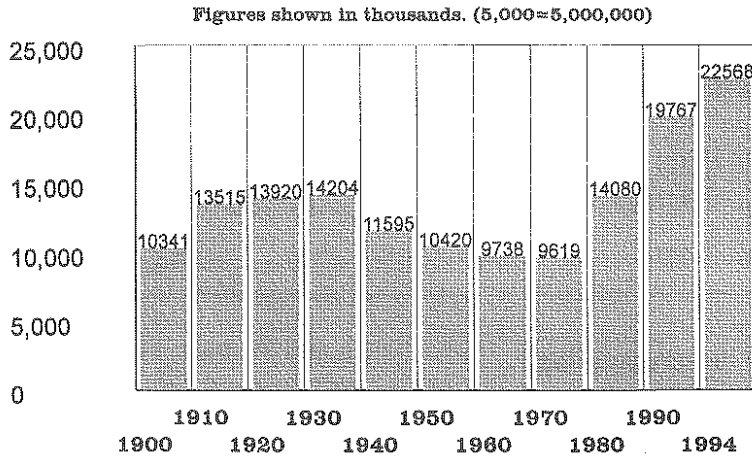
- **existing state laws and policies relating to immigration; the role and impact in Texas of federal laws and policies regarding services to immigrant populations,**
- **the effects of immigration policies on social services, law enforcement, and economics,**
- **and the effects of immigration on population growth, resources, the criminal justice system, and the environment.**

For the first century of America's existence, unrestricted immigration helped populate its vastness, but at the end of the 19th century, Congress began to pass legislation establishing a more restrictive policy. Early laws barred convicts, political radicals, criminals, paupers, and the diseased, and required literacy for immigrants age 16 and over. In 1882, after initially encouraging immigration of Asian laborers to build a burgeoning transnational railway system, Congress passed the first immigration law based on nationality, excluding Chinese immigrants. A series of laws from 1917 to 1924 severely limited immigration from southern and eastern Europe by implementing the first national origins quota system. Prior to 1900, Northern and Western Europeans dominated immigration into the U.S. By the time Southern and Eastern Europeans began to arrive in significant numbers after the turn of the century, a large population of

Northern and Western Europeans was already living in this country. As a result, the quota system, which limited immigration to 3% of the number of foreign-born persons of each nationality residing in the U.S. as of the 1910 census, effectively restricted immigration from southern and eastern European regions, as well as from Asia, for several decades, as was the intention.

Over the years, immigration policy has addressed a variety of national issues. Legislation providing assistance for persons displaced by war and establishing quotas for refugees and asylees fulfills humanitarian goals. Other laws reflect labor market needs, accommodating workers in certain fields or with specific skills. In the past, agricultural workers, entering under the now defunct *bracero* program, were high-priority immigrants; today, workers with scientific and technical skills are in demand. In a 1965 revision, Congress replaced the national origins formula with numerical limitations by hemisphere and focused for the first time on family reunification by giving high priority to family members of United States citizens and documented immigrants already residing in this country—a policy which changed the demography of the country by decreasing the ethnic diversity of the immigrant population. The 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA), focusing on undocumented immigrants, granted amnesty to

Number of Foreign-Born Living in U.S. 1900-1994



SOURCE: U. S. Census Bureau

those who had been living in the in the United States illegally prior to 1982. The same law introduced employer sanctions to make entry into the United States less attractive to undocumented immigrants.

The most recent reform, the Immigration Act of 1990 (IMMACT), had several purposes: to increase the diversity of immigrants, to bring in a greater number of skilled workers, and to continue the family reunification program. Responding to increasingly vocal public concerns, this latest law also established the U. S. Commission on Immigration Reform, headed by the late Honor-

able Barbara Jordan, to review and evaluate the impact of current immigration law and to suggest changes.

Immigration concerns often are closely related to a larger problem—population growth. According to U.S. Census Bureau projections in the 1995 *Current Population Reports*, the population of the United States will be close to 400 million by the middle of the next century, an increase of almost 50% in little more than 50 years. The population of Texas will increase from its present 18 million to almost 27 million by the year 2020.

The Carrying Capacity Network and other activist population groups warn of the dangers of unlimited growth. They believe that the nation, and specifically Texas, which became the second most populous state in 1994, cannot sustain such rapid growth indefinitely and eventually will face problems comparable to those in Third World nations. These groups see immigration as a major component of the overall growth problem of the country and advocate restricting immigration as one way to reduce population growth.

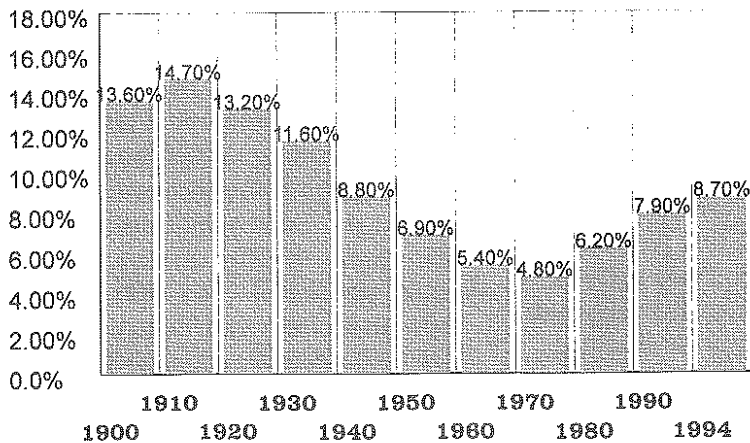
On the other hand, critics of restricting immigration argue that population growth is a function of fertility, mortality, and immigration levels. Critics of further restrictions also maintain that completely eliminating immigration, which makes up about 40% of the total growth, still would not achieve a zero population rate. For instance, nine million people were added to the total U.S. population from 1990-1995 as a result of births minus deaths, and only five million because of immigration.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Restrictionists argue that immigrants, representing almost half of the annual population growth, are bankrupting the country's social services programs, overburdening the school systems, displacing America's workers, and straining the criminal justice system, a viewpoint that is difficult to prove or disprove because of sometimes dated and conflicting—and in some categories, nonexistent—statistics. Very few agencies gather or maintain records on the citizenship or immigrant status of their clients.

Although immigrants have access to many public assistance services, eligibility for benefits depends on immigrant status—documented, undocumented, refugee, or asylee.

Foreign-Born as Percentage of Total U.S. Population, 1900-1994



SOURCE: U. S. Census Bureau

DEFINITIONS

ASYLEE: A noncitizen who, at a port of entry, seeks U.S. protection because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution based on race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group.

DOCUMENTED or LEGAL IMMIGRANT: An immigrant who applies and receives permission to enter the United States in one of several categories. The most common classes of documented status are: Legal Permanent Resident (LPR), Refugee, Temporary Protective Status (TPS), and Family Unity Status.

FAMILY UNITY STATUS: Spouses and children of undocumented immigrants who became documented during the amnesty period of the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1987 (IRCA).

REFUGEE: A noncitizen who seeks protection by application prior to entering the United States because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution based on race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group.

TEMPORARY PROTECTIVE STATUS: Immigrants from specified countries during a time period when extremely unsafe conditions exist.

UNDOCUMENTED or ILLEGAL IMMIGRANT: A noncitizen who enters the country without permission, as well as those who enter legally (on student or tourist visas, for instance) and maintain residence in the United States after their visas expire.

Under federal law, documented immigrants, after a three-year waiting period, are entitled to all forms of public assistance on the same basis of need as those who are native born, including the Food Stamp Program (FSP), Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), Supplemental Security Income

(SSI), and Medicaid. Undocumented immigrants who became documented immigrants under the IRCA amnesty program must wait five years to receive assistance. Refugees, whose needs are often greater than those of documented immigrants, may apply immediately on arrival. Asylees also qualify for immediate, but limited, assistance until the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) determines their status. Unlike refugees, who enter the country with permission, asylees come in illegally and must apply for documented status after entry, which is not necessarily automatic.

Like those who are native born, immigrants, regardless of their status, must contribute to Social Security—Retirement, Survivors, and Disability Insurance (RSDI)—in order to collect retirement benefits.

Undocumented immigrants—those who entered the country after IRCA or did not apply or qualify for amnesty under IRCA—are eligible only for those programs which provide services to children, such as the National School Breakfast and Lunch Programs and the Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC).

According to Dr. Julian L. Simon, Professor of Business Administration at the University of Maryland and adjunct scholar at the Cato Institute, foreign-born persons who entered the country between 1980 and 1990 receive on the average about 30% more in benefits than do native born and have a 10 to 20% higher probability of applying for public assistance. However, if refugees, who tend to receive assistance longer than documented immigrants, are excluded, the rate of welfare use

by foreign born is below that of native born.

The Commission on Immigration Reform found that, "Most legal immigrants do not receive public assistance; the utilization rate for these immigrants as a group is less than the utilization rate for the general population." The Commission did, however, recognize the special needs and relatively high utilization rates for refugees and elderly documented immigrants.

□ Food Stamps

According to William E. Ludwig, Administrator of the Food and Nutrition Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, in testimony before Congress, 1.3 million eligible immigrants received food stamps in 1992, less than 2% of the total number of persons in the FSP. According to the Texas Office of Immigration and Refugee Affairs (TOIRA), 9.1% of those receiving Food Stamps in Texas during fiscal year 1995 were documented immigrants.

□ AFDC

Families with dependent children, having a need because of lack of parental support as a result of death, unemployment, or disability, may receive AFDC benefits based on the eligibility of the children in the family. Because children born in this country to undocumented immigrant parents are automatically citizens by law, with all the rights of citizenship, including participation in federally funded assistance programs, it is possible for a family to include adult members who are neither citizens nor documented immigrants as well as children who are citizens by birth or citizenship. In such cases, a household receives prorated payments depending on the number of eligible children in residence.

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But according to Wendell E. Primus, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Human Services Policy, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, less than 1% of those who received AFDC benefits in 1992 were children of undocumented immigrants. For fiscal year 1994, according to the latest *Current Population Reports*, documented immigrants made up 10.5% of the total AFDC caseload, up from 7.1% in 1987. TOIRA's figures for fiscal year 1995 in Texas indicate that 3.6% of those receiving AFDC benefits were documented immigrants.

□ RSDI

Because payments under RSDI are based on contributions through payroll deduction, documented immigrants who work the minimum required time are eligible for retirement benefits. However, since documented immigrant status or citizenship is not a requirement for RSDI, it is possible for undocumented immigrants to acquire the necessary work/contribution record while employed illegally, qualify for insurance, and collect benefits under this program.

□ SSI

The largest percentage of immigrants who receive public assistance do so through the SSI program, which makes cash available to aged and disabled persons in order to bring their incomes up to a federally-established minimum level. In the first six months of 1987, approximately 6% of SSI recipients were immigrants, a slightly higher percentage than for other types of welfare. This higher percentage is attributable to aging parents who came into the country under the family reunification immigration policy and were unable to contribute to Social Security and qualify for retirement benefits.

□ Medicaid and Medicare

Overall, immigrants are generally of working age and as a result, healthy; their use of Medicaid and

Medicare benefits tends to be low, only 2.2% of the total caseload in Texas for fiscal year 1995. Undocumented immigrants, eligible only for emergency medical services, including obstetrical delivery services, because of their income level and lifestyles may have greater needs for other health services—services which they cannot receive while in the United States.

Many health officials express concern about the effect on the general population of denying health benefits to undocumented immigrants. Fear of deportation may keep undocumented immigrants from seeking necessary medical care for themselves and their families, increasing the chances of outbreaks of diseases such as tuberculosis and hepatitis. However, because of inadequate statistics, neither the use of health care facilities by undocumented immigrants nor the related costs can be accurately measured. The Texas Office of the Attorney General estimates the state's annual health expenses for undocumented immigrants to be \$534 million. Dr. Donald Huddle, Professor Emeritus of Economics at Rice University, judges costs at \$107 million, while TOIRA calculates \$78 million.

MAINTENANCE OF STATISTICS

Most Americans object to undocumented immigrants receiving public benefits. Many consider the problem widespread and express concern that undocumented immigrants receive publicly funded benefits that should be available only to citizens and documented immigrants.

Some relevant facts: Agencies that administer the FSP and AFDC mandate the utilization of an INS database, the Systematic Alien Verification System for Entitlements (SAVE), to determine eligibility of



immigrants for services. The Texas Department of Human Services (TDHS), responsible for administering many of the federal benefit programs in Texas, checks the applicant's alien or "A" number—the unique set of digits appearing on each applicant's immigration documentation—in SAVE and obtains immigrant status within minutes. If the immigrant is not in the system, TDHS submits a request for verification to the INS. Response time is several weeks.

Because TDHS generally consults SAVE only when applicants admit they are not citizens, those who claim to be naturalized or native-born citizens can bypass the verification system completely. The U. S. General Accounting Office (GAO) reports that because FSP fraud is almost nonexistent, SAVE is not cost effective and recommends that it be discontinued. Although SAVE identifies less than 1% of applicants as ineligible, its proponents argue that the system acts as a strong deterrent, discouraging ineligible immigrants from applying. Its critics deplore the system's lack of timeliness. Updating is slow, creating a 4-6 week backlog. Such delays especially affect refugees, who because of their special circumstances often need benefits immediately after arriving in the country.

HOUSING

Undocumented immigrants do not qualify for public housing, but the policy was not enforced until 1995. The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), which disperses tax dollars to renters and buyers in the public sector, now denies housing assistance to undocumented immigrants. Prior to 1995, proof of citizenship or immigration status was not a requirement for those seeking assistance in public housing or in



privately-owned units that received federal subsidies. With the new regulations in place, HUD requires proof of eligibility of applicants, and questions those presently living in federal housing about their status during the annual recertification process.

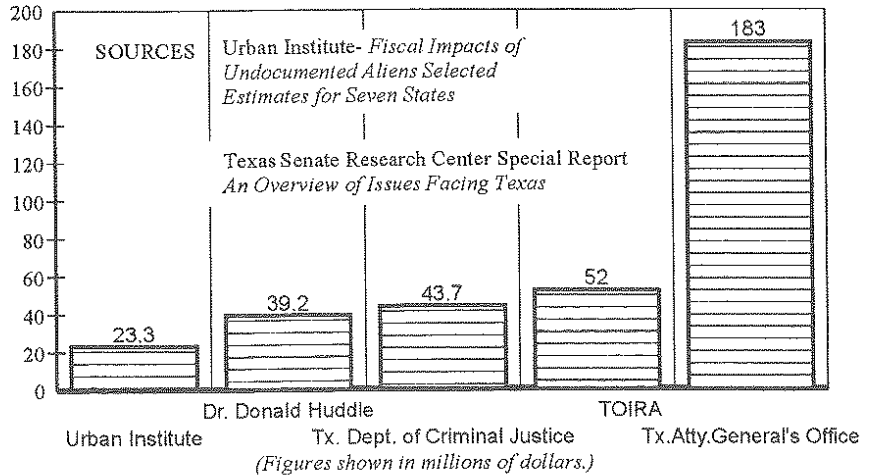
Some immigrants find housing along the Texas/Mexico border in *colonias*, unregulated developments of substandard houses peculiar to Texas. Often flimsy, makeshift, and without flooring, most *colonias* houses have no running water or sewage facilities. This inexpensive *colonias* housing attracts both documented and undocumented immigrants. According to the Texas Water Development Board, 339,000 people lived in 14,401 *colonias* in 1994. Texas voters have approved more than \$300 million in bond money to build water and sewer systems in the *colonias*, but because unplatted plots—lacking paved streets, curbs, and sidewalks—do not qualify, few *colonias* are eligible for this funding. The Texas Legislature, which outlawed development of additional *colonias* in the 1995 session, also has authorized \$40 million in mortgage bonds dedicated to *colonias* housing. Many of the houses were purchased with contracts of deed financed by developers. With only a contract of deed, buyers are in danger of losing their homes if they miss one payment.

EDUCATION



In 1982, the U.S. Supreme Court in *Phylar v. Doe* ruled that school districts cannot deny education to children between the ages of 5 and 17, regardless of citizenship or immigrant status. The court's ruling has the greatest impact on school districts with large undocumented immigrant populations, such as those along the Texas/Mexico border, although cost estimates for Texas vary from \$1,070 a year per child (Huddle) to \$4,461

Annual Total Cost of Undocumented Immigrants In Texas Prisons in 1994



(Urban Institute). Divergent methodologies, disparate categories of expenditures, and different estimates of school population account for the variances.

Typically, schools located in areas with large immigrant populations, especially those made up largely of newly-arrived and undocumented immigrants, operate with a lower than average tax base. They cope with rapidly rising enrollments along with special problems associated with the needs of educating children who lack English proficiency. A state law requires a school district with an enrollment of twenty or more Limited English Proficient (LEP) children in any language classification in the same grade level district-wide to provide a bilingual education program. Such a program necessitates hiring additional teachers to teach English as a Second Language (ESL) and to assist those who are LEP students. Budgets are further strained to hire additional aides to assist teachers with classes that include ESL and LEP students.

For schools serving large undocumented immigrant populations, there are other ramifications. Poor attendance, high drop out rates, and constantly fluctuating enrollment, related to cultural and economic causes, affect a school's overall rating and its ability to provide quality education for all students.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM



The impact of immigration on the criminal justice system can best be measured by the proportion of immigrants in the prison population, but even these statistics are incomplete. In a 1994 report to Congress, *Criminal Aliens: A Federal Responsibility and a State and Local Burden*, the House Committee on Government Operations comments on the lack of statistics available about numbers of immigrants in prison: "The committee finds that the numbers listed in the report are not an accurate count of the number of illegal aliens incarcerated in local, state, and Federal correctional facilities."

Of the 50,000 inmates in Texas prisons in 1994, more than 4,000 were foreign born, of which either 1,594 (Urban Institute's estimate) or 2,620 (Texas Department of Criminal Justice's calculations) were undocumented immigrants. The difference in the two sets of figures occurs because the Texas count included prisoners who were not illegal aliens but had been tagged by the INS for deportation. The Urban

Institute reports a further example of the statistical problem in its report, *Fiscal Impacts of Undocumented Aliens: Selected Estimates for Seven States*. Supplying figures for the report, the Texas Department of Criminal Justice figures included as "foreign born" 894 prisoners born in specific states—37 in Idaho, 380 in Missouri, 454 in Mississippi, and 73 in Nebraska.

The annual cost of maintaining undocumented immigrants in Texas prisons is variously calculated, as shown by the chart on page five. The figure from the Attorney General was used in the state's lawsuit, *Morales v. United States*, in which reimbursement for these expenses was sought from the federal government. The case was dismissed by the federal district court in Brownsville in August 1995. According to TOIRA, local governments spend an additional \$12.4 million annually on undocumented immigrants in the criminal justice system.

COST/BENEFIT ANALYSIS



Because of public interest in the subject, researchers often study immigrants' use of public assistance programs in an attempt to reach definitive answers as to net cost, with widely varying results, largely because of inadequate data. Consequently, researchers frequently resort to estimates and/or projections based on data from targeted immigrant populations, then extrapolate to the immigrant population in general.

Gathering statistics on undocumented immigrants presents a particular challenge. By the very nature of their existence as an underground population, they either do not admit to their status or do not apply for benefits, even those for which they qualify. The U. S. Commission on Immigration Reform, with all of its resources, found it difficult to obtain reliable information: "Distinguishing

fact from fiction has been difficult, in some cases because of what has become a highly emotional debate on immigration. We have heard contradictory testimony, shaky statistics, and a great deal of honest confusion regarding the impacts of immigration." Recognizing the problem, the Commission recommends an improved system of gathering, compiling, and sharing statistics, to facilitate informed administrative decisions and to further research.

Huddle maintains that immigrants are a major financial drain, costing taxpayers billions of dollars each year. Representing the other end of the spectrum, Dr. Jeffrey Passel, with the Urban Institute, and Simon conclude that immigrants are a financial asset, putting more into the system than they take out.

Studying all of the immigrants, documented and undocumented, who have arrived here since 1970, and offsetting cost against income from taxation, Huddle suggests that in 1993 taxpayers paid approximately \$44 billion to provide services to immigrants nationwide. Expressing an opposing view, Passel contends that immigrants are a net asset to the country by as much as \$30 billion a year, contributing more taxes than they take out in benefits, a conclusion Simon substantiates.

Although many factors contribute to such varying results, a principal one is the inclusion of more income categories in Passel's study than in Huddle's—Social Security taxes, gasoline taxes, and unemployment insurance. Huddle excludes Social Security payments because of their temporary nature; those who pay in eventually will collect. Because they use differing categories and time periods, other immigration study

results often are as confusing and difficult to compare as these three.

Huddle, author of a cost/benefit study of immigrants who reside in Texas, finds that 1.96 million documented and undocumented immigrants in Texas received \$4.68 billion in benefits in 1992 while contributing only \$1.42 billion to the system in taxes—a net loss to the state of \$3.26 billion. Huddle's study includes data relating to primary and secondary education, bilingual education, Medicaid, county health and welfare services, and Earned Income Tax Credits.

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U. S. Commission on
Immigration Reform

In *Morales v. United States*, the Attorney General's office estimated that Texas state and local governments pay \$1.6 billion a year to provide education, social services, and medical care to undocumented immigrants, including costs incurred through use of the criminal justice system. Other states have instituted similar suits or passed restrictive legislation, indicative of widespread concern about costs of undocumented immigration. A federal district court recently found unconstitutional California's Proposition 187, denying all benefits to undocumented immigrants. Researchers at the Urban Institute dispute Texas' figures, arguing that the combination of understated revenues and inflated costs produced an inaccurate result.

LABOR AND THE ECONOMY



Although providing public assistance to immigrants is controversial, the impact of immigration on the labor market has greater ramifications for many Americans—what affects the labor market affects ev-

everyone. Immigration legislation often addresses employer needs, establishing exigency categories for workers in specified areas and allowing large numbers of those who qualify to enter the country under these quotas.

Advocates of restricting immigration argue that the present immigration policy based on family reunification, and to a lesser extent on skills, fails to achieve goals compatible with a changing labor market that demands large numbers of workers with technological training and communication skills. They say that present laws encourage increased immigration of workers who lack training, education, and English fluency, intensifying competition for declining, low-skill, low-wage jobs.

Joseph R. Meisenheimer, II, writing in a 1992 *Monthly Labor Review* article, analyzes 1989 Census Bureau figures to determine the labor market status of immigrants. The statistics indicate that recent immigrants earn less and have a higher unemployment rate than those who arrived in this country prior to 1970 and those who are native born. For instance, the unemployment rate for immigrants, which was approximately 4% prior to 1970, has risen to 7.5%, compared to 6.8% for the labor force overall. He concludes that recent immigrants' generally lower levels of education and English fluency are major reasons for these disparities.

Critics of current policy express concern about the effect of unemployment and low earnings on minorities in this country and point to Los Angeles as an example of a place where the influx of unskilled Hispanic immigrants has allegedly swelled the ranks of unemployed and distressed minorities, particularly African-Americans. As *Los*

Angeles Times journalist Jack Miles writes in the October 1992 issue of *Atlantic Monthly*, "America's older black poor and newer brown poor are on a collision course." Such perceived racial tensions lead to the most stringent immigration proposal: stop importing all workers as long as any unemployment exists in this country.

Passel disagrees with Miles' conclusion, arguing that newcomers are more apt to displace those immigrants who have preceded them than African-Americans. When displacement occurs, he says it generally happens at the low-skill level in communities that have both weak economies and large immigrant populations. According to Huddle's study, unskilled immigrants displace American workers at least 25% of the time, a figure considerably higher than in other studies.

Jack Miles
Atlantic Monthly

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On the other hand, Dr. George J. Borjas, Professor of Economics at the University of California in Santa Barbara, finds that immigration has only a weak effect on the native-born labor market. In a 1994 article in the *Journal of Economic Literature*, Borjas states "...the estimated correlations between native wages and the immigrant share in local labor markets do not support the hypothesis that the employment opportunities of U. S.-born workers are strongly and adversely affected by immigration."

Simon finds no displacement of native-born workers and also maintains that immigrant workers actually increase employment opportunities because their consumption of goods creates additional jobs. Simon uses this premise to explain why populous states have unemployment rates comparable to those of less populous states and also why the

unemployment rate is no larger today than it was in the past, even though population has increased.

A 1989 U.S. Labor Department study finds immigrants emerging as an essential and positive factor in the workplace, causing a 22% annual increase in the labor force. Their demand for goods creates more jobs than they fill. According to the study, immigrants also become self-employed at a slightly higher rate than natives, a rate that rises with their length of stay. Entrepreneurial immigrants reduce the displacement impact by hiring other employees, especially family members, and also earn an average of \$30,000 a year.

Studies indicate that although the unemployment rate, which is a standard measure of the economy's health, is higher for immigrants during early months after their arrival, it improves over time. According to an INS study of undocumented immigrants seeking amnesty under IRCA, men who had been in the country for several years had a 2.2% unemployment rate, considerably less than half that of the population as a whole. Proponents of the present system see no reason to blame immigrants for unemployment, citing reports that attribute African-American unemployment rates in urban areas to differences in education level, the rate of population growth, and the amount of manufacturing and construction, rather than to immigration.

Supporters of current immigration policy argue that immigrants are a source of inexpensive labor, allowing smaller industries to compete. Cities with large immigrant populations also benefit as industry gravitates to their areas to take advantage of readily available immigrant labor pools. In El Paso, for instance, manufacturing jobs, which have declined in other parts of the nation, are on the increase. American companies that might have gone outside the country in their

search for inexpensive labor are instead looking to areas that attract immigrants for an affordable and competitive labor force. Critics point out that the down side of this type of industrial migration associated with a low-wage labor pool is the problem communities have operating with a combination of consumption of services and a low tax base.

Restrictionists rank this inexpensive labor pool as a negative and express concern that immigrants, who accept lower wages than native-born Americans, depress overall earnings and create difficulties for future workers. Borjas points out that although the average wage of the native worker is slightly lower in areas with large immigrant populations, the difference is numerically small. A 10% increase in the size of the immigrant population reduces native earnings by .2%. Passel agrees in part, saying that although immigration increases employment overall, it tends to reduce earnings of low-skilled women and African-Americans.

But business interests see the low-wage factor as a positive effect on the nation's economy, increasing profits and providing a higher return on capital. They argue that low pay is not necessarily a permanent condition. Studies show that by the end of a 15-year working period, immigrants' salaries rise to meet and surpass the wages of native-born workers, a trend that may be changing. Preliminary studies indicate that because the rate of assimilation—learning English, obtaining job skills, and adjusting to a new culture—is slowing for many current immigrants, their success rate in the labor market also may decrease. A trend of declining low-skill jobs and a growing pool of low-skill employees may slow or halt advancement,

even for highly motivated individuals.

Low wages also may cause increased employer exploitation. Because of their eagerness to work, their lack of English fluency, and their deficiency in appropriate job skills, many immigrants are vulnerable to abuse. Sweatshops are becoming more prevalent in cities with large immigrant populations, and some employers pay sub-minimum wages, give no benefits, fail to pay Social Security taxes, and violate health and safety laws.

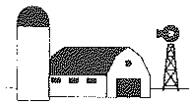
Although attention focuses on immigrants who work at low-skill and blue-collar levels, competition also exists between immigrants and native-born workers in the professional and technological fields. The Department of Labor's Foreign Labor Certification Program is designed to protect United States workers, requiring employers to prove that there are no qualified United States citizen workers available to fill positions. Labor advocates, favoring immigration restriction, suspect that employers routinely evade regulations by tailoring certain job descriptions to exclude all but foreign applicants. Even at the professional level, employers may ask immigrants to work for less or to work without benefits.

Many of these labor and economic problems are concentrated along the United States/Mexico border and in large interior cities. Because of the *peso* devaluation and resulting economic problems in Mexico, increasing numbers of Mexican nationals enter the United States to work in restaurants or construction or as domestics, gardeners, and factory workers. Many cross legally, using border-crossing cards, which authorize travel up to 25 miles from the border for a 72-

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hour period for business and pleasure but are not a substitute for work permits or green cards. The long-standing practice of Mexican nationals crossing into El Paso to work as domestics, gardeners and in other low-paying jobs is a way of life for residents on both sides of the border, and one that many do not want to change. The practice is so accepted that groups like the Border Rights Coalition advocate that amnesty and work permits be extended to these undocumented workers.

A demand for farm workers still exists north of the border, although as a result of the amnesty program of 1986, about 60% of farm workers in the United States are now either United States citizens or legal residents. Wages are low, approximately \$6,000 a year, but higher than in Mexico. More importantly, there is work on this side of the border, at least part of the year, that attracts documented and undocumented seasonal agricultural workers from Mexico and Central America to the United States.



Although the *bracero* program—which brought large numbers of agricultural workers into the United States on a temporary basis—no longer exists, other programs allow foreign nationals to come to the United States to work in agriculture for short periods of time to meet special employment needs. Between 1992 and 1994 a total of 570,000 workers were admitted under these programs, and subsequently 150,000 of them received permanent status as employment-based immigrants. Employers must apply and satisfy certain prerequisites in order to hire employees in this manner.

VERIFICATION OF STATUS



Despite the threat of sanctions, employers in areas with large immigrant populations, such as border areas, continue to hire undocumented immigrants. Many do so deliberately because the benefits are worth the risks, while others unknowingly hire workers carrying forged documents. Currently the INS is experimenting with producing counterfeit-proof verification documents. If successful, the new design will be used for border-crossing cards and green cards. The Commission on Immigration Reform believes that reducing employment opportunities in the United States is the only way to stem the flow of undocumented immigration.

Employer sanctions, first introduced with passage of IRCA, have not proved entirely successful, largely because of the availability of false identification documents and lack of a reliable verification system. When hiring, employers find themselves in nearly untenable positions. If they knowingly hire an employee with forged documents, they are liable for INS penalties, but if they refuse to hire a potential worker without good cause, they may be guilty of discrimination, leaving themselves open to the possibility of a civil suit.

Immigrants who apply for work must show two documents: a government form proving eligibility to work in this country and an additional document, which may be one of thirty or more documents, verifying eligibility. Even experts have difficulty recognizing forged documents when faced with so many options; employers find it almost impossible.

The Commission on Immigration Reform believes that a better verification system is essential to the effective enforcement of workplace sanctions. According to the Commission, a computerized database, refined by pilot testing and safeguarded from fraud, would provide rapid, nondis-

criminatory confirmation of workplace eligibility to employers. Advocates of a centralized database argue that some means of identification is central to the orderly administration of complex societies. They say that a better identification system could not only stanch the flow of undocumented immigrants but also further the achievement of other objectives, such as the control of drug traffic and tax evasion.

Those who advocate a national identification system say that citizens already are accustomed to using identification systems in various areas of their lives. Drivers' licenses in thirty states, including Texas, often are used for identification and now are more tamper proof because of holographic imaging, thumb prints, color photos, and bar codes or magnetic stripes. Many social service agencies, banks, and businesses require identification of this type. In a pilot program, Dallas and Tarrant Counties, using a new inkless electronic imaging technology to identify AFDC and food stamp recipients, reduced fraud by more than \$11.5 million a month in the first three months of the program. The new technology will be utilized statewide beginning in October 1996.

One of the strongest and most controversial recommendations of the Commission on Immigration Reform is for a computerized verification system based on Social Security numbers, using INS and Social Security Administration data. The Commission on Immigration Reform advocates interim use of SAVE, the INS database system, after improvements to correct current inadequacies during the pilot testing period of the new verification system. The pilot testing programs would be carried out in the five states most affected by immigration—California, New York, Texas, Florida, and Illinois—and would provide information about different types

of verification systems, such as those based on a Social Security number, a driver's license, or telephone verification.

Another component of the pilot program would be development of measures to protect privacy and civil rights and check database quality and timeliness. A nationwide system as envisioned by the Commission would eliminate the need for prospective employees to self-identify citizenship status, and in some cases the opportunity to circumvent the system.

In the meantime, SAVE will be available to Texas employers through a toll-free telephone number to verify citizenship or immigration status of immigrants who are prospective employees. Critics are skeptical unless INS can ensure database accuracy. In a 1989 audit, INS records were wrong 17% of the time. An error rate as low as 1% would declare 650,000 of the 65 million people who change jobs in this country each year ineligible for work. The INS acknowledges that its databases are not perfect but has built in additional checks to reduce the error rate.

Opponents are concerned about the integrity of a system based on Social Security numbers, whose validity is based on easily-forged birth certificates. Errors, which can keep eligible persons from working or delay the start of work for days or weeks, also are a concern. Critics are anxious about the gradual erosion of civil liberties that could occur when use of the system, designed only for employment eligibility verification, is justified for other purposes "in the national interest."

Civil rights advocates, such as the American Civil Liberties Union and the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, are concerned about possible abuses. Because of computer error, authorized employees

The Commission on Immigration Reform believes that a better verification system is essential to the effective enforcement of workplace sanctions.

could lose their jobs or feel forced to reveal private information about themselves in order to work. Some employers may view the system as a burden and practice unlawful discrimination by refusing to consider applications from people because of their national origins.

Supporters of the program argue that employees who might have been rejected will be hired. For instance, if an employer is suspicious of a prospective employee's green card, he or she might not take a chance on hiring. The computer system would supply instant verification and remove the decision-making burden from employers.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

According to environmentalists, many of whom are admittedly uncomfortable in their anti-immigration roles, immigration has a negative impact on the environment. Because population growth increases stress on the environment, and immigration is one component of that growth, environmentalists oppose immigration at the present rate. They point to facts indicating that United States residents do more damage to the world's ecosystems than people in any other country and are the most flagrant users and abusers of resources. In addition, the United States will account for 95% of population growth in the developed world in the next thirty years. United States residents, they say, constitute 5% of the earth's population but consume 30% of its bounty and produce 19% of its waste. According to this reasoning, immigrants to the United States, by becoming "Americanized," are adding more stress to the environment than would occur if they remained in their native countries.



Environmentalists also express concern about the high birth rate among immigrant populations, saying that immigrants bring the large-family preference of their native countries with them. Statistics do indicate a higher birth rate among first-generation immigrants, though there also is evidence that this rate declines in succeeding generations. According to the Population Reference Bureau's 1995 *World Population Data Sheet*, the birth rate for Mexico, the Caribbean, and Latin America combined—the areas from which the largest percentage of immigrants currently come to the United States—is 3.1, compared to 1.2 for United States-born women. According to 1994 Census Bureau figures, the birthrate for all foreign born women in the United States, 15 to 44 years old, is 1.5. Environmentalists feel that this figure will rise with the continued influx of immigrants from Latin American countries. Others maintain that, viewed in a global context, these immigrants would have had the same number (or possibly even more) offspring had they remained in their native countries; therefore they are not adding to overall environmental stress by emigrating.

Simon argues that although population increases add to short-term pollution, long-term trends indicate that air and water are becoming cleaner and resources more available. He says: "The basic trends in U.S. environmental quality are positive, accompanying (though not necessarily caused by) increases in population. The cleanliness of the water we drink in the U.S. has been improving in past decades by every reasonable measure of quantity and purity. The air, too, has been getting less polluted." And, further, "...natural resources over the long run have been getting less scarce rather than more

scarce, as indicated by the fundamental economic measure of cost." Simon also cautions, "These data do not by themselves prove a causal connection.

But they offer very strong evidence that there is not a causal connection in the other direction; more people do not imply deterioration."

Many environmental activists passionately disagree with Simon's premises. As evidence for their point of view, they point to increasing instances of dangerous ozone

levels in large cities and to decreasing levels of water in Texas aquifers. According to Ed Lytwak of the Carrying Capacity Network, "While air and water may be cleaner in certain selected areas and for a few indicators, this has been achieved through massive spending and regulatory efforts..." He continues, "...most ecological indicators of overall ecosystem and environmental health are in decline, some precipitously so."

MULTICULTURALISM

In addition to problems related to population growth, the changing demographic composition of the United States, resulting from current immigration policies, is fueling an escalating debate over diversity. The transformation that many Americans find disturbing and frightening was triggered by enactment of the 1965 immigration policy, which resulted in a heavier influx for the first time from the Third World, primarily Latin American countries, rather than Europe.

Extrapolating from current rates of immigration, demographers project that by the year 2050 no single group (white, black, Asian, or Hispanic) will be in the majority in the United States, a shift that is occurring much more quickly in Texas than it is nationwide. By 2020 whites will make

Immigrants to the United States, by becoming "Americanized," are adding more stress to the environment than would occur if they remained in their native countries.

up 47% of the Texas population, Hispanics 37%, Blacks 11%, and Asians 5%. In the 1980s Houston became a no-majority city and Dallas's population is headed in the same direction, according to Census Bureau figures. San Antonio and El Paso have had predominantly Hispanic populations for some time, and those figures show little change. Nathan Glazer, in his article, "Immigration and the American Future," speculates that when this country reaches the "no majority" stage, the event will have a different meaning for us than it does today. As in the past, assimilation, intermarriage, and Americanization will work their effects, erasing concerns about a new ethnic mix.

Multiculturalism's supporters view America's ethnic and cultural mix as beneficial, maintaining that immigrants' diversity contributes to the strength of the country. They point out that immigrants often settle in inner cities deserted by native born moving to the suburbs. They also maintain that newcomers are work oriented and value the benefits of the American way of life, providing energy, vitality, and new perspectives to older cultures. These advocates say that Americans should not be so self-satisfied with themselves that they cannot learn from others. In a world made smaller each day by technological advances in communications, Americans need to learn how to live and work with other ethnic groups and nationalities.

Proponents of multiculturalism also argue that contributions of individual immigrants have helped make this country great. In fact, according to *New York Times* columnist A.M. Rosenthal, one-third of all American Nobel winners are foreign-born. Yet he warns of the danger of letting in

only those who are full-blown geniuses, saying that "... geniuses have a way of arriving in America disguised as little kids. Or they come from the wombs of non-genius immigrant mothers."

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This country's long-term success as a multicultural society—possibly the most multicultural society in the world—is admirable, according to political scientist Bruce Porter, who writes, "We take for granted today the fact that this most heterogeneous and diverse population, having no obvious basis for unity, has nonetheless endured as a unified nation over two centuries."

Supporters of the current trend toward ever greater diversity see in it no threat to national unity, saying that first-generation immigrants, including undocumented immigrants, make up only a very small percentage of the total population of this country today—approximately 7%, compared to the early part of this century when immigrants were as much as 15% of the population. Those who came in the large, turn-of-the-century migration became industrious, successful Americans. From the perspective of multiculturalism's supporters, today's new arrivals who make up a much smaller percentage of the total population should become "Americanized" even more easily.

Opponents recognize contributions of past immigrants to the "melting pot" but question whether today's newcomers can assimilate as successfully as did their antecedents. The cultures of earlier immigrants, who were largely European, were more similar to the American culture. Cur-

rent immigrants from Latin America have less education and sophistication, and critics say Asian immigrants seem more "foreign." Critics of the current policy emphasize that America was a country settled by white Europeans with a Western heritage and a Western language, and they deplore the prospect, if immigration continues at the current rate, of whites eventually becoming a minority.

Advocates of changing immigration law view the growing emphasis on the nation's multicultural heritage and the fostering of racial and ethnic pride as dangerous and divisive and a threat to social cohesion. They fear that Balkanization will destroy the nation.

Peter Brimelow, writing in a 1992 *National Review* article says that the word "nation" from the Latin root *nascere* "...implies a link by blood. A nation is an extended family." He suggests that advocates of multi-culturalism are asking Americans to substitute the bonds of ideology (democracy) for those of common ethnicity, an experiment that historically has little chance of success. Multinational empires such as the Holy Roman Empire, for instance, have not survived. Only those nation-states representing the political beliefs of a specific ethno-cultural group have en-

dedured, according to Brimelow. In addition, he addresses the practicalities of a multicultural society. "What language is this 'universal nation' going to speak? How is it going to avoid ethnic strife? dual loyalties? collapsing like the Tower of Babel?"

Other critics of multiculturalism fear that furthering the goals of various ethnic and social groups in this manner will result in loss of the vision and tradition of America as a cradle of individual rights and liberties.

... geniuses have a way of arriving in America disguised as little kids. Or they come from the wombs of non-genius immigrant mothers.

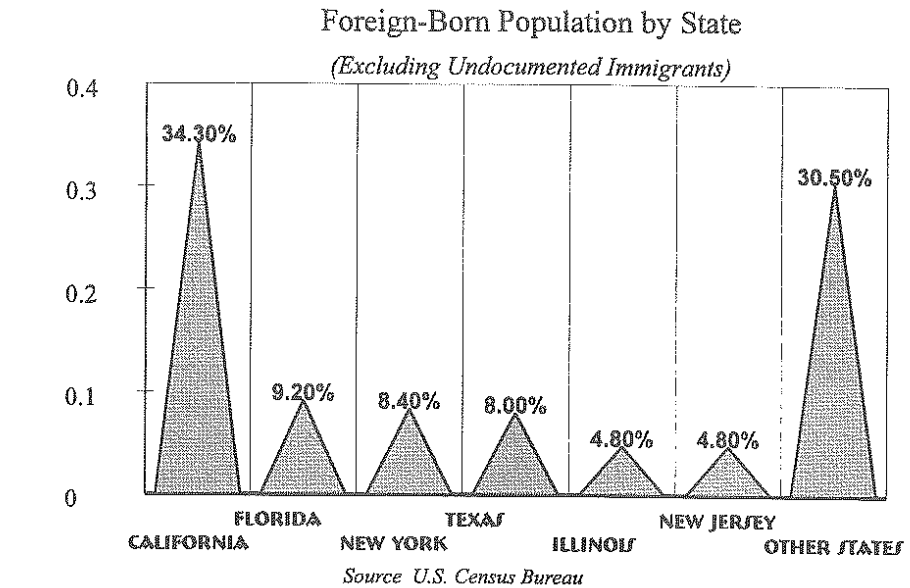
A. J. Rosenthal,
New York Times

ASSIMILATION

Assimilation appears to be at the heart of the multiculturalism controversy, and the question of language is a major factor in the debate. Opponents of current policies express concern over the amount of tax money that is spent in the public schools on bilingual education and helping foreign-born students increase their skills in English fluency. Stressing the importance of language as a cohesive influence, they cite the province of Quebec, Canada, as an example of fragmentation that occurs when a country does not share a common language, and they urge the adoption of English as this country's official language. These critics have fueled a movement for adoption of English as the official language at the national level, aimed at publication of government documents and materials in English, instead of in multiple languages as they are now. At least twenty states already have made English their official language, although many of them adopted their laws long before the current debate.

Those with opposing viewpoints suggest that we should welcome the diversity that other languages bring to our culture. Many educators support university programs which require a second language for graduation. These people regard bilingualism as a valuable asset and maintain that learning a second language is a good intellectual discipline. Studies show that immigrants have not lost their desire to learn English, difficult as it is, and the effort to learn our common language is as strong as it ever was. Those advocating "official English" or "English only" statutes are creating a problem where none exists, according to their opponents.

Many persons, including some immigrants, believe that bilingual education impedes English facility, but Ramon Magallenes, Director of Bilingual ESL in the Fort Worth I.S.D., emphasized the importance of bilingual education at a March 1996 forum



Shown as percentage of total foreign-born population of the United States.

sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Tarrant County. He explained that if one first grader had access to bilingual education and another did not, at the end of three years, they would both be proficient in English. But the child enrolled in bilingual education would be at the third grade level in history, geography, science, and mathematics, while the child without the benefit of bilingual education would not have advanced so rapidly in these basic subjects.

UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRATION

Although there is some overlap in issues related to documented and undocumented immigration, there are major differences, one of which is the criminal character of the act of undocumented immigration. Documented immigrants, in this country at the invitation of the United States government, are completely legal; undocumented immigrants, committing a felony when they enter without authorization, become criminals.

But public perception of the distinction between the two is blurred, and many view documented and un-

documented immigrants in the same disparaging, even criminal, way. As a result, some people advocate stringent restrictions on all immigration as a means of solving problems more closely associated with a small percentage of the immigrant population—undocumented immigrants. Others, like the U. S. Commission on Immigration Reform, recognize the distinction between the two and stress the more immediate need for effective prevention of undocumented immigration. The documented immigration procedure, a cumbersome process of complicated paperwork and lengthy backlogs, tends to impede legal entry and in some cases may encourage undocumented immigration.

According to the INS, as of 1992 more than three million undocumented immigrants were living in the United States, compared to an all-time high of five million in 1985, prior to the IRCA amnesty/legalization program. An estimated 350,000 undocumented immigrants enter the country annually, a rate that the INS predicts will raise the undocumented immigrant population back to the

pre-IRCA level of five million in 1988.

The Center for Immigration Studies estimates that between 30,000 and 50,000 undocumented immigrants settle in Texas each year—65% of them from Mexico. Because undocumented immigrants are an underground population, estimates of their numbers currently residing in Texas vary from a low of 357,000 by the INS and the Urban Institute to a high of 876,300 by the Texas Attorney General. TOIRA and Hudde agree on a median number of 550,000. An accurate count is difficult because of the ease of movement on the southern border of Texas, where Mexican nationals use a border-crossing card to enter the United States to work, shop, and visit friends and family. Although most return to Mexico after a few hours or days, some overstay their permits; others never return unless apprehended. California, New York, Texas, Florida, Illinois, New Jersey, and Arizona have a combined 86% of the total undocumented immigrant population in the country. The largest number, approximately 42%, live in California, and Texas is third with 10% of the total.

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Almost half of all undocumented immigrants enter the country legally, arriving at international airports on commercial airlines, using tourist, student, and business visas. When their documents expire, they remain in the country as undocumented immigrants. The other half of the undocumented population enter surreptitiously, primarily across the country's southern border. The 1,200-mile Texas/Mexico border is a major route for illegal entry, especially near larger border cities, such as El Paso, Laredo, McAllen, and Brownsville. Undocumented immigrants walk or ride across the bridges at major check

points, or they wade, swim, or row across the Rio Grande at remote sites. Some opt for a more dangerous route, traveling in locked boxcars, even though dozens have died in the process.

A constant flow of commercial traffic, tourists, and Mexican nationals often overwhelms INS agents at authorized crossing points. Some travelers quickly declare their United States citizenship and move across the border; others must produce proof. Looking for drug smugglers and contraband, agents search cars randomly or when suspicions are aroused. Lines of trucks, cars, and pedestrians impatiently wait their turn, and agents are strained to handle the traffic and still spot fraudulent documents, which are readily available.

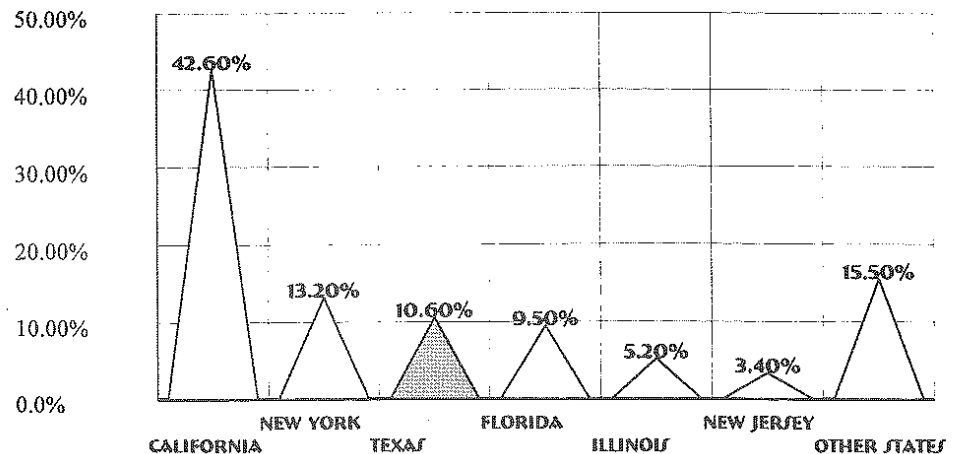
The greatest number of undocumented immigrants take their chances and cross the border at unauthorized ports of entry. Some rely on the services of "coyotes," human smugglers, who make their living guiding individuals or groups across the border. The INS reports that in fiscal year 1994 the U. S. Border Patrol apprehended about one million undocu-

mented immigrants trying to cross the United States/Mexico border. Of those, 65% crossed in the El Paso and San Diego areas and another 15% at Tucson and along the South Texas corridor. For those apprehended in the process of entering illegally from a contiguous country, the Border Patrol offers the option of voluntary return, and most turn back to try again another day. A few refuse to return to Mexico after deportation proceedings that take seven to fourteen days to resolve.

Utilizing IDENT, a computer-based tracking system, the Border Patrol at selected sites, including El Paso, routinely fingerprints and photographs undocumented immigrants. Such information is then input for identification and possible arrest of repeat crossers. The system also is helpful in identifying and arresting deported felons attempting to re-enter the United States.

Neither Mexico nor the United States interferes with persons entering the other's country illegally, and while each country's border management operates independently, the two countries cooperate to prevent violence and crime in designated criminal zones along the border.

Undocumented Immigrant Population By States
Shown as % total undocumented population of United States.



SOURCE: *Fiscal Impacts of Undocumented Aliens: Selected Estimates for Seven States.* The Urban Institute.

Undocumented immigrants represent approximately 33% of the total immigrant population, 1.3% of the population of the United States, and 2% of the population of Texas. Numbers of this size generally elicit little concern because of limited impact. And that would probably be the case with undocumented immigration if the impact were spread more evenly throughout the country, but it is not. California and Texas, and to a lesser degree, Arizona and New Mexico, receive more than their share—162,000 out of 350,000 undocumented immigrants a year enter illegally along these states' southern borders, primarily affecting border cities.

The Clinton administration has responded to the problem with increased funding, a \$5.2 billion effort to curb undocumented immigration, allowing the INS to utilize unprecedented measures such as barrier fences, high-tech equipment, and increased numbers of Border Patrol agents. The INS enforcement budget alone is expected to grow from \$933 million in 1993 to \$1.7 billion in 1996. With the increased budget, the Border Patrol now has 4,640 agents nationwide, 4,098 of them stationed along the southern border of the United States. Two hundred new agents have been added to the El Paso sector, bringing the total there to 783.

In September 1993 the INS began an intensive border enforcement program, focusing on three areas vulnerable to unlawful crossings—El Paso, San Diego, and the Tucson sector. The initial project, Operation Hold-the-Line, six miles west of El Paso, is made up of a human fence of border agents posted at quarter-mile intervals over a 22-mile stretch of the border. The operation also includes high-intensity lighting, motion sensors, helicopters fitted with infrared night scopes, and night vision cameras mounted along the Rio Grande

River. In the first two years of Hold-the-Line's operation, apprehensions of undocumented immigrants dropped 72% in the El Paso sector and 80% in the immediate vicinity of Hold-the-Line, indicating the effectiveness of stepped-up procedures. Large numbers of Mexican nationals apparently are reluctant to take their chances crossing illegally in the intensified enforcement area.

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In contrast, other areas operating without increased border enforcement either showed increases in apprehensions or no change. But the effect of intensified enforcement in selected areas may be short term. The percentage of apprehensions rose by 39% in 1995, indicating that illegal border crossers were regaining their nerve. In recent months, the INS has added border fences in the El Paso sector to discourage further illegal border crossing and reduce crime—one along the border in downtown El Paso and a 1.3-mile long, 10-foot high chain-link fence west of El Paso. The latter is located at one of the most active crossing points for undocumented immigrants along the Texas border, with 250 apprehensions a day. The region also is a high-crime area and a popular place for train robberies.

California's high-tech Operation Gatekeeper has copied many aspects of the El Paso operation, employing motion sensors, night vision scopes, and stadium lights. Instead of border agents stationed at intervals, California has a 10-foot high, 24-mile long steel wall to stop the flow of undocumented immigrants. Although the estimated operation costs were \$46 million for the first year, apprehensions were down by 40% for the same time period. The latest addition to the INS arsenal, Operation Safeguard at Nogales south of Tucson, includes 21

miles of 10-foot steel fencing and a beefed-up Border Patrol force.

Not everyone is happy about these new INS operations. El Paso residents are pleased about reduced crime, but businesses are concerned because of a significant drop in sales—undocumented immigrants no longer are shopping in the city. A University of Texas study indicates that many of the people who no longer come across were commuters working at day jobs with no intention of immigrating. Critics of the barrier system say that it shifts illegal crossings to areas less well patrolled, rather than actually reducing crossings. Popularly known as the balloon effect—when you squeeze a balloon in one place, it bulges out in another—the phenomenon has been documented in California where apprehensions increased by 14% just east of Operation Gatekeeper. Near San Diego, border crossers already have attempted to tunnel under the fence (the solution was to extend footings ten feet deep) and to build ramps in order to leap over.

Physical barriers may not be the answer; building a fence along the entire 2,000-mile United States/Mexico border will not thwart this type of determination. A spokesman for Juárez Mayor, Francisco Villarreal, says, "As long as the Mexican federal government is unable to improve the standard of living and provide jobs, migration to the north will continue."

This global concept has its supporters. If the United States has a higher standard of living and more opportunities, citizens of other countries will want to emigrate, legally or illegally. Large-scale immigration will not end until all countries have economies operating at approximately the same level.

Some El Paso residents are concerned about the deteriorating relationship between El Paso and its sister city, Juárez. Former El Paso mayor Bill Tilney, aware of the difficulties facing a border city whose

lives and fortunes are so intertwined with the Mexican city across the river, proposes creation of an international border zone. Unite El Paso, a local civic organization, suggests a borderless region with INS inspections on its periphery.

DISPROPORTIONATE IMPACT

A major immigration issue on which almost everyone agrees is the disproportionate impact of immigration. The majority of immigrants, documented and undocumented, settle in six states—California, Florida, Illinois, New Jersey, New York, and Texas. More than one third of all immigrants in the United States, 7.7 million, live in California. Almost two million live in Texas. Immigration has a greater impact on certain areas of the state—large cities, such as Dallas, San Antonio, Austin, and Houston, and the border area, including El Paso.

Whether there is a net cost or loss, depending on the study on which you rely, immigrants have an impact on areas with large immigrant populations. Most income from immigrants is in the form of taxes paid to the federal government. Very little of that money comes back to the state for distribution to areas straining to deal with a rapidly-growing population that has higher than average poverty and crime rates and a steadily diminishing tax base.

CONCLUSION

Because of the large number of documented and undocumented immigrants who enter the country through Texas and reside in the state, immigration affects Texas, but whether the impact is negative or positive is a controversial and emotionally-charged subject. Existing data is insufficient and has been variously interpreted by different individuals and groups.

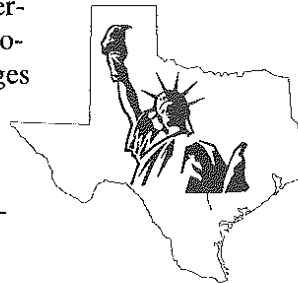
Congress, responding to public debate, is proposing a number of bills that, if enacted, would restrict immigration rates and immigrant benefits in varying degrees. At this point, given the disposition of Americans, some sort of change in immigration policy seems likely. Trustees of the League of Women Voters of Texas Education Fund encourage citizens to become well

As long as the Mexican federal government is unable to improve the standard of living and provide jobs, migration to the north will continue.

Spokesman for
Francisco Villarreal,
Mayor of Juárez

informed on immigration facts and issues, as well as on suggestions for addressing those issues.

Immigration laws and policies should reflect national interests, and proposed changes merit careful and informed consideration.



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