

Argument essay: nation of immigrants

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Argument Essay: Nation of Immigrants America is sometimes referred to as a "nation of immigrants" because of the largely open-door policy toward accepting foreigners pursuing their vision of the American Dream. Recently, there has been a clamor by some politicians and citizens toward creating a predominantly closed-door policy on immigration, arguing that immigrants "threaten" American life by creating unemployment, by taking jobs from American workers, by using much-needed social services, and by encroaching on the American way of life. While these arguments may seem valid to many, they are almost overwhelmingly false, and more than likely confused with the subject of illegal immigration. In fact, immigrants actually enhance American life by creating, not taking jobs. Immigrants bolster social service funds through tax payments and bring valuable technical knowledge and skills to the country. If Americans are to continue to excel as a nation, the traditionalists who fear an encroachment of foreign-born Americans must learn to accept that the United States will achieve its greatness as a result of being a nation of immigrants. A common argument among those opposing further immigration is that foreigners take U. S. jobs and cause unemployment among the displaced American workers. In the July 13, 1992 edition of Business Week, a poll states that sixty-two percent of non-blacks and sixty-three percent of blacks agree that "new immigrants take jobs away from American workers" (Mandel and Farrell 2). Among some American, this notion may be popular, despite its erroneous founding. Julian L. Simon, author of *The Economic Consequences of Immigration* states that ". . . immigration does not exacerbate unemployment. . . Immigrants not only take jobs, but also create them" (Simon 96). While immigrants work at

necessary jobs to keep the United States functioning effectively, their purchases increase the demand for labor, leading to new hires roughly equal in number to the immigrant workers. These immigrants are known to be diligent employees who benefit their employers. In the article by Mandel and Farrell, Business Week includes a poll, reflecting that eighty-three percent of non-blacks and eighty-seven percent of blacks agree that " many new immigrants are very hard-working" (2). The results of the poll may seem somewhat contradictory, but not necessarily negative. Those polled seem to be at least a little open-minded in their view of the quality of new immigrants. However, in order to overcome their distrust of foreigners, Americans must abandon their suspicions and recognize, as Julian Simon has acknowledged, that individuals residing in the United States will find that their lives are improved by immigrants creating U. S. jobs, not taking them away from citizens. More growth in America results in more jobs. Americans who want to work do find jobs. Some of the jobs filled by immigrants include construction, agriculture, and food services. Many Americans prefer not to work in these fields, yet the jobs are extremely necessary for the nation to function. Immigrants work these jobs and add to the growth of the country. Another widely held belief among Americans against immigration is that foreigners strain social service budgets. According to the Mandel and Farrell, sixty-two percent of non-blacks and fifty-nine percent of blacks agree " immigrants use more than their fair share of government services, such as welfare, medical care, and food stamp. " (1). The ideas about immigrants as people who take more than they deserve dates back to the nineteenth century when " one of the first immigration laws was designed to exclude the

entry of people likely to become a public charge" (Johnson 15). These misguided beliefs can more than likely be attributed to illegal immigration, which is certainly a different issue. In actuality, the majority of legal immigrants are young and healthy when they arrive and, therefore, "do not receive expensive Social Security and other aid to the aged" or the disabled according to Simon (23). In fact, Americans should be thankful for immigrants as these new residents "contribute more to the public coffers in taxes than they draw out in welfare services" and add "about \$2, 500 into the pockets of natives" from excess taxes (Simon 25). They are, in fact, raising the quality of life of those who are dependant of the social services. Some Americans seem to be resistant to accepting the benefits of immigration. Some people think immigration should stop altogether. However, these are the same people who have ancestors who have migrated to the United States from other countries. Pat Buchanan, the American politician and syndicated columnist, clearly has ancestors who had to have immigrated from somewhere, yet Buchanan loudly voices the need "to preserve the nation" and stop immigration. According to Buchanan's statistics, the U. S. is currently seventy-five percent white, twelve percent black, nine percent Hispanic, and the rest mostly Asian-American. By mid-twenty-first century, "whites may be near a minority in an America of eighty-one million Hispanics, sixty-two million blacks, and forty-one million Asians" (Buchanan 53). Americans must ask themselves if the nation profits from preserving white majority. Buchanan seems to equate being white with being American and being Hispanic, black, and Asian with being a foreigner. Unfortunately, Mr. Buchanan is not alone in his opinions. The fear of

encroachment by foreign-born Americans is a common one. However, considering their fears, Americans must think about the growth within the United States. Immigrants bring to American valuable technical knowledge and skills, as well as potential to become some of the most educated citizens, a fact explained in Simon's *The Economic Consequences of Immigration*. The traditionalists opposing immigration must recognize that American lives and future of the country as a whole are positively influenced by diverse individuals helping to build the nation. In order to preserve the nation, everyone must accept the United States as a nation of immigrants. Applying this perspective promotes the greatest good for the greatest number of people. The issue of immigration must be dealt with rationally, not emotionally. Facts, figures, and statistics must be studied by both sides in order to reach a decision most beneficial to the nation. Within the influx of immigrants, new jobs are created, the social service funds are bolstered by the additional tax payments, and the valuable technical skills and knowledge are brought in to improve the country. These benefits far outweigh any negative effects and prove the value of immigrants as they too pursue the American Dream. Works Cited Buchanan, Patrick. *State of Emergency: The Third World Invasion and Conquest of America*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2006. Johnson, Kevin R. *The Huddled Masses: Immigration and Civil Rights in the United States*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2003. Mandel, Michael J., and Christopher Farrell. "The Immigrants." *Business Week* 13 July 1992. 11 Jan. 2008. Simon, Julian L. *The Economic Consequences of Immigration*. 2nd ed. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan Press, 1991.