

Introduction send
about six thousand
national guard



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Introduction

Illegal immigration into the U.

S. has been on the rise in the last few years and this has sparked debate in the Congress and prompted many immigrant supporters to hold peaceful demonstrations in the streets. This debate has led to many controversies which heated up when the former president of the United States (President Bush) addressed the nation through the television requesting for a wide-ranging approach to the immigration debate.

According to his statement, he was going to send about six thousand National Guard troops to the Border States. These troops were going to provide intelligence and logistic support to the border patrol agents but were not to enforce law. Apart from protecting the border, Bush noted that the House should pass legislation that allows all illegal immigrants who have

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lived and worked in the U. S. for a considerable period of time to be able to become citizens.

The nature, scope, and effects of immigrants are addressed in this paper. It also proposes some policies to be implemented by the government in a bid to curtail the demerits of illegal immigrants

Citizenship to Illegal Immigrants

When the house is granting citizenship to illegal immigrant, it should take note of the difference between an illegal immigrants who have moved into the U. S. in the recent past and an immigrant who has lived and worked for a long period of time, and has established himself, for instance, has a home, a family and a clean record. The immigration debate puts at stake the lives of more than 12 million illegal immigrants who are working in the U.

S., the companies where they are employed, rule of law, and job openings for low-skilled Americans citizens (Smith and Edmonston 66). Questions raised in the debate include; do the illegal immigrants take away job openings from the Americans? Do they depress the wages paid to the American? Should the law compel illegal immigrants to go back to their country of origin? or should a legislation be passed that would allow illegal immigrants to continue working in the U. S. but pay some penalty? Some of these questions have been addressed and others remain unsolved. If illegal immigrants are deported from the U. S., it is not only them who will suffer, but this may affect the economic position of the U.

S. because these illegal immigrants are so many and they have taken up jobs in some of the high profile companies (Lynch and Woodyard 4).
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Nature and Scope of Illegal Immigration

Pew Hispanic Center conducted a study in order to clearly understand the nature and scope of illegal immigration. In the study, the term “ unauthorized migrant” was used to refer to a person residing in the United States, but not a citizen. This is a person who has not been allowed to reside permanently in the U. S. and his temporary status does not allow him to work.

According to the study, more than 12 million illegal immigrants resided in the U. S. as at March 2005 and this was a rapid increase from 8. 4 million in 2000. Most of these unauthorized migrants are from Mexico and Latin America. The study also revealed that illegal migrants account for about 5% of the total labor force which is equivalent to 7. 2 million workers out of the total labor force of 148 million.

They are employed in specific jobs, for instance, 19% work in construction jobs, 4% in farming and 15% in installation and repair (Jeffrey 2). Supporters of illegal workers point out that the economy of the United States require such laborers because they can work in certain types of jobs that can not be taken up by Americans. However, Briggs refutes with this claim and calls it a complete myth. According to him, illegal workers are hired in large number to perform certain tasks, not because Americans are incapable of doing them or because they have refused to take up such jobs, but because the wages associated with these jobs are too low. Some of these jobs do not follow work rules and are in poor working conditions. Most of the employers who employ illegal immigrants do so in order to cut on costs and to avoid investing in equipment or capital improvements.

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This has resulted in a decline in wages for low-skill American workers and it seems to be deteriorating daily. Briggs' argument is that, illegal immigrants should be banned from working in these jobs so as the employers may improve the wages and working conditions for Americans.

Effects of Immigrants

Some members of the house and the Senate are convinced that illegal workers suppress the wage rates and take up job opportunities that would otherwise be taken by the U. S.

citizens. They create a negative impact on American citizens who are low-skilled making it almost impossible for them to secure jobs in their own country. Vernon Briggs (a professor at Cornell University) believes that negative impact created by illegal workers on the American citizens and on the labor standards is so intense that the House should put tight measures on the companies that employ illegal workers as a way of discouraging illegal immigrants from taking up jobs in these companies. His conclusion is that illegal immigrants should not be tolerated in the U. S (Espenshade and Belanger 365). However, some members are in support of illegal workers continuing their stay in the U. S. Bernard Anderson (professor in Wharton's management department), admits that illegal workers have some negative impact on wages and sometimes they take up job opportunities that should be taken by American workers (Espenshade and Belanger 367).

However, he notes that the impact is not as grave as asserted by Briggs. Moreover, Anderson notes that illegal immigrants are hard working and they receive only what they have earned. They are not interested in welfare and,

therefore, they should be allowed to continue working in the United States after paying some type of penalty. The effects of illegal workers (on salaries and job conditions) are not only felt in the U. S.

, but in also in other nations of the world (e. g. the Middle East). Employers all over the world have taken advantage of the fate of illegal workers and they are employing poor working conditions. Most of these people have run away from their country and would not mind working in such conditions as long as they are able to take care of themselves and their families.

Many people still wonder why and how illegal workers suppress wages. The answer to this lies on market forces of demand and supply. As the number of illegal workers increase, their demand goes down forcing down the wages. If these people are to be deported from the U. S. it does not mean that these companies would not get other people to work for them.

The likely scenario is change of working environment by these firms. They would hire other people without interfering with their day to day operations. It is not only illegal workers who suppress wages, but also low-skilled legal immigrants. In fact, there is no significant difference between the legal immigrants and the illegal ones. The immigration debate should not be focused on the illegal immigrants but low-skill workers who find their way into the U. S. whether illegally or through legal means.

This is because if more unqualified workforce is allowed into the U. S., it will help in curtailing costs for employers. Wages will be pressed down making it hard for the Americans to do these jobs.

What Needs To Be Done

If the government is to succeed in helping low-skill Americans, it has to reduce the immigration rates. It has to put strict measures on illegal workers before they end up harming the U.

S. citizens. Illegitimate or undocumented recruits can dislodge low-skill Americans and other minorities seeking for job openings (or those with limited skills). In addition, even though these illegal workers earn minimum wages, they work in poor conditions which can be dangerous. Nevertheless, they are not in a position to seek legal remedies because they are living and working illegally in the U. S. The best solution to this problem is to restrict illegal immigrants from entering into the U.

S. Lack of illegal workers will force employers to improve the working conditions and also increase wages for the Americans (Edmonston and Smith 21). It will also result into increased job opportunities for the unskilled Americans and other minority groups.

Many of the illegal immigrants are working in horrendous conditions, some are exploited in terms of pay, and some are underage children working in jobs they are not supposed to be. Most of them are working in essence as slaves. Most of these immigrants are males aged between 18 and 30 years, very ambitious, and would take any job even if they are abused or exploited. Immigration is an issue that is discussed at length because of its crudeness. They are always up to the challenge and can take virtually any kind of jobs as long as they are able to take care of themselves.

This does not mean that the U. S. citizens have any problem or that they are not willing to take certain jobs, it means that there is dissimilarity between the immigrants' native country and the U. S.

It does not matter how bad the conditions of working are in the U. S. because it is always a better alternative for the illegal immigrants as compared to their country of origin (Lynch and Woodyard 4). They would not mind crowding into apartments or working during odd hours, they would not even complain when they are sexually or racially discriminated because they can not seek legal remedies. That is why many employers prefer to employ illegal immigrants compared to the U.

S. citizens. Illegal immigrants are the most vulnerable members and if the government does not do anything, they will continue to suffer. Immigrations laws have to be enforced in order to protect both the U.

S. citizens and the immigrants (Smith and Edmonston 67). One of way of curtailing illicit immigrants is to impose employer sanctions principally at the worksites.

Heavy penalties need to be imposed on employers who employ immigrants as a way of discouraging them on hiring illegal immigrants. It should be made clear to these employers that illegal immigrants are not supposed to be hired because they are not even allowed to live in the country. They have to make sure that all their employees are allowed by law to work. This will dishearten illegal immigrants and won't have an alternative than to go back to their country of origin. To ensure that this process is effective, every

employer should ask for a job identification card before hiring an immigrant
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worker. Moreover, physical barriers such as electronic fences can be put in strategic positions to detect when people are crossing borders (Edmonston and Smith 21).

Conclusion

It is clear that illegal immigration has resulted in depression of wages and displacement of some U.

S. citizens from their jobs. However, it has not affected employment opportunities or earnings as many people tend to believe. Opponents of immigration hold that, illegal immigrants should be deported back to their countries because they have negatively impacted the working conditions and suppressed wages. However, supporters claim the decline in wages or deterioration of the working conditions is caused by market forces. If the government wants to succeed in improving employment opportunities, it will first have to analyze the market before deciding what cause of action to take. It is true that, illegal immigrants have had a downward pressure on the wages but this does not mean they are entirely to be blamed for it.

It is the employers who hire these people who are answerable to the current problems experienced in employment. These employers take advantage of the plight of illegal workers and hire them to work in poor conditions where they only get the minimum wages. The illegal workers would not mind working in such conditions because they do not have an alternative and no matter how bad things are in the U. S., they are better off than in their country of origin.

The most effective way to deal with illegal immigrants is to enforce sanctions on workers who hire immigrants and discourage them from hiring illegal immigrants by putting penalties.

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