

History of immigration

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Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, the wretched refuse of your teeming shore. Send these, the homeless, tempest-tots to me, I lift my lamp beside the golden door! " Do our immigration policies still honor the words written by Emma Lazarus in 1883 on the base of the Statue of Liberty, and if so, what impact do they have on our economy?

The issue of whether our economy is impacted negatively or positively by undocumented workers and what should be done about it is a widely debated topic in this country right now and reported about on every form of media (news, print, social) available on a daily basis. The issue of undocumented immigration is important; it concerns fundamental, moral and economic questions about how we deal with immigration in our country. Various arguments have been presented about this issue.

We will consider the argument from people who feel the undocumented workers negatively affect the economy, why those views are flawed, review the evolution of immigration along with immigration policies and what are in effect presently, what policies would promote change regarding immigration, as well as how we can build a bridge between the two arguments. I will then put forward suggestions for the introduction of ways in which we can begin the changes in policy to best suit both sides of the argument. It has been argued that undocumented workers drain the economy and just benefit a few businesses at the expense of American citizens.

An article written by Steven Amalgam, published in the City Journal summer 2006, supports the belief: " unskilled, undocumented workers benefit a handful of industries by getting low cost labor, and the taxpayers foot the

bill. " In other words, undocumented workers and their illegal families are a drain on our economy. It is claimed that they send every penny they earn to their country of origin, use public services they are not entitled to, perform menial labor, do not pay taxes and their children abuse the right to public services and education.

However, as the pamphlet by Neighborhood center states: " in fact there is no question as to the importance of the buying power of undocumented immigrants. The real predictor of wage disparity is not whether someone is an immigrant (regardless of status), it is lack of education. Foreign-born entrepreneurs with startups businesses have been behind 25 percent of these businesses in this country. Three quarters of the undocumented immigrants pay payroll taxes and they contribute \$7 billion in Social Security funds annually without the ability to collect Social Security.

While the majority of the children of undocumented immigrants are born here legally and are eligible to public services and education, their parents for fear of deportation are negative impact on the economy is just a myth; there is a net benefit to the nation's total economic output raising it by a reported \$21.5 billion per year (USA Today). In addition, according to a study by the investment research company, Standard & Poor's, " the cost of providing services to undocumented workers is largely offset by the economic benefits they generate. We can see why if you look at the economic effect on the country without researching your views toughly, on the surface you may be able to put together a shaky argument, but after researching the facts you do see that undocumented workers actually boost our economy, as we see in Gordon H. Hanson's, The Economics and Policy <https://assignbuster.com/history-of-immigration/>

report of illegal immigration in the United States; " the current regime of illegal immigration, despite its faults, has been efficiently beneficial to US employers that they are doubtful about the capacity of Congress to improve the situation and therefore unwilling to take the political risk of supporting reform.

The collected taxes impact our economy now while baby boomers are starting to collect their Social Security benefits they boost the system by the unconvertible funds of undocumented workers. " Before we can understand how we arrived at the present immigration policies here in America, we must look back at the evolution of immigration and immigration policy from the 1600 to present time. Our long economic history in America has been shaped by the groups of immigrants that have settled here, what contributions to the economy they brought with them and how the immigration policy changed in response to the influx of each group of immigrants.

We will start our review looking at a few immigration groups, the changes made to our immigration policies starting with the English Settlers with traders and their contributions to the economy to present day influx of Middle Eastern and Latin origin immigrants benefiting our economy with access to low cost and back breaking labor. In the 1600 hundreds the traders that were brought by the English settlers not only brought the spices and hard goods to trade, they brought slave labor for trading as well.

This group, African slaves would grow quickly to 20 percent of the population providing cheap labor, and since they were considered property, they were not allowed to be naturalized till 1870. Many different groups came and

made contributions to the economy of cheap labor with their meat processing skills, work ethic and willingness to take on highly dangerous back breaking jobs. With each new group the policy changed; the first immigration law enacted in 1790 (after nearly a century of unregulated immigration and massive economic growth) began defining and restricting citizenship to the United States.

The act of 1790 was revised, further restricting and adding requirements for obtaining citizenship. The Asian immigrants experienced a similar exclusionary period as did the Africans; they were allowed to live in the US but were not allowed to become citizens until 1943 when the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 was repealed. President Ronald Reagan was instrumental in bringing forth the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986.

Many revisions have been made to the immigration laws, but it was never as publicized as after September 11, 2001 when fear of terrorism brought the need for reform so we can exclude individuals suspected to be terrorists. Presently the immigration laws are not an easy path to becoming legal and are not family friendly because they separate parents from their American born children just life. " America's immigration system is outdated, unsuited to the needs of our economy and to the values of our country.

We should not be content with laws that punish hardworking people and deny businesses willing workers and invite chaos at our borders. " George W. Bush, February 2, 2005. George W. Bush and Barack Obama did not agree on many things, but " They share a belief that the high levels of illegal

immigration are an indication of the current policy being broken, and that immigrants by and large make a positive contribution to America. " We need immigration reform that will secure our borders, and..... That finally brings 12 million people who are here illegally out of the shadows...

We must assert our values and reconcile our principles as a nation of immigrants and a nation of laws. " Barack Obama, June 28, 2008. Two Presidents, from two different political parties, with very different political views share the same view that our immigration system is broken. What changes should be made to the immigration policy here in America? How will those changes affect the economy? What is the moral impact on families? These are questions which divide many; philosophers, labor unions, political parties, the people within political parties, the people in nail salons and Americans in general.

Peter Brooklime (1999), a political philosopher, a ND supporter of placing restrictions on immigration that would all but end immigration to this country, believes the current immigration policies second guess the American people and Jeopardize our nation. Brimless beliefs historically were supported by Labor unions and their leaders, yet even these groups are realizing that the number of immigrant union members has been rapidly increasing (Migration Policy institute 2004) and if they do not begin to embrace the immigrants a large number of their membership base will disappear and possibly their existence as well.

To the other extreme, Walter Block argues " like tariffs and exchange controls, migration barriers of whatever type are egregious locations of

laissez-flare capitalism" (Block 1998; 168). The Democratic Party says they support "immigration reform" and point fingers at the Republican Party for not having it done yet. Ironically, a Republican President supported and pushed for the most encompassing reform possible "Amnesty in 1996". We need to arrive at a compromise of the two schools of thought.

Yes we do have to protect ourselves from terrorists and criminals, but not at the cost of our crops not being picked or produce being too high to purchase, our manicures and pedicures getting out of control prices or our restaurants having to raise prices so high only the rich could afford to eat out. We need to also morally take into consideration families. Why should I, a second generation American(paternal side of my family) and a multi generation American(on the maternal side of my family), with children who are first generation Americans be denied my late mother in law to visit and stay with us as long as is mutually agreed upon.

The Consulate in Ecuador at first denied us a visa for my Mother in Law. I had to fight for my rights as an American to bring her home with me. They only gave her a 3 month visa. I also had to close my eyes after the three month visa expired to her being illegally in America. So America's immigration policy made this grandmother a criminal. While we ponder on what to do about immigration we must control ourselves from falling subject to xenophobia, misconceptions and political rhetoric.

We do need to continue with researching the brings forth in their applications to come to America or that are here presently "illegally". The paperwork involved should not be so difficult that we only further the

economy by creating further jobs in the immigration law field. If you have family here already and have been contributing to our economy through your hard work, contributing to our economy through your spending power and good civic behavior, why should you have a difficult path to legalization?

Simplify paperwork, intensify background checks of those applying and their family members here and in their country of origin, require medical examination and community service components in the legalization path. Allow those that are here to pay a nominal fee, submit simple applications to change their immigration status from illegal to in process of globalization and come out of the shadows. This will really protect our borders by knowing who is here amongst us.

Willingness to do good works for the many non-profit organizations that exist should be much more important than your financial resources in your country of origin in any path to legalization. Policy should be put in place allowing immigrants here to move from "illegal" to citizen in a reasonable amount of time with the before mentioned components built in so we can weed out the criminals not willing to live by our laws and contribute to our society and support the growth of our country, while rewarding the immigrants that with their diversity and civic responsibility add to the strength of our country.

These policies would improve the type of applicant, reduce need for expense of immigration lawyers, and reduce the need to spend on expensive manpower in INS offices, and embassies, move the emphasis on skilled, community minded, productive, family oriented immigrants willing to pay

their taxes and contribute to diversity and economic growth of our wonderful country. We need to build a bridge between the main two arguments of public safety nickering terrorists and Jeopardizing our economy, as well as moral fiber with policies that will have protections of the many while also representing the fiber that made our country what it is.

Allowing the right wing to impose restrictions on immigration based on fear is not in the best interest of our country. In conclusion, we are a nation of immigrants. The only Americans that truly belong here is those with Native American Indian ancestry. The rest of the American population is either descendents of immigrants or immigrants themselves; some by choice and others forced to migrate due to refugee, slavery etc. Our Country was made by immigrants, and this is a supporting case point to continue allowing immigration at a fairly high level.