

The problem of illegal immigration in the united states research paper examples

[Sociology](#), [Immigration](#)



The United States (U. S.) in the 21st Century has more than one serious problem facing it. Yet, it can be determined that the most fundamental crises facing the nation today is the influx of illegal immigrants crossing the border from Mexico into the U. S., taking jobs and using-up resources meant for its own citizens. Admittedly, this issue has caused a furious debate on benefits versus liabilities on both the federal and state levels.

The U. S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has estimated that around 11.5 million illegal immigrants entered the country in 2011, of which 6.9 million arrived from Mexico (Hoefer, Rytina, & Baker, 2012). However, not only has the nation's economy been impacted by the influx of unauthorized immigrants from Mexico, it has affected individual states' economies as well. Numerous states are affected by this flood of immigrants, with California (CA), Arizona (AZ), and Texas taking the brunt of the problem.

Some economists and researchers believe these immigrants do influence the financial system, however, in a more beneficial way. "Immigrants provide cheap labor, lower the prices of everything from produce to new homes, and leave consumers with a little more money in their pockets. They also replenish—and help fund benefits for—an aging American labor force. . . ." (Campo-Flores, 2010, p. 1).

Campo-Flores continues to explain that undocumented immigrants do pay taxes, including income taxes, social security and property taxes. In spite of this, at the same time they use more state resources like schools, hospitals, and welfare assistance that do cause a serious drain on local funds, since the Federal Government is receiving most of the tax dollars instead of the states

(Campo-Flores, 2010). This is a serious problem. However, the media and publishers tend to focus more on the positive aspects of this issue. In the book *Brokered Boundaries* (2012) by Douglas Massey and Magaly Sánchez, the writers come to the conclusion that the net effect of immigration on the Gross National Product (GNP) is less than a 1 percent gain.

'The shrill voices have tended to dominate our perceptions,' says Daniel Tichenor, a political science professor at the University of Oregon. ' But when all those factors are put together and the economists crunch the numbers, it ends up being a net positive, but a small one.' (Campo-Flores, 2010, p. 2).

However, this small positive is a huge negative when it comes to low-skilled workers. Chris Isidore (2006) admits that low-skilled workers are the most injured by the problem of illegal immigration. Andrew Sum, economist and Director of Labor Market Studies at Northeastern University, also agrees that it is these young and poor workers who are most seriously affected. "About 85.5 of every 100 new workers are new immigrants in this decade," he said. " At no time in the last 60 years have we come close to this. They're really displacing young workers at a very high rate'" (Isidore, 2006, p. 1).

In addition, many other economists examine the harm done by these immigrants, yet believe that the laws should be changed to allow these same immigrants to become legal. Gallup's head economist, Dennis Jacobe, sees it as a moral issue. He claims that both job off-shoring and illegal immigration have troubling aspects to them. The worst of them, in particular, is in allowing poor working conditions and low-wage labor in a country that has laws to protect legal workers from those very same conditions (Jacobese, n. d.).

Jacobe admits that many businesses have a choice of either hiring the cheap labor or going out of business. He believes that they are put in a terrible position. “. . . because if the competition uses [illegal labor] and everybody looks the other way, then the employer is either forced into illegal actions or is at a huge competitive disadvantage and could even go out of business. . . .” (Jacobe, n. d., p. 3). He continues that the current situation is not fair to those companies and immigrants who are trying to do the right and legal thing, but have to compete with the long line of illegal’s crossing the border.

Additionally, one must look at the issue from more of a state perspective and the seriousness of the problem. AZ for instance, is suffering from both economic problems and bloodshed. AZ’s illegal immigrant numbers are costing the state’s taxpayers an enormous \$2. 7 billion in 2009, according to researchers at the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR) (Barnes, 2010). This amount is broken down to include a massive drain on AZ’s educational system, health care services, law enforcement, and welfare costs.

This economic problem has resulted in AZ’s new and controversial immigration law, SB1070, which includes the need to show legal documentation upon request during a traffic stop. FAIR admits that enforcement of this law will increase law enforcement and court costs. However, fines against local businesses that violate existing law and hire illegal immigrants will help offset these costs. “. . . . The Immigration Policy

Center, a major opponent of the new law, says FAIR's data do not accurately portray SB1070's potential outcome" (Barnes, 2010, p. 1).

However, Jack Martin, the head researcher on the report, states that any benefits from illegal immigrants are also calculated. He agrees that the 500,000 undocumented aliens in the state pay around \$142.8 million in taxes. However, "they assume every illegal alien will leave right away," Martin said. "That is not going to happen" (Barnes, 2010, p. 1).

AZ also has its share of drug cartel violence, from beheadings to multiple burned-out bodies being discovered in a van. However, although many report that crime statistics have actually gone down in AZ, the problem is still a persistent one. While the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) statistics show that both violent crime and immigration numbers have lowered in the state, some crimes are not reflected in the statistics. "Terry Goddard, the state attorney general, who does not support the immigration law, said the drop in violent crime rates might not reflect the continued violence, often unreported, that is associated with smuggling organizations" (Archibold, 2010, p. 1).

Conversely, the majority would agree that CA is the state affected the most by unauthorized immigrants, who total around 7% of its population. U. S. Representative Elton Gallegly recently commented on the FAIR report, which states that illegal immigrations cost the state nearly \$22 billion a year. The major area of concern, in relation to these immigrants, is CA's high unemployment rate. Illegal immigrants claim over 1.9 million jobs in CA,

where 3 million legal citizens need work (Gallegly & Smith, 2011).

Because illegal immigration contributes to California's deficit and high unemployment rate, lawmakers need to address the underlying issue: the jobs magnet. As long as the jobs magnet exists, millions of illegal immigrants will come to the United States, take jobs from lawful workers and drain taxpayer-funded resources. (Gallegly & Smith, 2011, p. 1).

Rep. Gallegly argues that most law enforcement and customs officials look the other way with barely a slap on the wrist. The E-Verify system is a successful system that helps employers confirm the legal statuses of its employees by checking each applicant's identification numbers against the Social Security Administration and DHS's records (Gallegly, 2011).

Education is another area that is deeply affected by the influx of illegal immigrants in CA. A 2008 study by the Pew Hispanic Center found that in CA, 13.5 percent of students in public schools were children of illegal aliens. The cost comes close to equaling \$11,649 per pupil, illegal aliens covering \$10.8 billion out of the state budget (Izumi, 2010).

The actual cost of educating these children is higher because many of these dollars are earmarked for specific purposes. California has a special program called the Economic Impact Aid program which provides tax dollars to fund English-language assistance, which aids children of unauthorized immigrants (Izumi, 2010, p. 1).

The public-education establishment can't have it both ways on this issue.

The Los Angeles school board, for instance, harshly criticizes Arizona's

immigration enforcement law, but also complains about its own budget shortfalls. The numbers, however, confirm that illegal immigration imposes large costs on the public school system. Policymakers should acknowledge and wrestle with this expensive reality instead of satisfying themselves with cheap rhetoric. (Izumi, 2010, p. 1).

CA feels the strain that it does because both jobs and education are deeply affected by the heavy toll of illegal immigrants crossing the border into its state. If this is allowed to continue the state, besides being bankrupt, will lack jobs and increase taxes to the point where most legal citizens will not want to live there anymore. This will all be due to the enormous cost of undocumented individuals that have not gone through the proper channels to legitimize their citizenship.

On the federal level, the government is receiving at least some of the necessary tax dollars that will help fund the continuous insurgence of immigrants in some ways. However, anger only rises in the current economic crises the nation faces. Blame is thrown at these immigrants for taking low-paying jobs that many legal citizens actually need at the moment. As stated above, minimal action has been taken by both law enforcement and customs officials to remove the people that clearly have no legal documentation.

Of course, lack of funds and manpower can be blamed for this. How can authorities possibly remove 6.9 million people (Hoefer et al., 2012)? It is not possible. This is where the issue becomes a serious problem for the U. S. However, instead of finding impossible ways to throw them all out of the country, states are developing their own initiatives and propositions to make

the problem a little bit easier for everyone. Although, at first glance, these propositions seem to be making life easier only for the illegal immigrants themselves, instead of quelling tensions.

For instance, the Dream Act of Maryland will allow children of illegal immigrants who graduate from high school and attend community college, to receive in-state tuition costs from a four-year public university. That is all good, however, benefits need to be extended for legal citizens as well. This may not apply to the Dream Act, since in-state residents already receive in-state tuition rates. Yet, as more and more laws are created to benefit illegal aliens, the government needs to consider legal citizens as well or apprehension will continue to grow.

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