

IMMIGRATION MYTHS AND REALITIES

REALITY: Immigrants, both documented and undocumented, pay significant taxes each year

Immigration Myth 1: Immigrants don't pay taxes

FACTS:

- Undocumented immigrants are taxpayers - they pay sales and property taxes and many pay income taxes. The Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy (ITEP) released a study showing that undocumented immigrants across the U.S. paid an estimated \$11.84 billion in state and local taxes in 2012.
- The Social Security Administration estimates that undocumented immigrants contribute about \$12 billion each year to the cash flow of the program without receiving benefits in return because of their status.
- In New York, undocumented immigrants contribute over \$1 billion in state and local taxes annually.

REALITY: Immigrants are learning English slightly faster than their predecessors

Immigration Myth 2: Immigrants aren't learning English

FACTS:

- Immigrants in the United States today are actually learning English slightly faster than their predecessors. Sixty-six percent of immigrants who speak a foreign language at home can also speak English "very well" or "well," according to a new study by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine.
- In many parts of the country, the demand for English as a Second Language classes is far greater than the services available.
- The most significant determinant of whether or not immigrants learn a new language is their age at the time of entry. Immigrants who arrive as young children learn a second language quickly while adults find it much more challenging.
- 89% of native born Hispanics in the U.S. speak English well.

REALITY: Immigrants usually are not competing with native-born residents for jobs

Immigration Myth 3: Immigrants take jobs from native-born residents

Facts:

- Immigrants do not generally compete with U.S. born workers. Instead, immigrants usually compete with the migrants who came before them.
- Many immigrants with legal authorization to work here are highly skilled and sought after by U.S. companies because of shortages in the native-born skill base. Economists find that highly skilled immigrants have a significant positive impact on creating new jobs in the United States.
- Undocumented immigrants often fill the lowest rung of employment in construction, agriculture and domestic services. Studies show that low-skilled immigrant workers and low-skilled native-born workers take on very different jobs, with native-born workers taking jobs that require work authorization and English language skills.
- The largest reason that native-born employment has stagnated or declined is due to significant restructuring of the U.S. economy.



IMMIGRATION MYTHS AND REALITIES

Reality: Undocumented immigrants are not eligible for most federal public benefits and even legal immigrants face strict eligibility restrictions

Immigration Myth 4: Undocumented immigrants are receiving extensive public benefits

Facts:

- Undocumented immigrants do not qualify for welfare, food stamps, Medicaid or most other public benefits.
- Most government assistance programs require proof of legal immigration status and even documented immigrants cannot receive many benefits until they have been in the United States for more than five years.
- Undocumented immigrants can receive schooling and emergency medical care. A recent report by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce states that “economists view expenditures on healthcare and education for children as investments that pay off later, when those children become workers and taxpayers.”
- Numerous studies have found that immigrants pay more in taxes than they receive in government services and benefits.

Reality: Immigrants are less likely than native-born citizens to commit serious crimes and areas with high rates of immigration are associated with lower rates of violent crime

Immigration Myth 5: Immigrants are bringing a crime wave to the United States

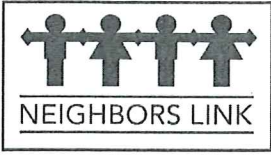
Facts:

- Decades of research has shown that immigrants are less likely to commit serious crimes than native-born citizens.
- Research also shows that high rates of immigration are associated with lower rates of violent crime and property crime. This holds true for both documented and undocumented immigrants.
- From 1990 - 2013, immigration in the United States increased significantly, including the number of undocumented immigrants, which more than tripled. During that time, the violent crime rate in this country declined 48%.
- The reasons for lower crime rates among immigrants are not fully understood. One theory is that people who choose the intense emotional and social sacrifice that comes with migrating are less likely to engage in risky or criminal behavior that would put their new lives in danger. Another theory is that immigrants revitalize neighborhoods and generate economic growth, which helps decrease the crime rate.

Sources:

American Immigration Council
Cato Institute
U.S. Chamber of Commerce
National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine
Urban Institute
Migration Policy Institute
Pew Research Center

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MYTHS AND REALITIES ABOUT DEFERRED ACTION FOR CHILDHOOD ARRIVALS (DACA)

The DACA program was created in 2012 and allowed certain undocumented immigrants who entered the U.S. as children a temporary reprieve from deportation, legal authorization to work and the ability to obtain a driver's license.

In early September, the current administration announced that DACA will be repealed and some of the 800,000 DACA recipients will begin to lose DACA status and work authorization as early as March 2018.

Myth 1: The DACA program hurts the economy

REALITY: Research shows that DACA has been beneficial to the U.S. economy and repealing it would cause economic harm. The Cato Institute estimates that repealing DACA would result in a \$280 billion economic decline over the next decade, largely due to the loss of tax income that would have been contributed by DACA recipients during that time. Additionally, repealing DACA would cost employers \$6 billion in turnover costs (to hire and train new employees to the same level of productivity).

Myth 2: DACA recipients take jobs from American citizens

REALITY: There is no evidence that DACA recipients take jobs from U.S. citizens. Contrary to popular perception, there is not a fixed amount of work available. Often, an increase in the number of workers actually boosts the economy and increases the number of jobs available. Currently, there is a shortage of skilled workers for many jobs in the U.S. and DACA recipients, who tend to have higher levels of education, are filling many of these gaps in our labor market.

Myth 3: The DACA program provides a pathway to citizenship

REALITY: The DACA program allows for a temporary reprieve from deportation, work authorization, and the ability to obtain a driver's license. DACA recipients must renew every two years and the program does not provide a pathway to citizenship.

Myth 4: DACA recipients are eligible for benefits

REALITY: DACA recipients are not eligible for federal welfare benefits, insurance through the Affordable Care Act, Medicaid, or other federal benefits. DACA recipients are eligible for emergency Medicaid services and some states have opted to provide additional benefits.

Myth 5: DACA recipients do not pay taxes

REALITY: DACA recipients pay personal income, property and sales taxes. The Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy estimates that DACA recipients and those immediately eligible for DACA contribute \$2 billion a year in state and local taxes.

Sources:

The Cato Institute

Barron's

The Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy

NPR

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