

STRONG LEGAL IMMIGRATION CHANNELS OF FAMILY AND EMPLOYMENT-BASED IMMIGRATION ARE GOOD FOR AMERICA

IMMIGRANTS AND IMMIGRATION MYTHBUSTERS: Addressing Common Misconceptions

Immigrants and immigration are good for our country, our communities, and our economy. New arrivals to the U.S. help drive business creation, fuel innovation, fill essential workforce needs, and strengthen the middle class. Family-based immigration promotes family unity and integration, all core principles of American values. The success of our nation comes, in large part, from our longstanding tradition of encouraging men and women seeking a better life to leave everything they know to begin contributing to the United States. Severely limiting legal immigration puts this at risk. Instead, we should protect and expand current immigration levels and work to pass immigration reform that makes it safer, faster and more efficient for prospective immigrants to enter the U.S. and begin contributing to our society.

ANNUAL LEVELS OF IMMIGRATION

Myth: The American people want to see a reduction in immigration.

FACT: More than [75%](#) of Americans oppose making cuts to our legal immigration system.

Myth: Reducing immigration levels will relieve pressure on the labor market, and make our economy stronger.

FACT: Immigrants are innovators, job creators, and consumers with an enormous spending power that drives our economy, and creates employment opportunities for all Americans. In 2014, after immigrants spent billions of dollars on state and local, and federal taxes, they were left with [\\$927](#) billion in spending power, which they used to purchase goods and services, stimulate local business activity, and create jobs. Proposed cuts would exclude 22 million people from the United States over the next five decades, making it the largest cut to legal immigration since the 1920s. This would have devastating effects on our economy, including a [2% decrease](#) in U.S. GDP by 2040, a [12.5% decrease](#) in U.S. economic growth, and [4.6 million](#) fewer jobs.

ANNUAL ENTRIES

Myth: The U.S. admits more legal immigrants per capita than any other country in the world.

FACT: Dozens of countries including Australia, New Zealand and Canada [take in more immigrants as compared to their current population, than the United States](#). In Canada, immigrants make up 21.8% of the country's population, more than 6% higher than the percentage of foreign born in the U.S. which amounts to 14.49%. The U.S. should protect and expand our current immigration channels, as immigrants are highly educated and commit less crime than native born citizens, making our country both safer and economically prosperous.

FAMILY SPONSORSHIP

Myth: A single immigrant can bring in a virtually unlimited number of distant relatives, who enter the U.S. immediately.

FACT: An immigrant typically sponsors [3.5 relatives](#), with wait times as long as [23 years](#). Immigrants cannot bring an unlimited number of family members to the United States. Under family-based reunification, neither U.S. citizens nor permanent residents can directly petition for an aunt, uncle, cousin, niece, nephew, in-law relative, or grandparent to come to the U.S. There is a years-long wait for children, spouses, siblings and parents seeking to immigrate to the U.S. through a family member.

SKILLS

Myth: Family based immigration brings in immigrants with no skills, making our country weak.

FACT: Immigrants of all skill levels are good for the American economy and our communities. Those who come through the family-based system make significant economic contributions, play a key role in business development and are among the most upwardly mobile segments of the labor force. Immigrants have economically revitalized many communities throughout the country and are an [invaluable “demographic lifeline” to the Midwest](#). For example, the immigrant population in Michigan has played an important role in preserving and growing the state’s manufacturing industry, and in 2010 immigrants were responsible for creating or protecting nearly [27,000](#) manufacturing jobs in the state.

INTEGRATION

Myth: Immigrants do not assimilate into U.S. society.

FACT: Today’s immigrants are revitalizing U.S. cities across the country, becoming U.S. citizens, learning English, and buying homes. In fact, immigrants add [\\$3.7 trillion](#) to housing markets nationwide. They are doctors, nurses and first responders, who care for the elderly, sick and injured, teachers who educate the next generation of American leaders, and engineers who build American roads and bridges.

EDUCATION

Myth: Immigrants are not educated and have no skills to offer Americans.

FACT: [43%](#) of all recently-arrived immigrants are college graduates - compared to 29% of native-born Americans, and [40% of Fortune 500 companies](#) were founded by immigrants and their children, employing over 10 million people worldwide. [Immigrants start 20% of our businesses despite being only 13% of the population](#), keeping our workforce flexible, allowing our companies to grow faster, and increasing productivity of American workers by bringing in individuals with diverse skill sets and new ideas.

NATIONAL SECURITY

Myth: Foreign governments send criminals to immigrate to the United States.

FACT: Foreign governments do not determine who is allowed to immigrate to the United States. Any immigrant who enters the U.S. must comply with a rigorous application and screening process. In order to enter the U.S., on a family visa, candidates must have a sponsor in the U.S. over the age of 18, prove the legitimacy of their relationship, meet strict income requirements, [undergo extensive background and security checks](#), including criminal, national security, health-related and other screenings, and pay a fee.

CRIME

Myth: Immigrants are a threat to public safety and are more likely to commit crimes than native-born Americans.

FACT: Immigrants make our communities safer, and are [69% less](#) likely to be incarcerated than native born citizens.

“MERIT-BASED” SYSTEM

Myth: The U.S. needs to switch to a “merit-based” immigration system.

FACT: We are already doing this through both our high-skilled, and family based immigration system. Immigrants in the U.S. tend to be more upwardly mobile of all American workers, and are highly educated. In fact, [43%](#) of all recently-arrived immigrants are college graduates - compared to 29% of native-born Americans. Immigrants sponsored by their family member start businesses and work in innovative, job-creating fields such as STEM, driving life-improving innovation and economic growth for all Americans.

Myth: The American immigration system lets people in randomly, with no consideration of their merit or skills, compared to systems like Australia and Canada which select based on talent.

FACT: Our [demand driven immigration system](#) tells us that in order to immigrate to the U.S. for employment, a worker must be sponsored by a specific employer for a specific job for which an American worker cannot be found. This means our highly-skilled immigrants are matched to the specific needs of American businesses, as opposed to countries where someone can be admitted simply for having enough “points,” even though they are not filling a needed job. Further, countries with robust skills-based immigration programs also have robust family-based immigration channels - in fact, their humanitarian, family, and skills-based immigration levels tend to be equal or higher than America’s.