



# The **TRUTH** About Immigrants

► **FACT: By paying taxes and Social Security, immigrants contribute far more to government coffers than they use in social services.**

The National Research Council of the National Academy of Sciences concluded that on average, immigrants generate public revenue that exceeds their public costs – approximately \$80,000 more in taxes than they receive in state, federal and local benefits over their life times. Immigrants are also crucial to the long-term viability of our Social Security system – immigrants entering the US will provide a net benefit of \$407 billion to the Social Security system over the next 50 years. And immigrants pay sales, property and income taxes.

Though they are ineligible for most social service programs these taxes sustain, immigrants pay in and provide vital income support and health care for elderly Americans. Even documented immigrants are not eligible for Temporary Aid for Needy Families, Medicaid or Food Stamps until they have lived legally in the US for five years. Undocumented immigrants cannot get any of these, yet they pay billions in taxes.

► **FACT: Immigration has a positive effect on the American economy and on the income of US-born workers.**

According to the President's Council of Economic Advisers, immigrants increase consumer demand, fuel new businesses and spur the creation of new jobs. Immigration increases the US Gross Domestic Product by roughly \$37 billion each year, and roughly 90 percent of US-born workers experience wage gains from immigration, which total between \$30 billion and \$80 billion per year.

► **FACT: Immigrants are less likely to commit crimes than the US-born.**

The US Commission on Immigration Reform and academic researchers from across the country have found lower levels

of crime among the foreign-born than those born in the US. Crime is not aggravated by immigrants, who come to this country to pursue economic and educational opportunities not available in their home countries and to build better lives for themselves and their families.

► **FACT: Creating a path to legalization for undocumented immigrants will make New York's communities safer.**

Police chiefs support comprehensive immigration reform as a way to improve public safety. At the 2009 National Summit on Local Immigration Policies, 100 top police administrators from cities across the country called on Congress to adopt immigration reform so that millions of people – and hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers – can become full members of society.

Many immigrants – including documented immigrants and US citizens – are afraid to report crimes or serve as witnesses in legal proceedings because they are afraid that they or their loved ones may be deported. When people can come out of the shadows and work with the police instead of fearing them, we are all safer.

► **FACT: Immigrants, including Latino immigrants, want to learn English and become fully integrated members of American society.**

The US Department of Homeland Security reports that, between 2006 and 2007, citizenship applications doubled and naturalization applications increased by 350 percent. But because of tremendous backlogs that can delay the citizenship process for years, many people who want to become Americans and have applied to do so are stuck in bureaucratic limbo.

Despite these barriers, immigrants from across the globe are a part of the fabric of

American society. Eighty-eight percent of Latino immigrants' US-born adult children speak English very well, and studies show that the number rises dramatically for each subsequent generation. Furthermore, similar to other immigrants, Latinos believe that they need to learn English in order to succeed in the United States.

► **FACT: Immigrants are a driving force in the housing market.**

According to Harvard University's Joint Center for Housing Studies, there are more than 5.7 million foreign-born homeowners in the United States, representing \$1.2 trillion in home value and \$876 billion in home equity. Immigrants are 12 percent of first-time homebuyers.

► **FACT: Immigrants contribute to all parts of New York State's economy.**

Immigrants teach our children and care for our sick. They are a critical part of making our state work. According to the Fiscal Policy Institute, immigrants make up not only half of New York's nurse's aids and home health care workers, but also nearly half of all doctors and nearly a third of all registered nurses. Immigrants are 28 percent of postsecondary teachers, 41 percent of all child-care workers and 17 percent of teacher assistants. Immigrants work as managers (20 percent), secretaries (14 percent), retail sales people (23 percent) and accountants (29 percent).

► **FACT: New York State is home to immigrants from around the world.**

In upstate New York, the top nation of origin for immigrants is Canada, followed by India and Germany. In New York City, most immigrants come from the Dominican Republic, followed by China and Jamaica. In the downstate suburbs, the top country of origin is El Salvador, followed by Italy and the Dominican Republic.



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