

## US Illegal Immigration

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## Introduction

Illegal immigration also known as illegal emigration refers to migration into a country in defilement of the immigration laws within that jurisdiction, raising political, economic, and social issues. Those who involve themselves in illegal immigration are referred to as illegal immigrants or illegal aliens. Illegal immigration is also said to be among the most eminent issues that many developing countries and developed countries face and the United States is not an exception (Ethier, 1986). Throughout history, the U.S has been referred to as a haven for legal and illegal immigrants from all-over the world. Individuals flock to the shores of the nation in search of the liberties guaranteed by America and the economic prospects presented by the American economy.

Hosting approximately 10 million unregistered immigrants in the United States by 2009, the problem of illegal immigration keeps on dividing the thoughts of Americans, with some Americans arguing that illegal immigration is beneficial for the country's economy due to the extra tax revenue, increase in low-cost labor pool, and more money in circulation. These Americans believe that illegal immigrants contribute ideal values and motivation; they carry out jobs that Americans refuse to take and that opponents of illegal immigration are racists. Antagonists of illegal immigration argue that illegal immigrants break the law by not having appropriate documentation or by overstaying their visas, thus they should be expatriated. Opponents add that illegal immigrants are social and economic encumbrances to upstanding, tax paying Americans citizens. Clearly, illegal immigration is a major international economic issue confronting the United States of America (Jasso & Rosenzweig, 1990).

### Statistics of illegal immigrants

According to the Center for Immigration Studies, the U.S. Census Bureau disclosed that legal and illegal immigrant population in the country got to approximately 38 million in March of 2007, and a third these were illegal immigrants. The American Academy of Sciences study in 1997 discovered that because of illegal immigrants providing cheap labor, there was a 44% decrease in earnings amongst the poorest of American populations since 1980 until 1994 (Martin & Ruark, 2010).

In a study released by the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR), it was approximated that currently, illegal immigration costs the American taxpayers and the federal government \$113 billion annually. The comprehensive report dubbed 'The Fiscal Burden of Illegal Immigration on U.S. Taxpayers' analyzed the amount that the approximated 13 million illegal immigrants and their children, who are born in the U.S. cost the federal government, the state, and the local governments. In addition, education expenses for the children of illegal immigrants make up the single biggest taxpayers annually, going to approximately \$52 billion (Martin & Ruark, 2010).

### Causes of Illegal Immigration

Illegal immigration to the United States is triggered by various causes, most of which are internal, from their countries of origin. Some immigrants move to the U.S illegally because of armed conflict in their country of origin such as the chronic civil wars and conflict brought about by the Colombian guerrilla war. The armed conflict contributes to high prevalence of rape, homicides, massacres, which forcibly displace people, due to the insecure climate. Poverty in the countries of origin leads to high unemployment levels, thus making people to opt to leave their native country in search

of jobs to help their families. Most of these people enter the U.S illegally to seek greener pastures (Jasso & Rosenzweig, 1990).

As in the case of Cuba, dictatorship and repression in countries of origin and lack of governments to respect the human rights of citizens pushes people from their native country. In addition, natural disasters such as hurricanes in countries of origin affect human development, thus the need to improve living conditions push people to immigrate (Ethier, 1986). The United States itself also contributes to having people enter the country illegally, by not implementing adequate legal and economic provisions for individuals wishing to immigrate legally. This makes individual to find devious ways of entering the United States. Liberalization of trade through globalization has continued to displace huge numbers of unskilled worker or agricultural workers, who rush to the United States in search of higher quality of life.

#### Impacts of Illegal Immigration

Illegal immigration has many repercussions, some that are negative and positive, and which affect the American populations directly and indirectly.

#### Negative Impacts of Illegal Immigration

Illegal immigrations deprive Americans their rights and prospects because resources are allocated on population basis without taking into consideration the illegal immigrants' population. Resultantly, the allocated resources are never adequate to meet the requirements of the entire population. This deprivation of opportunities and rights occurs in all the sectors including education and employment sectors (Jasso & Rosenzweig, 1990). The presence of illegal immigrants in the United States changes the nation's demographics, and the huge influx of immigrants brings in foreign cultures,

which tends to dent the American age-old traditions and culture. In addition, illegal immigration seems to be accompanied by crime, with many studies revealing that illegal immigrants lead in cases of criminal activities including drug and human trafficking. Unlike legal immigrants, there is no procedure of screening of illegal immigrants for different health problems, thus they increase the likelihoods of spreading diseases to the American population (Hanson, Scheve, Slaughter, & Spilimbergo, 2001).

#### Positive Impacts of Illegal Immigration

There are a few positive and favorable economic impacts of illegal immigration. For instance, the illegal immigrants contribute to the economy of the United States by paying taxes, and they ensure that there is a balance in the society because they help meeting demand for labor in the United States. Illegal immigrants to the United States take up the jobs that the local American population leaves out ensuring that no job vacancies are left bare (Hanson, Scheve, Slaughter, & Spilimbergo, 2001).

#### Eliminating or Reducing Impacts of Illegal Immigration

Illegal immigration has some disruptive impacts to the U.S society, and that is why they need either to be reduced or eliminated. The federal government of the United States and the different states should take various actions in order to handle and lessen the negative impacts of illegal immigration. For instance, during allocation of resources, the United States government should consider the illegal immigrants' population and thus provide extra resources or direct the few resources only to the American citizens. This will ensure that Americans are not deprived off resources that are rightfully theirs (Jasso, & Rosenzweig, 1990). In addition, the federal government, the different states, and the local government should ensure that illegal immigrants are no longer eligible for

most social-welfare plans that are meant for the American citizens. The elderly and even disabled individuals from the illegal immigrants' population should not be eligible for federally provided Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and complementary medical benefits (Andreas, 1994).

To limit, lessen, and eliminate the impacts of illegal immigration, the number of individuals immigrating illegally to the United States has to be reduced considerably. This can be done by ensuring that border guards do their work well and any entrees to the U.S have proper documentation. For the illegal immigrants that are already in the country, the United States government should limit the job vacancies given to them. This can be done through scrutiny of documents that are proof of one's citizenship or legality in the country, and use of anti-counterfeit detection tools in conjunction with other identifications such as the use of social security numbers. The prohibition of employment of illegal immigrants will not only avail job opportunities for the American citizens, but it will also play a part as a comprehensive approach of reducing illegal immigration since people will be more discouraged to enter the U.S illegally in search of jobs (Andreas, 1994).

### Conclusion

The issue of illegal immigration in the United States puts the country at a crossroads. Some Americans and authorities proposing the government to pursue a strategy that disheartens the future occurrence of illegal migration and one that increasingly reduces the present illegal immigrants population through denying them job opportunities and even deporting those that are caught by the law. Other people propose that the government of the U.S to repeat the earlier decision that was used in

1986, of adopting an amnesty program. Generally, most means of handling the already present influx of illegal immigrants in the United States of America may seem subjective, aggressive, or cruel. However, these strategies may be the only way of dealing with the prevalent issue of illegal immigration, and the United States government should take the bold step and implement the tough measures.

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