

Argumentative Essay on Immigration

Illegal immigration has been a problem for the United States for a long time. This phenomenon is not new and thousands of illegal immigrants have come into US through either the Mexico border, the Pacific Ocean, or through many other ways. Some people have entered the country legally through a visit visa, but then have stayed illegally and are working in various places. Illegal immigration is a double-edged sword; on the one hand it provides the local economy with cost benefits as the illegal immigrants are not paid so much, while they are more productive. On the other hand, these illegal immigrants do not pay taxes and their employers also do not pay their taxes. There are both pros and cons of illegal immigration and this paper shall take a look at some facts pertinent to illegal immigration in the United States.

“Every day thousands of illegals stream across the 2,500 miles of border with Mexico. According to the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, or INS, the total number of illegals in America from this source increases by 275,000 annually. Already the United States is host to an illegal population of 7 to 12 million, of whom the vast majority are Mexican or Hispanic in origin. These illegal and uninvited guests help themselves to jobs, education, welfare and unemployment compensation. The many whose wages are paid under the table pay little or no taxes. And they are easy prey for unscrupulous employers and politicians” (Hayes 2000)

The U.S. population primarily is growing as a result of births in the minority and immigrant communities. We do not like to think about it--as it is a political correctness problem--but there is stratification of labor, mostly along education lines, where the tough jobs in agriculture, manufacturing, and services are taken by those without recourse into the white-collar world of employment. Especially when these low paying jobs do not require language ability, immigrants historically have jumped at these opportunities as a way to get their foot in the door. The U.S.-born unemployed do not think first about having just any job to help plant their feet. They first think about what their wages will be. If you are here illegally, you clearly have a competitive advantage (Howell 2006).

Most of the Americans and the American officials are of the opinion that illegal immigration is bad for the country and it should be stopped completely. The Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) is a law in the United States of America that pertains to the policies and regulations regarding employment. This law was enacted in 1986 for various reasons, which includes the fact that many illegal employees work in the United States. The two main requirements of the IRCA include: “(1) to hire only persons authorized to work in the United States and (2) to not discriminate on the basis of citizenship status or national origin” (LMD 1992). In order to be eligible to work in the United States, the workers must complete an I-9 form and must be able to prove their authorization to work in the United States to their employers. “Employers may not refuse to consider all qualified persons with work authorization, whether citizen or non-citizen. Employers must accept any document listed in the INS Handbook for Employers, and may not arbitrarily specify an INS document, or require additional documents. Employers may not refuse to hire a qualified worker whose employment authorization expires at a later date. IRCA imposes back pay and severe penalties on employers who commit immigration-related employment discrimination” (LMD 1992). I am for this

immigration reform as I believe that illegal employment is a drain on the economy of the United States.

There are more than 10 million undocumented workers (excluding their families) in the United States (White). Most of these illegal workers are concentrated in California and Texas, although their presence can be felt all over the country. About three quarters of these illegal immigrants come to the United States after crossing the US/Mexico border. Many of these illegal immigrants are hired by US employers as undocumented workers and this is done because they can be hired at a pay less than minimum wage. Most of these workers are hired to work in the agricultural, manufacturing, and construction industries, or in backroom jobs. These workers are not given any kind of health care or any other benefits (White). These jobs are mostly opened illegally by US employers in order to save up on taxes and also save up on their costs by paying the workers less than minimum wage. It is for this reason that I believe it important for the immigration reform to be in place as it makes it harder for the employers to cheat the government out of the taxes etc.

One other benefit that can be derived from the IRCA is that of the social costs related with illegal immigration into the United States. When the illegal immigrants enter America, they do so without any papers or any authorization. This means that there is no record of where they come from or what sort of a background they have. They might be infected with a hundred diseases, such as polio, tuberculosis, etc. These diseases can spread and cause a lot of problems for the American citizens. Other than that, there are more costs that are added for a state as it has to pay for the education etc. for these illegal immigrants. "In an already under funded programs they give these services a heavier burden to deal with. Republicans have reached agreement among themselves on legislation designed to combat illegal immigration (Carney 1996). But with their package facing delaying tactics from Senate Democrats and a veto from the president, they finished the week of Sept. 2 uncertain of their next move" (Website).

It would be useful to consider the downside of implementing strict immigration laws. If the labor market were not being filled by illegal immigrants crossing the Mexican border, these positions would have to be filled by someone else. If we were to bring more agricultural and service workers into the U.S. through a regularized process, the resulting body of immigrants would be less Mexican and more Arab, Muslim, South Asian, and African. For those who want an idea of how this would impact American society, take a look at Europe. This is an issue of culture, language, and religion. Author Samuel Huntington (Who Are We?) and others have argued that Mexican culture is not readily compatible with the Anglo-Protestant culture under which the U.S. has prospered. This may be true. but it certainly is more compatible than Iraqi culture (Howell 2006).

If the Mexicans were not coming in illegally, we would have to process--and keep track of--all of them. What would the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS, the successor agency to the Immigration and Naturalization service under the new Department of Homeland Security) have to look like to process the 500 workers who are sneaking into the country illegally on a daily basis? What would it cost? There roughly are 11,000,000,000 illegal immigrants in the U.S. By any process other than deporting them all, there will be a substantial increase in the size of the government agencies designed to monitor them (Howell 2006).

By making such an issue of illegal immigrants from Mexico, we are discouraging all immigrants about life in the U.S., including those that we need desperately. The issue is plugging up the immigration system for applicants who have math and science skills. Many claim that the education system is being overburdened by the children of illegal immigrants. Yet, such skills have not--at least over the last 20 years--been produced by that same system, forcing us to import our technological capability from India, East Asia, and elsewhere (Howell 2006).

One might argue that the immigrants are people after all and that they should not be discriminated against even if they come illegally into the country. A lot of public controversy has been sparked on the discourse of affirmative action, which is about the discrimination of the immigrants in the workplace. This started as a period of "passionate debate that began around 1972 and tapered off after 1980, and the second indicating a resurgence of debate in the 1990s leading up to the Supreme Court's decision in the summer of 2003 upholding certain kinds of affirmative action" (Fullinwider 2005). Other than this, there have been two paths that the development, defense, and contestation of preferential affirmative action have taken. "One has been legal and administrative as courts, legislatures, and executive departments of government have made and applied rules requiring affirmative action. The other has been the path of public debate, where the practice of preferential treatment has spawned a vast literature, pro and con" (Fullinwider 2005).

Many people argue that the immigrants are usually skilled labor and they help increase the local production of the United States. Others also argue that when the businesses pay them lower than minimum wage, their costs go down, which means that the costs of production as well as the prices goes down, and these help the citizens of the United States. It is also argued that the immigrants tend to send their US dollars outside America to their families, and this strengthens the value of the dollar, making it more valuable, thereby making the economy of US stronger.

Yet, we find that these benefits are far outweighed by the costs that the illegal immigrants bear on the US. Many immigrants have felt that they are being discriminated against in the workplace for one or more of the various kinds of discriminatory practices that occur within various organizations. Many of these employees are women who believe that they have been discriminated based on their sex. The Revised Order of 1972 affected a change that included women among the "protected classes" whose "underutilization" demanded the setting of "goals" and "timetables" for "full utilization" (Graham 1990). There are some theories that are presented in Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 that pertain to discrimination in employment, even if the employee is an illegal immigrant. The IRCA changes all that. An illegal immigrant cannot be considered an employee under the IRCA, which automatically takes care of the discrimination problem.

It can be concluded that the immigration reforms are a good practice for both the immigrants, and more importantly, for the US. The illegal immigrants pose many problems for our country and they should not be allowed to enter in the first place. But since it is very hard to implement total security, steps should be taken to reduce the illegal immigrant inflow into our country and the first step is to implement immigration reform. Much of what these people earn in the US is sent to their homes in their own countries and the US economy is deprived of their

taxes. By staying in the US, they are spending each second doing an illegal act as just their presence inside the US borders is an illegal act.

Many people tend to think that eradicating illegal immigration is impossible and that it can never work. This is not true. Illegal immigration can be repealed if the government takes the proper measures. While there is no painless magic answer, illegal migration can be significantly reduced with a few effective measures. Some of those measures require money; some require political will; many can be accomplished by the President without new legislation. Adopted as part of a comprehensive approach, these measures will be effective. Adopted selectively, they will fail. As a first step, however, current law and regulations must be clarified. Employers are caught between competing legal mandates when hiring non-citizens; aliens with only a tenuous claim to presence in the U.S. remain here for years under the color of law; and some government officials do not know whether they are obliged to report information to or withhold it from the INS. Congress and the regulators must simplify legal requirements so that the average person, citizen or alien, can know what the rules are (Lempres 1994).

Interdiction can be effective because of the nature of the flow of illegal migration. Over 95 per cent of illegal border crossers come through Mexico, where the terrain funnels traffic into several crossing points. By far the busiest crossing point in the nearly 6,000 miles of land border is the 13 miles near San Diego. Over 40 per cent of the Border Patrol's total interdictions occur in that 13-mile strip of land. Moreover, the Border Patrol estimates that over 90 per cent of its total apprehensions occur in just 100 miles of border segments. The concentration of illegal traffic means that interdiction efforts can be focused for greater effectiveness. Physical structures such as lights, fences, and anti-automobile barriers can be placed along the high-traffic crossing points. Without new legislation, the Administration can build these structures and add Border Patrol officers at the hot spots (Lempres 1994).

Other than that, there has been a lot of prosecutions regarding illegal immigration over the past few years. But the government is not merely prosecuting illegal immigrants for immigration offenses; it is reinvigorating its investigation and prosecutorial efforts against corporate America as well. Various corporate scenarios in the United States show that corporate America currently faces in confronting federal prosecutions. Congress first deputized corporate America into controlling the flow of illegal immigration at our nation's borders in 1986--by making it illegal for employers to knowingly hire, or knowingly retain after hiring, illegal immigrants, as well as to fail to comply with the employment verification requirements--and then subjecting employers to stiff civil and criminal penalties for noncompliance. Congress further deputized corporate America in 1996, and subjected corporate America to even higher financial stakes, when it made certain immigration offenses predicate offenses in RICO, and thereby opened the doors to suits from plaintiffs' lawyers for treble damages for having knowingly hired at least ten undocumented workers in a twelve-month period. Given the increasingly high stakes for employers, it is imperative that they expend the resources now to take the preventive measures outlined in this article. To do less will only perpetuate exposure to unnecessary and costly risk (Ciobanu and Green 2006).

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