



Fact Sheet on Hispanic Immigration

Advocate for Change: Be Informed ... Become Involved ... Take Action

What factors distinguish migration/immigration today from past waves of newcomers?

The biggest factor has to do with the friendly economy for people without formal schooling or proficiency in middle-class Standard English. Today the workplace requires more formal schooling and proficiency in speaking and writing the English language. In a nutshell the immigrants of yesteryear, who sought entry-level positions, needed a strong back and a willingness to work to excel in the economy; today, not so. Yesterday, immigrants could speak to the cow in Swedish and the cows gave milk. Germans could talk to the corn in German and the corn grew. Today's newcomers do not confront the cow or the corn – they confront the computer. In essence, today's newcomers are bringing the same skills that other immigrants brought with them –but, at the wrong time!

DO YOU KNOW?

In 2008, 46.9 million people identified themselves as having Hispanic or Latino ancestry; nearly two-thirds (62%) were native-born US citizens. Latinos represent over 15% of US population and 17.8 million Latinos are Foreign-born.** An even larger share live in families with mixed immigration status, making immigration policy an important issue for this community (Migration Policy Institute & NCLR, 2009)

REALITY: The success of immigrants is intrinsically linked to the future success of the nation as a whole.

Why were previous immigrants more successful in the economy than today's newcomers?

Immigrants of yesteryear first entered the economy and slowly, after several generations, their great grandchildren earned college degrees. Today's newcomers must first succeed in schools -- before entering the economy with jobs that have quality and benefits for health care and related expenses. It took the non- English speaking immigrant's generations to master English. They first worked with their hands, then with their backs before working with their heads. The land taken from the indigenous American Indians and the free labor from enslaved Blacks created a basis for wealth for earlier newcomers. Those resources that never should have been exploited in the first place, account in part for the advantages that previous immigrants had for their success when compared with today's newcomers. Today, the menial labor economy that served as a stepping stone for immigrants in the past to educate their children has gone overseas.

DO YOU KNOW?

Coinciding with the rise of the immigration debate, "the FBI has documented nearly a 40% increase in hate crimes targeting Latinos from 2003-2007, and the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) attributes the 47% rise in hate groups between 2000 and 2007 almost completely to the manipulation of anti-immigrant rhetoric" (NCLR, 2009).

LATINO VOTING POWER

Latinos emerged from the 2008 elections as a powerful force, exhibiting record-setting political participation. There was an increase of 32% over 2004 elections and greater than 25% increase in Latino voter registration. It is believed the immigration debate roused the Latino voters and in 2008, reform-minded candidates won 20 out of 22 battleground races against opponents supporting deportation-only or restrictive approaches, and 66% of voters in swing districts support an approach that will result in undocumented immigrants becoming legal, tax-paying workers within the system (NCLR, Public Policy Brief, 2009).

REALITY: Foreign-nationals comprise half of the Masters and 71% of the PhD's graduating from U.S. universities in the engineering field (US. House of Representatives Judiciary Committee Hearing, 2008).

* The terms "Latino" and "Hispanic" are used interchangeably by the U. S. Census Bureau and throughout this document to refer to persons of Mexican, Central and South American, the Caribbean (Cuban, Puerto Rican and Dominican), Spanish and other Hispanic descent; they may be of any race.

** "Foreign born" and "immigrants" and "foreign-nationals" are used interchangeably and refer to persons with no US citizenship at birth. This population includes naturalized citizens, lawful permanent residents, refugees and asylees, persons on certain temporary visas, and the unauthorized.

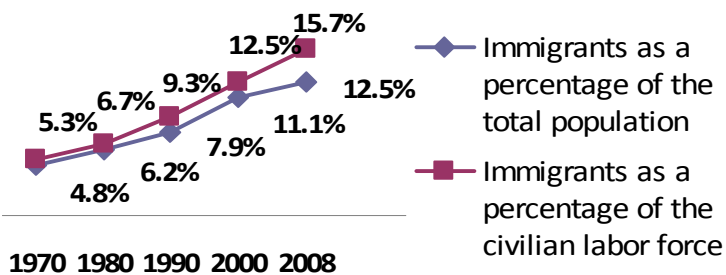
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What are the myths and realities about Hispanic immigration that affect the role that Hispanics can play in society?

There are over 20 myths that plague our nation when it comes to immigration. Please refer to the full synopsis for a summary of Aviva Chomsky's book, *"They Take Our Jobs! and 20 other myths about immigration."* According to Chomsky and other leading authorities, there are three major myths: Immigrants take jobs away; Immigrants are a drain on the system; and, illegal Immigrants are criminals.

Foreign Born as a Percentage of the Total Population and of the Civilian Labor Force 1970 to 2008



Source: Migration Policy Institute, 2009

REALITY: Immigration is a result, not a cause of global economic changes. Immigration is a humanitarian problem.

DO YOU KNOW?

Immigrants, documented and undocumented, are more likely to pay taxes than they are to use public services. In fact, 39% of undocumented immigrant children live in poverty and 53% lack health insurance, and immigrants account for 29% of the 46.6 million lacking health insurance in the US (MPI, 2009).

There is a practice of allowing immigrants to use false social security numbers, these immigrants are subjected to federal and state tax deductions that will go into federal and state coffers. But, if these immigrants are undocumented, they still have no access to the benefits they are paying for, like social security or unemployment benefits. As of 2005, Social Security was receiving about \$7 billion a year through false social security numbers – allowing it to break even.

REALITY: The facts do not support anti-immigration forces' rhetoric linking illegal immigration and crime. There are dozen of studies examining immigration and crime and they all come to the same conclusion: Immigrant are more law-abiding than citizens.

DO YOU KNOW?

According to the Pew Hispanic Center, Latinos have accounted for more than half of all U.S. population growth since 2000. Projections show that by 2050 the Hispanic population will grow to more than 138 million or more than 30% of the nation's total population. Moreover, 22 million Hispanics are in the labor force;*** making up one in three workers in the U.S. (Passel & Cohn, 2009). In addition, almost 34% of the Hispanic population is under age 18 compared with 25% of the total population (U.S. Dept. of Commerce, 2009). One in five Hispanics (21%) are under the age of 5 (NCLR, 2009).

Immigration's Impact on Children

About 5.5 million children in 2008 had at least one parent who was an unauthorized immigrant, according to the Pew Hispanic Center. Of this group, 73% (4.0 million) were US citizens by birth and 27% (1.5 million) were unauthorized immigrants themselves. According to the 2007 report by the Urban Institute for the National Council of La Raza, the recent intensification of immigration enforcement activities by the federal government has increasingly put these children at risk of family separation, economic hardship, and psychological trauma.

REALITY: "If our immigration enforcement strategy undermines the health and well-being of America's children and the structures designed to protect and nurture them, it is time to reconsider our priorities." Janet Murguia, President and CEO, National Council of La Raza

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What immigration issues affect Hispanics within the Nation, the State of Ohio and Northeast Ohio?

Synopsis of Hispanics & Immigration in the United States of America

Without comprehensive reform of the immigration system, our nation cannot experience a full economic recovery!

The Immigration Policy Center (IPC) in its April 2009 report, *The Economics of Immigration Reform*, found legalizing undocumented workers would improve wages and working conditions for all workers, and increase tax revenues for cash-strapped federal, state, and local governments. Moreover, comprehensive immigration reform that includes a path to legalization for undocumented workers would pay for itself through the increased tax revenue it generates, in contrast to the failed and costly enforcement-only policies that have been pursued thus far. Newly legalized workers would be able to move into higher-paying jobs, pay more in taxes, and spend more on goods and services—all of which would increase the already-substantial economic benefits of immigration for the United States.

REALITY: The most well known and celebrated “illegal aliens” in what we call today the United States of America are the Pilgrims. The English do not qualify to be called “immigrants” since they never gave their passports to the Indian Nations in North America. They did not become part of the nations and tribes in the region. In that respect they were unauthorized or undocumented migrants.

DO YOU KNOW?

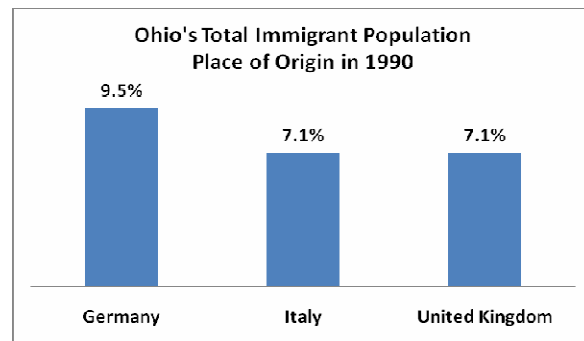
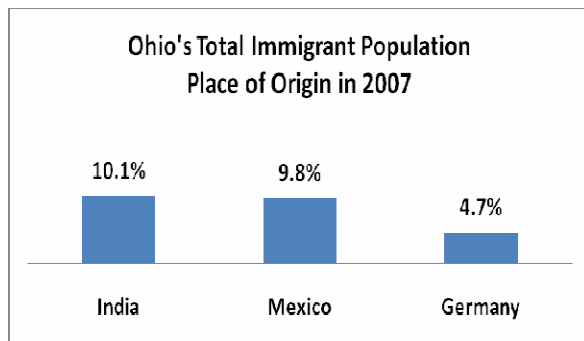
Immigrant purchasing power is \$450 billion; Latino buying power totaled \$951 billion in 2008 and is expected to increase to \$1.4 trillion by 2013 (IPC, 2009). A 2007 report from the White House Council of Economic Advisers concluded that immigration as a whole increases the U.S. Gross Domestic Product by roughly \$37 billion each year.

REALITY: “This country was founded by outsiders who are today’s insiders who get very nervous about today’s outsiders.” Dr. Samuel Betances, Diversity Consultant

Synopsis of Hispanics & Immigration in the State of Ohio

DO YOU KNOW?

According to MIP Oct., 2009 report, in 2007, 3.7% of Ohio’s total population was immigrants, compared to 3.0% in 2000 and 2.4% in 1990. Ohio’s foreign-born population changed by 23.6% between 2000 and 2007, or from 339,279 to 419,443. In comparison, the foreign-born population changed from 259,673 to 339,279 between 1990 and 2000, a difference of 30.7%. Also, immigrants’ place of origin has changed significantly.



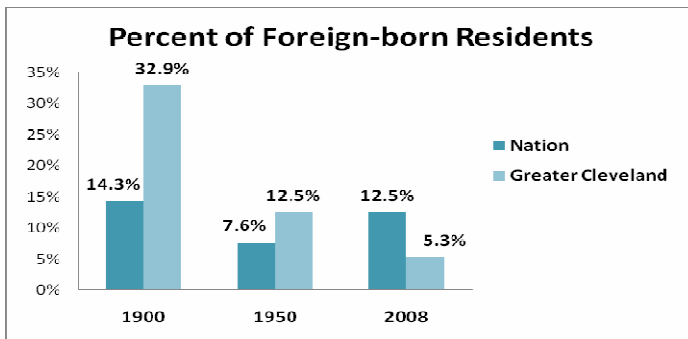
Source: Migration Policy Institute, October 2009

REALITY: In Ohio, during the presidential election Ohio newspaper poll asked voters about immigration: 56% of voters said illegal immigrants should be allowed to become U.S. citizens, while 27% said they should be deported. 15% said the United States should allow illegal immigrants to remain in the country to work for a limited time (Jindra, 2008).

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Synopsis of Hispanics & Immigration in Northeast Ohio: Cuyahoga County and City of Cleveland

REALITY: Greater Cleveland once was the center for attracting residents from abroad, outpacing the national rate for the first half of the 20th century. That is no longer the case. If Cleveland is to regain that lofty status -- especially in a global economy that rewards intelligence, creativity and innovation--it needs to re-establish itself as a magnet for new Americans. Greater Cleveland Total Population = 1,283,925 (Cleveland.com)



Social Justice Champion

Immigration is a politically sensitive topic. Max Rodas, Executive Director, Nueva Luz, says, "Immigration is a matter of proximity, people do not feel it is their issue." The economic prosperity awaiting a community who embraces immigrants is real. Pastor Max Rodas and other Latino Pastors offer humanitarian services to immigrants, "No one is turned away."

What steps can we take as members of the Hispanic Alliance to ensure that Hispanic immigrants are treated fairly and are allowed to contribute to their fullest potential ?

- ✓ In early 2010, conduct a series of workshops to educate the community on the benefits of immigration to Greater Cleveland and Northeast Ohio.
- ✓ Begin a reading discussion group around suggested reading list materials (refer to full synopsis).
- ✓ Collaborate with other groups who have been scapegoats in the past and understand displacement; include groups who are fearful of increased immigrant population.
- ✓ Collaborate with Greater Cleveland Partnership (GCP) in realizing 2009/2010 Public Policy Agenda by working with already present Hispanic population to realize GCP Policy Agenda #6: *Initiate a Demand-Driven Talent System.*
- ✓ Support efforts of the US Hispanic Chamber of Commerce NEO Office in Cleveland to encourage and support immigrant ingenuity and leverage the region's economic development opportunities.
- ✓ Begin a campaign to communicate with legislators and elected officials on **passing comprehensive immigration reform in 2010**. Urge President Obama to keep his promise on this issue.
- ✓ Work with the **Immigration, Faith-Based and Social Services Area Team** of Convencion Hispana 2008 to resolve its Community Resolutions., especially immigration proposals.
- ✓ Establish an ESL Resource Center – to address lack of coordination of ESL resources available in the community.
- ✓ Bring together a coalition of Latino subgroups to build harmony to address the needs of all Hispanics in Northeast Ohio; including immigration reform agenda.
- ✓ Honor and recognize those who champion working with immigrants and comprehensive immigration reform initiatives.

Hispanic Alliance, Inc. is a 501 (C) 3 nonprofit corporation in the State of Ohio with the purpose of addressing Hispanic/Latino community needs.

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