

Hispanic Alliance Inc.

**HISPANIC IMMIGRATION SYNOPSIS**

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For

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Definitions:

- \* 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.
- \*\*\* These data do not include the 3.9 million residents of Puerto Rico, or the 3% undercount for Latinos reported by the U.S. Census Bureau for the last decennials Census (U.S. Census Bureau 2003, 2004).

## **Executive Summary**

Of the 46.9 million people in 2008 who identified themselves as having Hispanic or Latino\* ancestry, nearly two-thirds (62%) were native-born US citizens (Migration Policy Institute, 2009). Latinos represent over 15% of the country's population and about 17.8 million Latinos are foreign-born\*\* and an even larger share live in families with mixed immigration status, making immigration policy an important issue for this community (National Council of La Raza [NCLR], Policy Brief, 2009). Furthermore, the NCLR's - the largest national Hispanic civil rights and advocacy organization in the United States - immigration policy agenda "supports a workable and humane immigration systems that restores the rule of law and protects workers and families, measures that protect civil rights and due process and keep the nation safe, and integration strategies that help immigrants become fully participating and contributing Americans".

At the core of this discussion should be the realization that the success of immigrants is intrinsically linked to the future success of the nation as a whole. 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).

The U.S. has always had a constantly changing immigrant population with stories of today's immigrants similar to those of their past counterparts, even as places of origin have changed. However, 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).

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in the State of Ohio the Hispanic population grew 55.4 % between 139,696 in 1990 and 217,123 in 2000. Hispanics accounts for 1.9 % of the state's total population and Latinos comprise the fastest growing segment of Ohio's population. In 2007, less than seven years, Ohio's Latino population grew another 30% to total 284,000. Over 50% of Hispanics in the Midwest is under age 25 (BGSU, 2002).

In 2007, 3.7 percent of Ohio's total population was immigrants, compared to 3.0 percent in 2000 and 2.4 percent in 1990. The foreign-born population (or immigrants; we use these terms interchangeably) of Ohio changed by 23.6 percent between 2000 and 2007 that is 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 percent (Migration Policy Institute, 2009).

Fifty-one percent of the Latino population in Ohio resides in four counties: Cuyahoga, Franklin, Lorain and Lucas. Cuyahoga County is home to the largest Hispanic population. Cleveland is located in Cuyahoga County; while the City's overall population decreased, losing almost half its population between 1960 and 2000, and an estimated 38,000 persons between 2000 and 2006 (Ahren & Salling, 2008); the City of Cleveland-Elyria-Mentor Hispanic population grew by 54%, from 45,900 to 85,000 (US Dept. of Commerce, 2009). According to U.S. census estimate, in 2007, Latinos made up 8.3 % of the city's population. Greater Cleveland rate of foreign-born is 5.3 percent (all immigrant groups).

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. As both election results and polling demonstrate, the country as a whole is in a more realistic place on this issue than Congress seems to realize (NCLR, 2009).

This is a synopsis and not a comprehensive analysis of Hispanics and immigration. The document looks at factors that distinguish migration/immigration today from past waves of newcomers; reasons why previous immigrants were more successful in the economy than today's newcomers; the overarching myths and realities of immigration, and most recent statistics. This document highlights immigration in the State of Ohio and the City of Cleveland and how the region can play a role in bringing about an immigration system that restores dignity and the rule of law while rejecting the status quo; misinformed, misleading and many times unjust opinions, attitudes and behaviors. Additional resources are provided to assist groups in further examination

of immigration issues and its affect on both the Hispanic and the larger community to manifest initiatives which would benefit all.

### **The Issues of Immigration and Impact to Hispanics/Latinos**

What factors distinguish migration/immigration today from past waves of newcomers?  
Why were previous immigrants more successful in the economy than today's 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!

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. The jobs in the US that still required that kind of labor do not pay enough to leap frog let alone catapult newcomers and their children to a better way of life. The challenge of educating the children of immigrants to excel in middle-class places of learning is complex and requires that the policy makers and service providers stop

romanticizing the past. The cultural shift of having to excel first in school before succeeding in the economy is a new and different reality for today's newcomers.

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

### **Myths, Fallacies and Realities**

There is over 20 myths that plague our nation when it comes to immigration. Aviva Chomsky, professor of Latin American Studies, has been active over 25 years in immigrants' right issues. The following section provides most recent statistics available from a variety of sources in combination with summarizing the myths and realities presented in Dr. Chomsky's (2007) book, "*They Take Our Jobs! and 20 other myths about immigration.*"

1. Immigrants take American jobs
2. Immigrants compete with low-skilled workers and drive-down wages
3. Unions oppose immigration because it harms the working class
4. Immigrant don't pay taxes
5. Immigrants are a drain on the economy
6. Immigrants send most of what they earn out of the country in the form of remittances
7. The rules apply to everyone, so new immigrants need to follow them just as immigrations in the past did.
8. The country is being overrun by illegal immigrants.
9. The United States has a generous refugee policy
10. The United States is a melting pot that has always welcomed immigrants from all over the world
11. Since we are all the descendants of immigrants here, we all start on equal footing
12. Today's immigrants threaten the national culture because they are not assimilating.
13. Today's immigrants are not learning English, and bilingual education just adds to the problem.
14. Immigrants only come here because they want to enjoy our higher standard of living.
15. The American public opposes immigration, and the debate in Congress reflects that.
16. The overwhelming victory of Proposition 187 in California shows that the public opposes immigration.
17. Immigration is a problem.
18. Countries need to control who goes in and out.
19. We need to protect our borders to prevent criminals and terrorists from entering the country.
20. If people break our laws by immigrating illegally, they are criminals and should be deported.
21. The problems [around immigration] are so huge that there's nothing we can do about them.

Myth 1: Immigrants take American jobs

Fallacy 1: “American jobs”

Fallacy 2: Immigration and immigrants reduce the number of jobs available in the US.

Given today’s global economy the idea of jobs having a national identity is practically useless. Next, unemployment during the Depression, like unemployment today simply had very little to do with immigration. In fact, most analysts point to two major structural developments in the U.S. economy and the main causes of the shifting employment pattern: deregulation and deindustrialization.

Deregulation of major sectors and cutbacks in federal social spending went hand-in-hand with plant closures and outsourcing. Employers seeking to reduce costs employed the poorest, most vulnerable people by moving labor force to poverty stricken countries and supporting policies at home that kept immigrants coming, and keep them vulnerable. Connected to the first fallacy, “American jobs”, by maintaining and exploiting global inequalities, the U.S. economic system has created a high-profit/cheap-product model that is unsustainable, both morally and practically.

Throughout history, we’ve seen that if workers aren’t paid enough to be consumers, there will be no market and production will crash. To that end, there’s a clear relationship between population size and the number of jobs available, although not quite as simple. The number of jobs is not finite but elastic and affected by many factors: Population growth creates jobs because people consume as well as produce. When population declines stores, schools, churches and hospitals close and jobs are lost: growing communities mean more jobs.

Another factor is the global economy, many jobs produce goods and services that are consumed elsewhere in the world. However, it has become painfully obvious in recent decades businesses that service a global market don’t generally have a strong commitment to the local community. So jobs in the U.S. have a lot to do with the global economy, not just what’s happening locally; and, unemployment rates has little to do with immigration and this has been demonstrated time and time again in U.S. history. Interesting to note today’s increasing demand for corporate social responsibility to address lack of commitment to the quality of life of the people employed and to the communities surrounding U.S. and other global businesses.

Myth 2: Immigrants compete with low-skilled workers and drive-down wages

According to October, 2009 Migration Policy Institute report, of the 156.2 million workers engaged in the US civilian labor force in 2008, immigrants accounted for 15.7 percent (24.5 million). Between 1970 and 2008, the percentage of foreign-born workers in the US civilian labor force nearly tripled, from 5.3 to 15.7 percent. Over the same period, the percent of foreign born in the total population grew from 4.8 to 12.5 percent.

Chomsky writes “coincidence does not prove cause and effect”. In the first half of the twentieth century the working class experienced gradual gains, only to see these gains chipped away in the second half of the century – just as immigration rates began to rise again. Looking at the small picture one could see immigrants and low-skilled citizens competing for the same jobs. However, the larger picture is businesses certainly wants and have enabled this kind of competition – lower wages translates into lower prices. Middle-class and even low-wage workers in the U.S. may benefit from lower prices for consumer goods but at the same time are finding it more difficult to buy a house, affordable health care and send their children to college.

Study after study has shown that since the late 1970’s the distribution of wealth in the U.S. has become more and more skewed: richest 1% of the population owned 30% of the country’s wealth, and the top 5% controlled 60% of the wealth. Again, immigration increased during the last decades but that does not prove that immigration was the cause of the growing inequality of wealth. We could argue that cause and effect are reversed: increasing inequality created demand for immigrant workers and thus spurred immigration.

Rising inequality, concentration of wealth and cheap products are linked together. The immigrants are the victims of the system. Sociologists have used the concept of the *dual labor market* to explain how this system has worked throughout the history of the U.S (and other industrialized countries). In essence, inequality maintains a population of poor people who lack access to resources, and who may have little alternative but to accept jobs under the worst of conditions. The structures of exclusion are compounded by the global inequalities that made immigrants, as people who had a dual frame of reference (the home country and the United States), more likely to accept, rather than challenge, their exclusion. To this conspired end, immigrants do jobs that even the poorest of American citizens would not do and often do so on a temporary basis for two primary reasons; wages are much more than what they could earn in their home country and migrant workers are less concerned about living or working conditions

here because their goal is to save money and return to their country to build their dream house and make a decent home for the family they have left behind.

So yes, immigrants compete with low-skilled workers for low-paying jobs because too many [immigrants] are deprived of rights. The bottom-line is that governments have made sure that there are people without rights to fulfill business needs for cheap workers and high profits.

Myth 3: Unions oppose immigration because it harms the working class.

The mainstream U.S. union movement in the 20<sup>th</sup> century opposed immigration- until the 1990's. At every juncture and with no exception prior to the 1980's, the union movement either directly instigated or strongly supported every legislative initiative enacted by Congress to restrict immigration and to enforce its policy provisions. Until 1917, those immigration restrictions were purely race based. The exclusionary system worked fairly well for many white workers until the restructurings of the 1970's. Businesses accelerated their shift abroad, and government began to dismantle the New Deal social welfare state which benefitted white immigrants from Europe after the First World War.

It took the AFL-CIO until 1993 to come to terms with the fact that the old system was unrecoverable - and that its survival depended upon reaching out to immigrant workers. The federation adopted a resolution criticizing those who "exploit public anxiety by making immigrants and refugees the scapegoats for economic and social problems." The resolution affirmed the rights of immigrants, whether documented or undocumented, and encouraged unions "to develop programs to address the special needs of immigrant members and potential members" and collaborate with "immigrant advocacy groups and service organizations." The "New Voices" leadership rejected the idea "that immigrants are to blame for the deteriorating living standard of America's low-wage worker. Rather than focusing on immigrants as the problem, it proposed "increasing the minimum wage, adopting universal health care and enacting labor law reform as the remedies for the widening income disparity in the nation."

Myth 4: Immigrants don't pay taxes

Immigrants no matter what their status, pay the same taxes that citizens do: sales taxes, real estate taxes (rent or own), gasoline taxes. Just like many citizens, some immigrants work in the informal economy and are paid under the table. Much of the service sector operates in the

informal sphere. Sub-contracting is one way businesses are moving once formal sector jobs to the informal sector jobs. Benefitting companies by paying lower wages than required by law and benefitting consumers access to inexpensive products and services provided by these low-wage, untaxed workers.

Furthermore, there is a practice allowing immigrants to use false social security numbers, these immigrants are subjected to federal and state taxes 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.

#### Myth 5: Immigrants are a drain on the economy

The majority of immigrants, being of prime working age and ineligible for many public services, tend to contribute more to the public sector than they actually use. Moreover, by maintaining arbitrary status differences and excluding millions of people from legal rights, and by ensuring that immigrants will continue to arrive, and that some will continue to be classed as “illegal,” U.S. policies guarantee the existence of a permanent underclass. The following points demonstrate this practice:

- Several state-level studies trying to assess the level of state and federal taxes that immigrants, documented and undocumented, pay compared to the level of state and federal services that they receive have come to similar conclusions: ***Immigrants, documented and undocumented, are more likely to pay taxes that they are to use public services.***
- The only kind of public services that immigrant households use at higher rates than natives is food assistance programs. However, it is not the immigrants themselves who use this aid-they're usually not eligible- but their U.S. born children, who are citizens.
- If immigrants do not heavily use social services and they do pay taxes, then why don't their taxes cover all of or more than, the services they do use? Because immigrants wages are very low.

The other question becomes, “Do immigrants pay enough in taxes to cover the services use?” First generation immigrants pay more in federal taxes than they receive in federal benefits

but this does not hold true at the state level. However, their descendants correct that pattern and contribute more in state and federal taxes than they consume in services due to increased wages, improved language skills and greater educational attainment.

Since the 1990's, economists have started to use a more complex model that examines not only taxes and public services but also future tax revenues of the children of immigrants. This approach called "generational accounting," is based on the notion that when a government is operating at a deficit – as is the case in the U.S., future generations essentially have to pay back the debt. Hence, more immigrants mean lessen burden on the native born.

From the business perspective, employing immigrant workers and the workers in other countries, brings some special advantages. Immigration and outsourcing (moving production abroad) fulfill the same logic as the shift of strategy used by slaveholders when slavery was abolished. That is, a U.S. company gets just what the slaveholder got: workers in their prime working years, with no investment in the society that raised them or that will care for them as they age. Literally, businesses are banking on immigrants realizing their dream to return to their home country after working prime years in the U.S. and eager for new immigrants to replace them.

A significant exception to the model of economic improvement over time is undocumented immigrants. Unlike "legal" immigrants, whose income increases proportionately to their time in the United States, undocumented immigrants tend to remain on the margins of the U.S. economy. ***In fact, 39% of undocumented immigrant children live below poverty and 53% lack health insurance.***

- According to recent Migration Policy Institute (October, 2009) estimates, immigrants accounted for 29 percent of the 46.6 million working-age adults and children under age 18 with no health insurance in 2008. Of these 13.4 million uninsured immigrants, about half (6.8 million) were unauthorized immigrants, almost a third (4.2 million) were lawful permanent residents (LPRs), and another 17 percent (2.3 million) were naturalized citizens.

Myth 6: Immigrants send most of what they earn out of the country in the form of remittances

"Remittance" refers to money that immigrants send home to family in the home community. Remittances are a very important part of the global economy for which we all participate in. A cup of coffee at Starbucks supports both U.S. economy as well as the coffee

growers in another country. Because of the complex nature of the global economy, it's very hard to untangle exactly who benefits from every dollar spent.

- ***The total income of Latin American immigrants in the U.S. is \$450 billion.***
- Immigrants send their families in their home country about 10% of their wages; leaving 90% to spend in this country.
- The 10% sent home represents 50%-80% of household income for their family in the home country and goes to provide basic needs such as food, health care and clothing.
- The practice of remittance supports sectors of the U.S. economy: In the 1990's the cost of sending money to Latin America was almost 20%, benefitting local banks and money transfer companies.

In some ways, remittance money is more effective than foreign aid at improving people's lives in ways that reduce migration. Some remittance money goes to hometown associations involved in different types of development projects like building schools, water systems or sports facilities.

Remittances can have contradictory effects too, e.g. a country may elect to spend significant portion of remittance on imported consumer goods. Thus rather than create local jobs, they create incentives for their people to migrate to continue the flow of remittance since local families having members as migrants are the ones who can afford this kind of consumption of consumer goods.

Remittance is one element in an extremely integrated global economy. One ought not look only at the flow of remittance between wealthy and poor countries, rather look at the global economy as a system, remittances are just one small piece of a very complex, multidirectional flow.

*Myth 7, 8 and 9 looks at "Immigrants and the Law". Much of the current anti-immigrant agitation stems from the idea of the sanctity of the law, and antipathy of the crime that immigrants commit when they violate immigration law. The following myths looks at the arbitrary and discriminatory nature of immigration law and argue that the legal categories it creates have historically been informed by racism and politics, rather than humanitarianism, justice, or the idea that all men (or all people) are created equal.*

Myth 7: The rules apply to everyone, so new immigrants need to follow them just as immigrations in the past did.

History taught in the U.S. has been to think this as a country of white, voluntary immigrants. “The rules”, though, were different for Europeans than for other immigrant groups. What the people (usually of European origin) who point to “the rules” tend to ignore is that when their parents and grandparents came to the United States, they in fact did exactly what so-called “illegal” immigrants are doing today; They decided to migrate. However, they were not denied entry and citizenship because the rules were different then; U.S. law explicitly limited citizenship and naturalization to white people. Through a complex process of omission and commission, immigration and naturalization were used to create “a nation by design.” Until 1924 when numerical restrictions were placed on European immigration, though pale in the face of restrictions placed on non-white immigrants who were excluded altogether.

The last major immigration reform, in 1965, finally removed racially defined quota system, and replaced it with a uniform quota system for all countries. In addition to the new laws of 1965, the acceleration of what we now know as “globalization” lead to the huge increase in immigration from Latin American and Asia. To comprehend this global phenomenon, we have to look at the socioeconomic and cultural legacy of colonialism. Briefly, the European colonialism that shaped the modern world could be described as the conquest of people of color by white people, the massive transfer of natural resources out of the colonies and into the colonial powers, and the dispossession of formerly self-sufficient native inhabitants as their lands were take for the export economy. Formally self-sufficient natives of these lands conveniently served as a cheap or coerced labor force to exploit the resources (land, minerals, forests etc).

The U.S. has the highest standard of living in the world, and it maintains it by using its laws, and its military, to enforce the extraction of resources and labor from its modern version of colonies, with little compensation for the populations. It is no wonder that people from these countries want to follow the resources to the place where they are being enjoyed.

Most of today’s immigrants come from countries where historically the U.S. has been deeply involved. Immigrants are here in the U.S. because the U.S. is in their country! Yet U.S. law is inherently discriminatory. It primarily benefits close relatives of U.S. citizens and of permanent residents. For most others who want to come to the United States, the law simply forbids it.

Case in point, The Immigration Act of 1990 established the Diversity Visa Lottery (also known as the green card lottery) to allow entry to immigrants from countries with low rates of immigration to the United States. The act states that no more than 55,000 diversity visas are made available each fiscal year. Of the 55,000 visas, 5,000 have to be used for applicants under the Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act of 1997, thus reducing the available number to 50,000 (Migration Policy Inst., 2009).

Myth 8: The country is being overrun by illegal immigrants.

The difference between “legal” and unauthorized, undocumented, or “illegal” immigrants is nowhere near as clear-cut as most people imagine. Some people who enter the country legally will become illegal if they overstay their visa; some who enter illegally or become illegal are actually in the process of legalizing their status.

The United Nations High Commission on Human Rights rejects the expression “illegal migrant,” stating it contradicts the spirit and violates directly the words of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which clearly states in Article 6 that ‘Everyone had the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law’. The preferred term is “undocumented” or “unauthorized” migrant.

The Migration Policy Institute issued the following latest statistics on immigration and immigrants in their October 2009 report. You will want to refer to report for details and to view the full report rich with data.

- Of the 46.9 million people in 2008 who identified themselves as having Hispanic or Latino ancestry, nearly two-thirds or 62% were “native-born” US citizens; the remaining 38% of Hispanics were immigrants.
- Of the 38 million “foreign-born” populations in the United States in 2008, 49.9 % were female. (The stereotype held by most Americans is the “illegal immigrant” is single, adult male, here to work temporarily.)
- Of the foreign born in the United States in 2008, 48.9% reported their race as white alone, 8.1% as black or African American alone, 23.7% as Asian alone, and 17% as some other race; 1.5% reported having two or more races.
- According to Pew Hispanic Center estimates, there were 11.9 million unauthorized immigrants living in the United States in March 2008. Unauthorized immigrants made up

30% of the nation's foreign-born population, about 4% of the entire US population, and 5.4% of US workers. Approximately 44% of the nation's unauthorized immigrants have arrived since 2000. About three-quarters (76%) of the 11.9 million unauthorized immigrant population were of Hispanic origin.

Overall, unauthorized migrants tend to have lower levels of education and work at lower-paying jobs than do authorized migrants and citizens. They are overrepresented in agriculture and construction work- some of the most unregulated sectors of the labor market. In industrial work, unauthorized workers are present in food manufacturing and in textiles and apparel manufacturing. These two industries offer good examples of how global economic restructuring has affected the U.S. labor market.

Myth 9: The United States has a generous refugee policy

This section in Chomsky's book provides a succinct historical timeline of U.S. law in the matter of refugees. In summary, since WWII, United States law has provided for certain would-be immigrants to be granted special rights as refugees, prior to this time, the country had no immigrant provisions at all for refugees. For the U.S. "refugee" has generally meant "refugee from Communism" and this definition written into the law from 1965 until 1980; when the U.S. finally created the Refugee Act of 1980, a policy that conformed to United Nations standards of treating equally all people facing political persecution. The main point however, is that U.S. admission of refugees since then and today is often thought of as a humanitarian policy; however, its character has been much more political (U.S. relations with other nations) and oftentimes racial.

*Myth 10 – 13 addresses "Immigration and Race". Immigrants of today have inherited a long history of immigration and expansion which has incorporated people into the nation in a distinctly unequal manner. Today's immigrants are still immigrants, like the Europeans of the last century. But they are also Asians and Latinos, whose history in the U.S. has been one of exclusion and conquest. Both of these intertwined histories structure the ways in which immigrants come to, and are received by, U.S. society today.*

Myth 10: The United States is a melting pot that has always welcomed immigrants from all over the world

Here again let's take a look at history and to the degree that things have changed or remained the same today. Most European conflicts of the last century were focused on groups trying to enforce some kind of racial, ethnic, or cultural purity, or to define borders of nations. United States portrayed its national identity very differently, as the melting pot made up of ethnically diverse immigrants. The citizenship test (knowledge of English and certain aspects of U.S. history and institution) has no racial or ethnic requirements. However, U.S. nationality has historically been based on race. Beginning with the first naturalization law in 1790; declaring naturalization to "free white persons" and "persons" meaning "male". Arguments about the citizens and "aliens" of today reflect many of the same ideas. Immigrants may be physically present-as African Americans were- but they are excluded from the community that is accorded rights. Rights are reserved for the portion of the population defined as "citizens".

The Fourteenth Amendment prohibited discrimination based on race, but it did not prohibit discrimination based on citizenship status – and access to citizenship was still very clearly based on race. Immigration restriction laws of 1917, 1921 and 1924 (the latter remained in effect until 1965) codified these racial/national exclusions making it clear that this is essentially a white country. Finally, in 1952, all racial/national restrictions to citizenship were lifted. Most likely the reason for expanding the categories of those eligible for citizenship was embarrassment at being the only country in the world besides Hitler's Germany to uphold such a racially exclusive definition of citizenship.

Of great significance, the immigration and naturalization restrictions constituted a neat circumvention of the Fourteenth Amendment; guaranteeing equal rights to all citizens-but it did not specify that all people should have equal access to citizenship. Whites, who were voluntary immigrants, were people inherently eligible for citizenship. Nonwhites, who were to be conquered and exploited, were not.

Myth 11: Since we are all the descendants of immigrants here, we all start on equal footing

As previously mentioned, the United States has incorporated populations through voluntary immigration, involuntary immigration, and conquest. Saying it is a nation of immigrants creates ambiguity for the latter two types of population integration. Scholars of

ethnic studies have used the terms “internal colonialism” or “colonized minorities” to explain the way people of color have been incorporated into the U.S. As discussed earlier, it seemed the United States couldn’t live with imported workers, and couldn’t live without them. In short, as long as popular opinion accepts the division between “legal” and “illegal,” the social structures of inequality-and the profits they facilitate- could continue.

Myth 12: Today’s immigrants threaten the national culture because they are not assimilating.

It’s not lack of assimilation that keeps them marginalized-it’s assimilation itself. For immigrants of color, assimilation means something very different than it historically has for European immigrants. As Toni Morrison suggest in a special issue of *Time* magazine on immigration, racial inequality is so deeply embedded in the national culture and social fabric of the United States that assimilation has historically meant finding, learning and accepting one’s place in the racial order. The current anti-immigrant sentiment reinforces racial inequality.

When European immigrants assimilated, they joined the white society in social and cultural terms who had ongoingly excluded people of color. Obviously, the color of their (European) skin did not change-but the category of “white” expanded from its former association with Anglo-Saxons to include these newcomers. Anglo-Saxonism was fundamentally based on the domination of Africans, Native Americans, and Asians, and the institutions and ideologies of the U.S. reflected this reality.

For immigrants of color, the trajectory of assimilation is a very different one. Unlike whole generations of European immigrants, no amount of assimilation will ever make them white. Like earlier generations of immigrants, those arriving today still see learning English as crucial to survival and success. But the new immigrants also become aware that learning to speak English will not resolve the problems of race.

Immigrants of color do assimilate into U.S. society, but, in contrast to white immigrants, for people of color assimilation means downward mobility. The social and economic statistics have told the same dreaded story for many generations: blacks, Hispanics, and Native Americans are at the bottom of the social hierarchy.

In a study conducted by Mary Waters of black West Indian immigrants; “When West Indians lose their distinctiveness as immigrants or ethnics they become not just Americans, but

black Americans...those who resist becoming Americans do well or risk becoming downward mobile.”

Lastly, the following data from the Migration Policy Institute (2009) tells a story of immigrants’ desiring to become part of U.S. culture. Moreover, understand that dual citizenship is not a U.S. option; foreign nationals must denounce their country of origin; this is not an easy thing to do nor is this to be taken lightly.

- In 2008, 1,107,126 foreign nationals became lawful permanent residents (LPRs) (also known as green-card holders) according to the Department of Homeland Security's *Yearbook of Immigration Statistics 2008*. The total number represents a 5.2 percent increase from 2007 (1,052,415) and a 31.6 percent increase from 2000 (841,002).

Myth 13: Today’s immigrants are not learning English, and bilingual education just adds to the problem.

One way to measure the desire of Latin American immigrants to learn English is through their enrollment in ESL classes. In a recent study, almost 60% of ESL providers in the U.S. reported significant waiting lists – some up to three years.

In many ways, the language patterns of today’s immigrants are similar to those of earlier generations in that, older immigrants find learning a new language more difficult than the younger immigrant, and by the third and fourth generation their native language and culture is lost. In some ways, though, today’s situation is different and has led to misconceptions about today’s immigrant, especially with regards to English. Looking back on European immigrants, many held the same dream as today’s immigrant of working in the U.S. for a period of time and return to their home country. But things changed after both WWI and WWII when the migrant stream was interrupted in both directions. Plus anti-foreign (especially anti-German) propaganda and Americanization campaigns created further pressures for immigrants to abandon their native language. This meant that European immigrant populations and their culture cease to be nourished.

Both the past and the present of Latin America immigrants are somewhat different. First, conquered peoples, such as the Mexican and Puerto Ricans, have historically been more marginalized, and more reluctant to give up their cultural heritage, than voluntary immigrants. Second, geography, technology and immigration patterns keep cross-border ties much more alive

for today's Latino immigrants. From the outside, it may look like Latinos are not learning English. But what's really happening is that as one generation learns English, new Spanish-speakers are arriving. They learn English without having to give up Spanish.

In 2000, of the U.S. population, 18% or 47 million people spoke another language other than English at home; 28.1 million of these spoke Spanish and over half of these were proficient in English and Spanish or another non-English language. Moreover, a study by the Pew Hispanic Foundation reported 92% of Hispanics believed that it was "very important" that the children of immigrants be taught English, compared to 87% of non-Hispanic whites and 83% of non-Hispanic blacks.

Why then have politicians and activists felt the need to promote "English only" laws and initiatives throughout the United States? Education should not be understood as a zero-sum issue. Just as children should be taught math *and* reading – understanding literacy enhances math skills, and vice versa- children who are fluent in another language other than English have an academic skill that must be nourished. Just as important, the benefit of bilingual education has long been proven by substantial data; unlike English-only methods for teaching. To this end, politicians and others who are concerned with immigrants learning English should push for more adult ESL programs, and better funding for bilingual education, rather than punitive measures like English-only ballots and banning the educational programs designed to effectively teach children. The following most recent statistics beckons supportive action:

- In 2008, 52.1 percent of the 37.7 million foreign born age 5 and older were Language English Proficient (LEP), compared with 51.0 percent of the 30.7 million foreign born age 5 and older in 2000.
- In 2008, 80.3 percent of the entire US population age 5 and older said they speak only English at home. The remaining 19.7 percent or 55.8 million people reported speaking a variety of foreign languages. Of them, Spanish was by far the most commonly spoken language (61.9%), followed by Chinese (4.4%), Tagalog (2.7%), French (including Cajun, 2.4%), Vietnamese (2.1%), and German (2%).
- In 2008, there were 31.9 million immigrants age 25 and older. Of those, 27.1% had a bachelor's degree or higher, while 32.5% lacked a high school diploma. Among the 168.2 million native-born adults age 25 and older, 27.8% had a bachelor's degree or higher and only 11.7% did not have a high school diploma.

*The next series, Myth 14- 21, is an overview of how U.S. policies created immigration and the current immigration debate. To iterate, a more in-depth analysis can be found in Aviva Chomsky book, "They Take Our Jobs!..." (2007).*

Myth 14: Immigrants only come here because they want to enjoy our higher standard of living.

Discussions of immigration everywhere today tend to see immigration as an individual, rather than a structural and historical issue. Assumptions prevail that people in other countries come here to take advantage of the wealth and opportunity of this country. The numbers and trends, however, tell a story of how migrant flows are in fact highly structured by colonial relationships.

Disparities of resources don't on their own lead to immigration. It's the economic ties created by colonial and neo-colonial economies, economic demand in the receiving country, and even, in most cases, direct recruitment that set stage for immigration. The following push-pull factors describe immigrant's decision to leave their home country: Poverty, lack of opportunity and danger "push" people to leave; opportunity, availability of jobs educations and safety "pull" people elsewhere. The colonial power projects an image of omnipotence and superiority and reiterates the inferiority of those it has colonized. Is it any surprise that colonial subjects dream of leaving home for the metropolis? Once traditional village life and ties are unraveled, migration out of the country becomes a real possibility. Moreover, this system is not erased after direct colonialism ends. Rather, it evolves and develops. Immigration is just one piece of the larger puzzle, interlocking with all of the other pieces.

The explanation proposed here does not mean to imply judgment but to place migration in a historical context, and see it as part of a larger global system. Citizen workers who have lost their jobs to globalization and migrants who come to the U.S. to fill the new secondary labor market are part of a system that is much larger than them. Hence, migration is a result, not a cause, of these global economic changes.

The Migration Policy Institute, October 2009 reports on how illegal immigration has responded to the economic crisis in the United States; Research in the United States and other countries indicates that along with temporary migrant workers, flows of unauthorized immigrants

are most closely linked to the economy, and thus the ones most likely to fall in poor economic times.

- US population survey data show that while the annual number of new arrivals from Mexico — the largest source of illegal immigration to the United States — was about 650,000 between March 2004 and March 2005, and 420,000 between March 2007 and March 2008, the estimated annual inflow dropped to just 175,000 between March 2008 and March 2009, which is the lowest total this decade. This finding is reinforced by US Border Patrol apprehensions data and Mexican government surveys.
- A second central story is that even now — nearly two years into the recession — return migration remains the exception and not the rule. There has been virtually no change in return flows to Mexico despite the fact that unemployment rates for Mexican and Central American immigrants in the United States have nearly doubled from 6.4 percent in December 2007 to 11.5 percent in August 2009 according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Myth 15: The American public opposes immigration, and the debate in Congress reflects that opposition.

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. As both election results and polling demonstrate, the country as a whole is in a more realistic place on this issue than Congress seems to realize (National Council of La Raza, 2009).

We need to pause and think about what exactly is so dangerous about immigration – what makes it a crisis. For many Americans, there indeed is a crisis. It’s an economic crisis. It’s also a crisis that benefits once sector of society: the very rich. And it’s a crisis that has very little to do with immigration. Another crisis facing Americans is national security; whether here or abroad. Then there’s the crisis of global warming and Americans hand in that crisis. With so many real

crises facing us, why has so much national attention been focused instead on the issue of immigration?

Furthermore, data from Pew Research Center found the numbers who believe that immigrants take jobs from Americans has been on a fairly steady decline since 1983, when over 40% believed it. Today it's just 24%. So it seems that the upsurge in anti-immigrant rhetoric and politicking may have inflamed small numbers of people, but that most people in the country, especially those who live in high-immigration areas, hold more considered views.

Perhaps the media pundits and politicians who are spending so much energy whipping up this immigration scare are trying to distract us from some other, more pressing, national- and global-issues.

Myth 16: The overwhelming victory of Proposition 187 in California shows that the public opposes immigration.

Prop 187, billed as the “illegal alien initiative” would have prohibited undocumented immigrants from receiving public health and education service in the state, had not most of it provisions been quickly struck down by the courts as unconstitutional. There are two reasons why the vote on Prop 187 does not seem to correspond to the more positive attitude about immigrants that the polls tend to show.

1. The campaign itself mobilized virulent anti-immigrant rhetoric-and fallacious arguments- that may have influence public opinion.
2. While polls use scientific methods to come up with representative cross-sections of the population, electoral voting merely records the opinions of those who choose to vote; noting only 8.9 million people voted-fewer than half of those eligible.

As we move forward in our own communities with regards to the immigration debate, a lesson to be learn from Prop 187 is that by failing to assertively offer a counter to the anti-immigration message promoted by the pro-187 campaign, the “no” campaign may have actually strengthened anti-immigrant sentiment and encouraged some people to vote “yes”. Further enabling politicians throughout the nation to inflame, and benefit from these anti-immigration attitudes.

Myth 17: Immigration is a problem.

Immigration is a humanitarian problem. What is needed is a humanitarian solution: the creation of a new model of global economic integration—one that redistributes the planet’s resources more equitable among its inhabitants, and one that respects and nourishes traditional peasant lifestyles. U.S. domestic policies keep domestic inequality, and the demand for secondary-sector workers, high. And border enforcement policies have created a humanitarian crisis.

The \$20 billion that the United States has spent on border military efforts has had no appreciable effect on immigration levels, but it has caused thousands of deaths and untold human suffering – a problem that U.S. citizens ever see. The only substantive change it has brought is that unauthorized migrants are likely to stay longer and bring their families into the U.S. because going home to visit has become dangerous. The greatest beneficiaries of the change were the smugglers; border smuggling grew from a small-scale, individual operation to encompass sophisticated rings with links to organized crime and drug trafficking.

Below are the latest statistics from Migration Policy Institute (2009) debunking stronger border as a solution:

- Since 2000, the total number of alien apprehensions reported by the Department of Homeland Security has declined steadily, numbering 960,756 in 2007 and 791,568 in 2008. The 2008 figure is the lowest since 1989 and the second lowest since 1982. The overwhelming majority, 97%, were along the Southwest border. The United States deported almost 1.2 million aliens in 2008. The total number of aliens deported follows a similar trend to apprehensions, rising from 1,052,572 in 1990 to 1,864,343 in 2000 before declining to 1,170,149 in 2008.
- Funding for the US Border Patrol, then part of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) in the Department of Justice, increased 519% between 1986 and 2002, from \$268 million to \$1.6 billion. The Border Patrol budget was more than \$3.5 billion in 2008 according to the Office of Management and Budget. The Border Patrol is responsible for enforcing 8,000 miles of US land and water boundaries between legal points of entry (designated points where immigration officials can regulate entry).
- The number of Border Patrol agents has nearly doubled from approximately 9,000 in 2001 to 17,499 in 2008.

Myth 18: Countries need to control who goes in and out.

Governments often tried to control the size and makeup of their population by how they establish borders, by expelling or exterminating groups of people within their national borders. When we study how governments have done this in the past, we are horrified. There is, however, a parallel between racial thinking and economic thinking here.

The economic pattern is the haves often see eliminating the have-nots as the best solution to inequality, rather than redistributing the resources. And, because this world of haves and have-not has been structured by conquest and racial superiority, the racial and the economic arguments are often the same two sides of the same coin. English migrants had no intention of assimilating into the land they migrated to: they wanted to replace the societies that existed there.

Over the course of the existence of the United States white society have historically used people of color for labor; whether forced to be in the U.S. through slavery or migrate here due to push-pull factors in their home country, people of color are deemed nonpersons through immigration laws and regulations, and other practices to control population (such as eugenics, sterilization and even war).

We forget or deny that Settlers made strangers of the Indigenous American-Indians in their own homeland. To put it bluntly 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. More to the point they later became conquerors and settlers. Yet they are considered heroic and worthy of a holiday season (Thanksgiving) to be recognized for their courage to leave their homeland to search for a better life here. The pilgrims did yesterday what newcomers are doing today- to come here to improve the quality of their lives. In essence, as Dr. Samuel Betances puts it: “This country was founded by outsiders who are today’s insiders who get very nervous about today’s outsiders.” What immigrants are not trying to do, however, is trying to replace, conquer or make of members of the larger society strangers in their own homeland.

The fact that Mexican consist of a blended heritage with the indigenous peoples of the Southwest must also be considered in the debate. Mexican did not much come to the USA. The US took by force what use to be Mexico. The concept of Chicano reveals a great truth – those

that are described as “Mexican – Americans” have an identity rooted in the original indigenous inhabitants of the land. The Spaniards mingled with the inhabitants and created the *mestizo* blended people who today want to be called “Chicanos.” Tell a Mexican to “go back to where you come from” and they could just wind up in Texas, Arizona, and California – for these and others like it are the homelands of the Chicanos. People who lived there way before the USA became an independent country that began to define the people of colors that they conquered, colonized, or enslaved as unworthy of becoming ideal “American.” The indigenous suffered the indignity of becoming strangers in their own homeland. The Mexicans that cross the border to what use to be Mexico are consider “illegal.” This shameful reality must be exposed.

What the US European settlers did to the indigenous in our country other Europeans, including the English, did in other lands. It’s because of the horrible consequences that have befallen the conquered, that the issue of immigration is intertwined with the quest for social justice for today’s newcomers. The champions of today’s immigrants must not only advocate for their groups, they must also advocate for the *unresolved issues* impacting the original inhabitants and their descendants; *Le faltaron respeto a los Indios primero*. The Native Americans were *the first* to have had their dignity attacked and their status and land taken from them. The indigenous were labeled as “illegal”; those who were not killed were forced to live in reservations. The fact is that everyone who comes to live in the United States of America benefits from the bloody legacy of the original subjugation of Indigenous American Indians. Supporting the rights of Native Americans must form part of the agenda which seeks social justice for today’s newcomers.

And the struggle continues today; case in point, in 2008 Americas Policy reported on “*Border Apartheid Documented in United Nations Report on Indigenous Peoples*”; sharing with the world (via United Nations) the “racism and apartheid” on indigenous peoples at the [U.S] borders. “Under the guise of Homeland Security, the United States has increasingly become paranoid and isolationist, and is ahead of schedule in building a barrier, a steel wall along 700 miles of the U.S. Mexican border. This wall and U.S. xenophobia greatly affect Indigenous Peoples whose lands straddle both sides of the border,” the report states. The National Security Administration has demanded that elders give up their lands. They have been told that they will have to travel three miles to go through checkpoints, to walk, recreate, to farm, and herd goats and cattle on their own Apache lands.

The following is a short list of actions the group would like the United Nation to address with the United States:

- Consultations should take place with Indigenous Peoples, including the right to free, prior, and informed consent, with the aim of abolishing racist doctrines such as the Trust relationship while protecting the rights of Indigenous Peoples as reflected by international customary law and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
- That the United States recognize all Indigenous Peoples in the United States as Indigenous Peoples with Indigenous rights, consistent with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and with international customary law, including terminated Tribes, unrecognized Tribes, Alaskan Natives, Native Hawai'ians, and the Taino Peoples of Puerto Rico. It should also comply with its Charter responsibilities of ensuring the wellbeing of the Native Peoples of Guam and Puerto Rico.
- The "Plenary Powers Doctrine" should be immediately abolished. Indigenous lands taken under this doctrine should be restored.
- The United States should begin a process of reinstating abrogated and unrecognized Treaties with Indigenous Peoples, with the aim of respecting and adhering to their terms, and provide, with the free, prior, and informed consent of the Indigenous Peoples affected, restitution and where appropriate, compensation for damages as a result of their abrogation or failure of recognition.
- Sacred Lands should be returned to Indigenous Peoples with particular attention paid to the Black Hills of South Dakota to the Lakota Nation.
- Indigenous Peoples should be allowed to practice their religion without the necessity of permits or the observation and encumbrances of tourists, bikers, and rock climbers.
- Development that affects the Sanctity of Sacred Lands should immediately cease and should only be allowed with the free, prior, and informed consent of the Indigenous Peoples affected.
- Prison Inmates, in both Federal and State prisons should immediately be allowed their religious practice as is allowed all other religions in United States prisons, including but not limited to, last rites for condemned Indigenous inmates.
- Development with potential harm to Indigenous Peoples' rights, whether on recognized reservations or not, should not be done without their free, prior, and informed consent. The United States should take immediate steps to remediate and compensate for the legacies of development harmful to Indigenous Peoples.
- The United States should be held accountable for its behavior and that of U.S. trans-national corporations that violate the rights of Indigenous Peoples abroad. It should immediately cease these racist policies and practices and explore ways of holding transnational companies registered in the United States accountable. Particularly, the United States should: 1) Outlaw the manufacture of banned pesticides for export; 2) Stop the spraying of herbicides in Colombia and other countries; 3) Cease their economic and logistical support of paramilitary death squads under the guise of "economic development."

- The United States must comply with its Treaty Obligations as well as customary international law, and provide the means by which Indian Reservations can develop and provide for future generations in keeping with their cultures and traditions.
- Congress should act to reauthorize and update the Indian Health Care Improvement Act to reflect both current needs of Indian health and the current health care systems enjoyed by most Americans. Equally importantly, it should receive the necessary funding to be effective.
- In order to better protect tribal female citizens from sexual violence, the United States should recognize full tribal criminal jurisdictional authority over all crimes occurring within Indian country. In addition, Congress should provide adequate funding to fully implement Title IX of the Violence against Women Act.
- The United States should afford Native Americans the full right to participate in government by addressing the rampant voting discrimination practices throughout the nation, and particularly in South Dakota.
- The United States should provide just and adequate reparation and compensation for any damages suffered by indigenous victims of abuse by the United States under its historical practice of mandating that Native children attend federally sponsored boarding schools.
- The United States should promote the development of textbooks and the teaching of culturally appropriate and historically accurate curriculum for all school age children, particularly Native American children, of the dignity and worth of Indigenous Peoples and cultures, as well as their human rights.

Myth 19: We need to protect our borders to prevent criminals and terrorists from entering the country.

Tom Barry in his 2008 article, *Truth about Illegal Immigration and Crime* tells us anti-immigration forces have been hammering into our heads the dangerous link between illegal immigration and increases in violent crime. Their only problem: the facts don't support their alarmist contentions. "Some of the most violent criminals at large today are illegal aliens." That's the lead sentence of a policy report published by the Center for Immigration Studies (CIS), a Washington, DC institute that provides intellectual ammunition to the anti-immigration forces. Another CIS study led with a similarly impressionistic assertion about the immigrant-crime link: "In recent years, it has become difficult to avoid perceiving immigrants, legal or not, as overwhelming this country with serious crime."

CIS is not alone in relying on impressions to form opinions about just how illegal immigrants are. On the basis of fear-mongering stories rather than scientific studies, groups like the Center for Immigration Studies have succeeded in convincing the media and the U.S. public that undocumented immigrants are criminals. A National Opinion Research Center survey found

in 2000 that 73% of Americans believed that immigrants were casually related to more crime. But, as in other dimensions of the immigration debate, the facts don't support the alarm. There have been dozens of national studies examining immigration and crime, and they all come to the same conclusion: immigrants are more law-abiding than citizens.

A 2007 study by the Immigration Policy Center (IPC) found that immigrants, whether legal or illegal, are substantially less likely to commit crimes or to be incarcerated than U.S. citizens. The Immigration Policy Center (IPC) study found that:

- At the same time that immigration—especially undocumented immigration—has reached or surpassed historic highs, crime rates have declined, notably in cities with large numbers of undocumented immigrants, including border cities like El Paso and San Diego.
- Incarceration rate for native-born men in the 18-39 age groups was five times higher than for foreign-born men in the same age group.
- Data from the census and other sources show that for every ethnic group, incarceration rates among young men are lowest for immigrants, even those who are least educated and least acculturated.

Ruben G. Rumbaut, coauthor of *"The Myth of Immigrant Criminality"* study, said: "The misperception that immigrants, especially illegal immigrants, are responsible for higher crime rates is deeply rooted in American public opinion and is sustained by media anecdotes and popular myth." According to Rumbaut, a sociology professor at the University of California at Irvine, "This perception is not supported empirically. In fact, it is refuted by the preponderance of scientific evidence."

As the IPC study noted, the fact that many immigrants enter the country illegally is framed by anti-immigration forces as an assault on the "rule of law," thereby reinforcing the false impression that immigration and criminality are linked. Certainly, immigration is an issue that merits public discussion. But facts, not irrational fear and dread, should inform the national debate about immigration policy (Barry, 2008).

Chomsky also states the "rule of law", and the lawful prosecution of those who commit crimes, makes a lot more sense than closing borders as a way to reduce crime. Terrorist acts in the U.S. have been committed by citizens and by immigrants, and for causes related to domestic as well as international issues. These crimes are crimes of violence, not crimes of immigration.

Yes, we may need to do better, or different, screening of those who want to enter the United States by legal means, but *there remains no logical relationship between border security and the prevention of terrorism.*

Chomsky suggests two approaches which seem more likely to prevent future attacks against U.S. targets, both here and abroad:

1. Seek to reduce global tensions, and in particular U.S. unilateralism and aggression, could reduce anti-Americanism in other countries.
2. Effective police and investigative work—abiding by international law, international agreements, and the Geneva Conventions—at least offers the possibility of working toward a world ruled by law, in which criminals are prosecuted under law, and those not accused of any crime are spared the fate of becoming collateral damage.

Myth 20: If people break our laws by immigrating illegally, they are criminals and should be deported.

“Breaking the law” conjures up images of assaults, thefts, murders-violation of laws that were created to protect people from harm. As we’ve seen, the history of our country has included many laws that today look unjust and discriminatory (e.g., slavery, lynching and segregation). Immigration laws are very different; these laws define and differentiate legal status on the basis of arbitrary attributes. Immigration laws create unequal rights. People who break immigration laws do not cause harm or potential harm; they simply cross a border or even more common, simply exist.

Some citizens wonder why immigrants don’t simply “follow the rules” and go through the process to become “legal”. Because the law was designed *not* to allow certain groups of people to have the rights that others enjoy. It’s the same reason Rosa Parks didn’t sit “legally” in front of the bus or Harriet Tubman didn’t “legally” emancipate herself from slavery. Both committed a victimless crime that was illegal not because of what they did, but because of who they were. The law discriminates by making it illegal for some people to do what is perfectly legal for others.

In fact, unauthorized immigrants continue their attempts to become “legal” or “authorized”; According to Migration Policy Institute:

- Applicants registered for the 2010 Diversity Visa Lottery (run between October 2 and December 1, 2008) were selected at random from over 13.6 million qualified entries. The number of qualified entries totaled 5.5 million in the 2007 lottery, 6.4 million in the 2008 lottery, and 9.1 million in the 2009 lottery. (The Department of State does not release the total number of applications received, only the number of qualified entries.)
- The US Department of State (DOS) reports the number of visas issued to foreign nationals who wish to come to the United States for the purpose of traveling, conducting business, working, studying, and other reasons: In 2008, DOS issued 6,603,073 nonimmigrant visas, which is lower than the decade's peak of 7,588,778 visas in 2001 but higher than the decade's bottom of 4,881,632 visas issued in 2003 (MPI, 2009).

Myth 21: The problems [around immigration] are so huge that there's nothing we can do about them

Again, immigration is part of an interconnected global system that has been shaped by history and economics. Unequal economic relationships should be changed - not because they lead to migration, but because they lead to human suffering and an unsustainable world. If our goal is to slow migration, then the best way to do so is to work for a more equitable global system. Fences and borders serve to harden global inequality. It is entirely possible for open borders to coexist with orderly administration and a state of law (e.g. European Union, and interstate travel within the U.S.)

There are certain concrete steps that we could take to make our immigration policy more humane. Moreover, if changes in immigration policy were accompanied by steps to ameliorate glaring injustices in other areas, we might actually be on our way to create a better world. Below are actions we can take to begin to achieve this goal:

- Eliminate current immigration policy's most sinister characteristics: rollback the punitive and discriminatory changes made in the 1996 Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act; this would be a logical first step in a process aimed at eventually guaranteeing full equality before the law for immigrants.
- Reverse the militarization of the border; encourage almost all would-be immigrants to pass through established inspection stations, just as the vast majority of U.S. citizens do when they travel to Mexico or Canada.

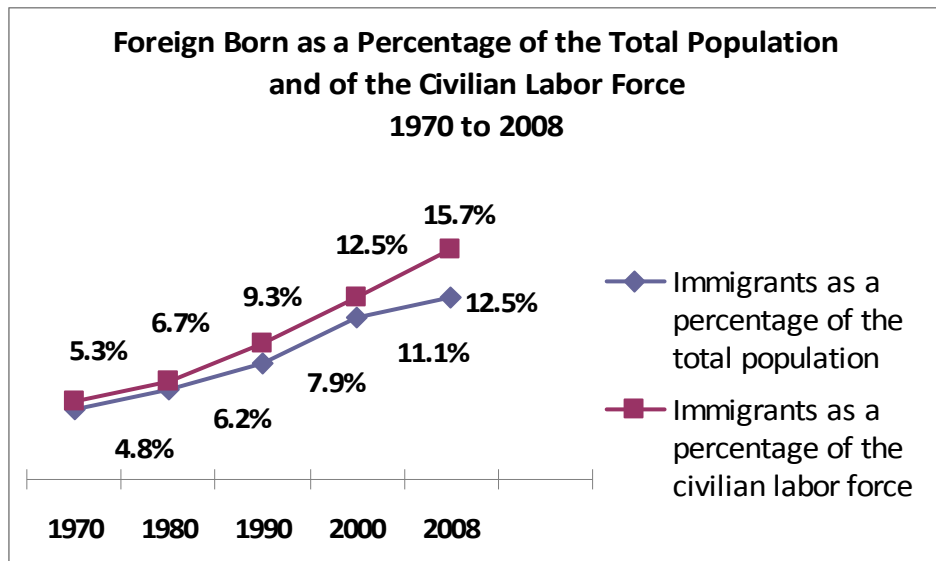
- Extend full legal rights to all immigrants would go far toward eliminating the economic exploitation of immigrant workers by employers thus workers would no longer be subject to the constant fear of discovery.

Most signs suggest that these steps would NOT lead to a huge influx of immigration. Contrary, immigration has steadily increased as anti-immigration policies have become harsher. Some migrants leave their homelands for fun, adventure and curiosity. The vast majority though leave because they have no alternative. They leave their homes, families, and loved ones as a last resort. Today's war on immigrants continues the fight against the poor.

We should work for a more just world for moral, ethical and humanitarian reasons. Migration would be reduced because poor people's lives and livelihoods would become more sustainable-which is a worthy end on its own.

### Synopsis of the Nation

Of the 46.9 million people in 2008 who identified themselves as having Hispanic or Latino\* ancestry, nearly two-thirds (62%) were native-born US citizens (Migration Policy Institute, 2009). 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).



One of the untold stories is immigration’s impact on children. According to the October, 2009 Migration Policy Institute report:

- 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 percent (4.0 million) were US citizens by birth and 27 percent (1.5 million) were unauthorized immigrants themselves. The number of US-citizen children with unauthorized immigrant parents has grown 48 percent since 2003, when there were just 2.7 million such children. At the same time, the number of children who are unauthorized immigrants has remained at about 1.5 million since 2005.

- In 2008, children of unauthorized immigrants, both those who are unauthorized immigrants themselves and US citizens, made up 6.8 percent of the students enrolled in US elementary and secondary schools according to the Pew Hispanic Center.

Foremost, Hispanic students make up about 20% of U.S. public school enrollment and thus constitute a large portion of the country's future workforce. They also represent the fastest growing segment accounting for 60% of the total growth in public school enrollment between 1990 and 2006 (NCLR, 2009).

According to 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.

***“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 (Foreword).

The Urban Institute study found:

- That for every two immigrants apprehended, one child was left behind.
- Potentially thousands have been separated from their parents as a result of recent immigration enforcement activities and literally millions more may be at risk.
- Two-thirds of affected children are U.S. citizens or legal residents and the potential cost significant for the U.S. in contending with the social ramifications for the state of mind of these children who will no doubt be scarred by feelings of abandonment, isolation and trauma.
- In addition, the report found that the social structures that support children (school systems, child care providers) was profoundly negative and unprepared for dealing with children left without care, without warning.

## Synopsis of the State of Ohio

According to Migration Policy Institute’s (MIP) most recent report (October, 2009), 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 (or immigrants) 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%.

- Between 2000 and 2008, included in the nation’s 10 counties with the largest absolute decline is Trumbull County, Ohio (-1,000).
- Between 2000 and 2008, included in the nation’s 10 counties with the largest percent growth (209%) is Delaware County, Ohio.

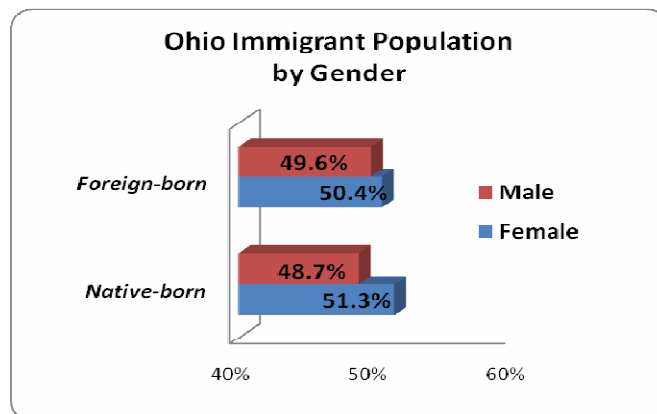
### Ohio Rankings in the Nation in several categories

(All rankings include the 50 states and the District of Columbia and are ranked highest to lowest.)

#### Rankings

Size of the foreign-born population, 2007:	19 out of 51
Percent foreign born in the total population, 2007:	39 out of 51
Numeric change in the foreign-born population, 2000 to 2007:	20 out of 51
Percent change in the foreign-born population, 2000 to 2007:	35 out of 51

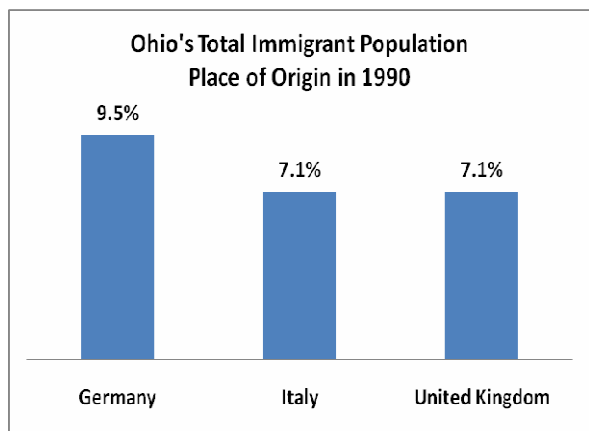
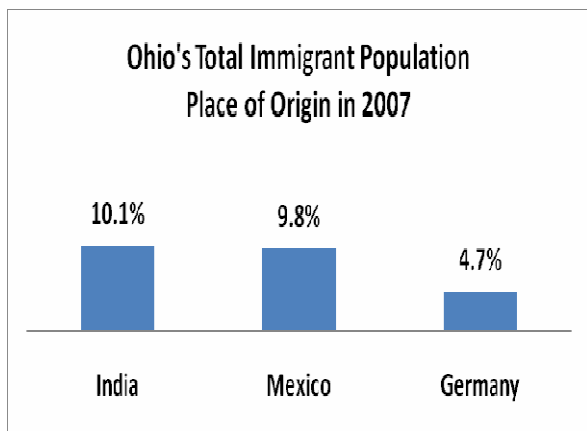
Source: Migration Policy Institute, 2009



Recall the stereotype held by most Americans is the “the foreign-born or illegal immigrant” is single, adult male, here to work temporarily. In fact, as with the nation, in the State of Ohio, females outnumber males; 50.4% are female compared to 49.6% Male; and female

representation is also more than male representation of the native-born immigrant population in Ohio.

Further revealing the changing face of America, the place of origin of immigrant for Ohio in 1990 (Germany, Italy and United Kingdom) is different than place of origin in 2007 (India, Mexico and Germany -in third place versus first).



Source: Migration Policy Institute, October 2009

With regards to the immigration debate in Ohio, during the 2008 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). This further supports the nation’s finding that the anti-immigrant sentiment is held by a few who are misinformed about the true value immigrants present to America.

### **Scope on Northeast Ohio: Cuyahoga County and City of Cleveland**

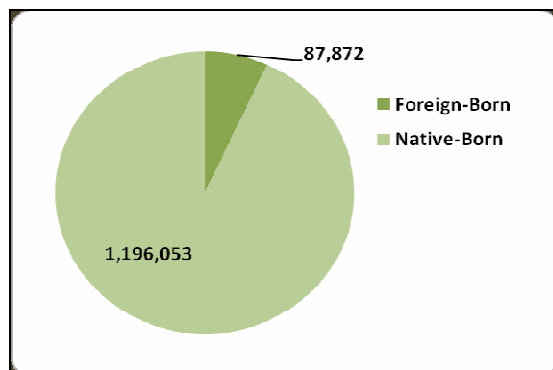
Fifty-one percent of the Latino population in Ohio resides in four counties: Cuyahoga, Franklin, Lorain/Elyria and Lucas. Cuyahoga County is home to the largest Hispanic population. Cuyahoga County is projected to continue losing population for the next quarter century, declining from more than 1.31 million in 2006 to approximately 1.27 million. The City of Cleveland is located in Cuyahoga County and while the City’s overall population decreased, losing almost half its population between 1960 and 2000, and an estimated 38,000 persons between 2000 and 2006 (Ahren & Salling, 2008), in the Cities of Cleveland-Elyria-Mentor the Hispanic population grew by 54%, from 45,900 to 85,000 (US Dept. of Commerce, 2009).

According to 2007 U.S. census estimate, Latinos made up 8.3 % of the city's population with Foreign-born at 5.3% (all immigrant groups).

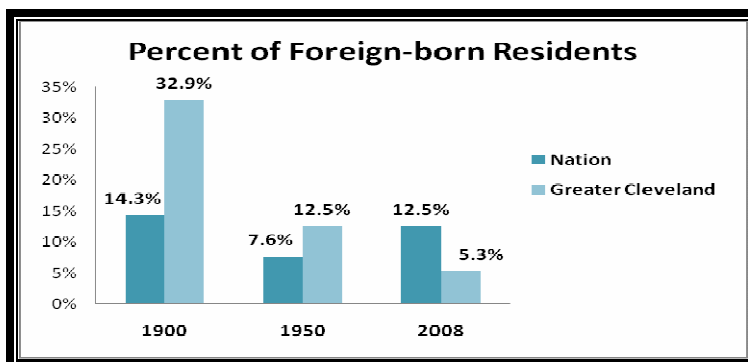
**GREATER CLEVELAND**

(Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, Lorain, Medina, Portage and Summit counties)

TOTAL POPULATION = 1,283,925



Source: Cleveland.com Data Central - 2008 Demographics Ohio



Source: U.S. Census Bureau – Greater Cleveland

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. The national rate for foreign-born residents stands at 12.5 percent, more than double the Greater Cleveland rate of 5.3 percent (Exner, 2009).

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. We need their fresh ideas, entrepreneurial zeal and optimism. We need them to help reverse decades of migration away from the region's urban core.

It won't happen by accident. Right now, Cleveland is not on the radar screen for many newcomers to America. The region needs to actively market itself to legal immigrants looking to sink new roots. It needs to enlist this region's many ethnic groups as ambassadors, to spotlight its assets -- including sophisticated business development groups -- and to establish the kinds of one-stop welcome centers that have put other cities on immigrants' map. Immigration alone won't cure what ails Greater Cleveland. But it ought to be a central element of shaping this region's future (O'Brien, 2009).

Immigration is a politically sensitive topic long avoided in Northeast Ohio. Partly due to the lack of responsibility of the "majority" population with how they have treated the ever-growing "minority" population in their community. For instance, the colonization of Puerto Rico is part of the reason why migrants gravitate to Cleveland. One Puerto Rican activist in Cleveland was asked "why are you here?" His response: "***We are here because you are there!***" African-Americans are in Cleveland because of their forced transportation to do free labor in the USA. Peoples of Color have been conquered, colonized and enslaved. To justify those evils, the victims have been stigmatized and defined as undesirables – even when allowed to become citizens, they are considered second-class.

Max Rodas, Executive Director, Nueva Luz, shared during an interview that the immigration debate is one of proximity. "People don't feel it is their issue." This includes the native-born, non-Hispanic groups who have themselves been displaced in America's history (Jews and African-Americans) and subgroups within the Latino community. "Solidarity is growing but it is not enough. When will the Puerto Rican flag begin to wave?" (See below p. 40)

During an immigration workshop Rodas said, "We must force ourselves to empathize with the immigrant," he said. Rodas was undocumented for several years. "It was an interesting experience," he said. Rodas summarized that the root cause of anti-immigration sentiment is fear and cultural ignorance. "You don't have to like us, but get your facts straight," Rodas encouraged open dialogue saying it makes solutions possible (Arooj, 2007). Lastly, Rodas emphasized the need to bring light to real data and numbers on the economic potential that awaits a community who embraces the ingenuity of immigrants.

"It's pretty clear the statistics show immigrants not only bring the talent, they bring investment dollars," said Greater Cleveland Partnership President and Chief Executive Joseph Roman. "We certainly have raised it way up on our agenda." All agree Cleveland has a people

problem. The city lost half its population between 1950 and 2000 and became nearly entirely native-born. The slide continues. In 2006 and 2007, the city lost more people than any other big city in America. It could slip below 400,000 at the 2010 census (O'Brien, 2009).

Bob Smith, International Culture Writer for *The Plain Dealer*, shared during an interview with Mike McIntyer of *More of the story* “that immigrants have no political base; making up only 4% of City population and ranking 48th in the US in size of its immigrant community. There exist a great paradox in Cleveland with anti-immigrant sentiment from both the black and white population; general foreigner resentment out there... Cleveland population majority African American community race politics will ensure immigration will never happen here.” He further shared, “Immigrants do not leave their home country to come here and do nothing! They come to prosper and this prosperity is shared by the entire city.” As long as immigration is seen as a race issue, Cleveland will be left out of the immigrant wave in America; and will be left further behind.

Now let's look at how to go about bringing a healthy and holistic approach to cultivating Hispanic immigrant ingenuity in Northeast Ohio beginning with two issues: First, identify the levels of immigrants. Second, examine the strategies leaders are undertaking to fulfill workforce needs – which may hinder harmony of Latinos in general.

There are two levels of immigrants: Top of the food chain and the bottom of the food chain. The US wants certain immigrants with talent and intellectual capital to move here. If they study in the US they should remain here, the thinking goes. Headhunters recruit medical service providers in countries overseas. The “top of the food chain” immigrants have competencies and technical skills that are needed in corporations, universities, hospitals and other critical areas. The world's talented workers are suppose to be welcomed and persuaded to stay. However, too many are opting to return to their native countries, especially if the countries represent rapid economic growth like China and India. They are leaving in part because the US is not working fast enough on the “hot topic” of immigration. Because the country does not want to do justice to the undesirable immigrants, those at the “bottom of the food chain”, they are causing the desirable ones at the top to leave.

Caroline Fan included a piece in the internet for the *Progressive State Network* which was published in the *USA Today* by Emily Bazar. She opens with the following statement: “*More*

*skilled immigrants are giving up their American dreams to pursue careers back home, raising concerns the US may lose its competitive edge in science technology and other fields.”*

The key issue of reverse immigration is vital to understanding her analysis. “In the next five years 100,000 immigrants will go back to India and 100,000 to China,” she reports. Why is this so? They are being provided with incentives to return. The other reason is that the US is very slow to welcome this group. Fan reports that “skilled immigrants are discouraged by the immigration process. Some can wait up to a decade for permanent residency, she says. ‘They’re frustrated with having an uncertain immigration status,’ she says. ***‘They’re giving up.’*** Immigrant bashing can suggest to the well educated newcomer that the larger society does not value them either. ***Moreover, it could be that people of color whom are educated and highly skilled, in their humanity, identify with the poor, less educated people of color who are the victims of immigrant bashing.***

There is a need for immigration reform that is comprehensive in nature. The US needs workers at all levels. Failure to be fair across the board with all immigrant groups will hurt the economy at all levels. CNN had to separate from professional immigrant basher and polarizer, Lou Dobbs, if the network really wanted to be “the most respected name in television news”. If the larger society wants immigrants of color at the top of the talent food chain to feel comfortable enough to stay, the bashing of immigrants at the bottom of the talent food chain must end. Cleveland decision-makers can learn from CNN’s actions against Lou Dobbs and immigrant bashing.

The strategic pull-factors by Northeast Ohio civic leaders and organizations making immigration a priority are encouraging and actively recruiting these skilled professional immigrants to migrate to Cleveland from Spanish-speaking countries; these immigrants are known in the Hispanic community as “Latin Americanist.” This pull-factor is disconnected and has been a source of internal concern and tension in the Hispanic community.

Hispanic Cleveland is largely made up of American citizens of Puerto Rican descent. Mexican and Central Americans immigrants continue to grow and represent the bulk of the remaining Latinos. To be sure, there are other people from all over the Americas, but their numbers pale in comparison to the larger groups noted. The professional Latin Americans who apply and take jobs to serve the needs of poor Hispanics in the city have been referred to as “Latin Americanist”, they are generally highly-skilled, well traveled, well-educated and come

from the upper echelons of their countries of origin. They fit nicely with members of similar class status in the Greater Cleveland Area. They are top of the food chain immigrants.

By virtue of the fact that they come from Spanish-speaking countries, this elite immigrant group may have been relied upon by decision-makers in the larger society to interpret the Hispanic reality in Cleveland. “Latin Americanists” are often asked to make sense of a reality that they themselves may not have experienced. They are expected to have a pulse on the needs and aspirations of Cleveland’s Hispanic poor. Notwithstanding, Hispanic Cleveland is blessed with the passion and commitment of several outstanding “Latin Americanists” who are genuinely engaged in community improvement efforts.

Sufficed to say, there is a need for a coalition of Latino subgroups to address today’s issue of immigration (everywhere in the US and in Northeast Ohio) so that the Hispanic community is not further divided by the US status quo migration/immigration practices.

This section addresses the question raised above (p. 37); when will the Puerto Rican flag wave? Again, it is important to understand history to be able to create a new vision. In the 2007 Assessment Project Report from Team Cleveland/Souder, Betances and Associates the relationship between the largest sub-group vs. recent, but growing immigrant groups is described as follows:

Puerto Ricans are born as U.S. citizens in their Island-nation due to Congressional acts related to the fact that Puerto Rico was conquered by the United States in 1898 and acquired from Spain as war booty through the Treaty of Paris that marked the end of the Spanish-American War. Some 19 years later, on the eve of WWI, island residents became U.S. citizens. That action makes Puerto Ricans “migrants” within the American Empire, not immigrants, like other Latino sub-group members coming into the area.

The increasing numbers of the undocumented raise different concerns and priorities about which other Hispanics are normally unaware. In some cases, the Puerto Rican migrant may be viewed with envy by those who wish they had the opportunities that citizenship allows. Puerto Ricans, on the other hand, may feel that the opportunities and privileges come at the expense of a colonial dependency status. So when the other groups have celebrations around their independence, the issue of status envy is reversed.

Puerto Rican organizations, by virtue of their longer sojourn and establishment in Hispanic Cleveland have greater access to contracts and programs than other groups. They have

also provided services to non-Puerto Ricans and have included non-Puerto Ricans on their boards. However, being responsive and inclusive to the needs of immigrant and undocumented subgroups has its challenges. As undocumented and immigrant Hispanics move into Cleveland, they seek venues for their priorities from Puerto Rican established and led organizations that still struggle to meet the needs of a large and ailing Puerto Rican community. Tensions arise about which priorities should drive programmatic focus. These factors must be taken into account when developing strategies for coalition-building within the Hispanic community.

Puerto Ricans, having established the largest organizations, may resist efforts for greater collaboration when they perceive these efforts as a move to relinquish what they have worked so hard to build. Yesterday's formula for survival must be modified to fit the needs of an ever-growing Central American population. Organizations with Puerto Rican leadership and roots, however, can remain influential, if they also serve as a bridge, provided they do not feel threatened or perceive that they are disrespected by new groups.

Make no mistake; the Puerto Rican flag is waving by the many Evangelical Puerto Rican Pastors leading Latino immigrants, and making the connection to ensure their basic needs are met; something the middle-class religious institutions have ceased to practice (Pew Hispanic Center, 2007).

Honoring their [Puerto Ricans] past with awe and respect holds the most promise for genuine coalition-building. The business case for coalition-building must be connected to demographic changes and cultural shifts. Every group is vital to the success of collaboration and regionalism. Done right, all can benefit from the process.

Overall, in terms of immigration, the Team Cleveland assessment states, the traditional immigrant model does not fit the "minority" construct in this country. The benefits and values of becoming a society that introduces, accepts and leverages a new paradigm philosophy of unity in diversity (pluralism) may very well be one of the major contributions that Hispanic Cleveland can make to White ethnic Americans in the region, and a best practice for other communities throughout the United States.

The theme of respecting differences through a vision of diversity may better accommodate the needs of the future for an increasingly diverse society. As it is clear that Hispanics will continue to grow in Cleveland, understanding how ethnic relations evolve over time will assist stakeholders to respond in positive ways to efforts that strengthen and leverage

diverse, inclusive, and high-performing teams that will benefit from Latino talent (Team Cleveland, 2007).

### **Responding with Accountability**

How we choose to react to the debate on immigration reform will reveal the true character of the citizens of the United States. There exists a real opportunity for the United States of America to transform its haunting past to creating a society that works for everyone, with no one left behind. Yet, we continue to debate the issue within the discourse of scarcity, this, the unparallel track, of what we could truly manifest for ourselves and the world – true abundance and vitality.

Jorge Ramos in his book, *The Other Face of America* writes immigrants in America are the heart of what makes this country the most prosperous and visionary in the world. This optimism was at its peaked until the tragic events at the World Trade Center. Once again, the foreign-born in America have become objects of suspicion, and instead of adopting laws that would extend our borders to them, our country has suddenly swung its gates shut. He further shares, America's second wave of immigration is now a reality, and like the previous one, this wave will again transform American society, and the world, forever.

The Immigration Policy Center 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. ***Without comprehensive reform of the immigration system, our nation cannot experience a full economic recovery!***

Then we have unfounded acts as that reported by Miguel Perez (2009) that legislation to authorize funding for the 2010 census; Republican Sens. David Vitter of Louisiana and Bob Bennett of Utah introduced an amendment that would have scared millions of illegal immigrants

from responding to the census, excluded even legal immigrants, and reshaped the American political landscape in one swift legislative coup d'état.

Perez goes on to say Vitter and Bennett wanted to count only American citizens — not even legal residents were to be considered — and they wanted to use only those citizen population numbers to determine how congressional seats would be reapportioned among the states. Its impact would have been revolutionary! When House seats were reallocated based on the 2010 census, there would have been a dramatic shift in power from states with many noncitizen immigrants to states with few immigrants. Under the revised Vitter-Bennett amendment, the census would have had to come up with two population counts — one for citizens and one for noncitizens — and our country would have been even more polarized than it already is.

In Perez's Article "*The Lesser of Two Evils*", he shares his discontent with how both political parties are treating Hispanics: "Unfortunately, this makes many Democrats assume that there is nothing they need to do for Latinos because Hispanic votes will go to them by default. Yet to be totally frank, right now I believe the Democratic Party is the lesser of two evils. I dislike the way the Democrats take advantage of Latinos almost as much as I hate the way Republicans discriminate against us."

Adding more salt to the deep wound are those individuals such as Samuel Huntington in who have it in their mind that more immigrants of Latino descent will degrade American culture. Fortunately, there is substantial evidence to the contrary and presented throughout this synopsis. However, anyone seriously interested in understanding migration issues ought to read Huntington's essay "The Hispanic Challenge". However, read it with the following words of caution: "...his essay is incomplete and sometimes deeply flawed in its emphasis or thesis, and misses a big reason for the illegal immigration problem..." (eRiposte, 2004). Huntington pays too little attention to the demand side of the problem— the practice of US businesses to hire cheap labor to enrich their wallets and enable propaganda exaggerating claims to crime and welfare associated with illegal immigrants to disguise the most important reason for the problem; that of their own creation. (Please access the in-depth response for, or against, Huntington's essay at: [http://www.eriposte.com/civil\\_rights/non-citizens/illegalimmigration.htm](http://www.eriposte.com/civil_rights/non-citizens/illegalimmigration.htm)).

Another area Huntington misrepresents is U.S. practice of division and conquest. Huntington says, "*No other immigrant group in U.S. history has asserted or could assert a*

*historical claim to U.S. territory. Mexicans and Mexican Americans can and do make that claim... Mexico is the only country that the United States has invaded...*” Once again Huntington pays little attention to how U.S., past and present, has forcefully asserted itself onto territories of Native Americans here in the U.S. and in other areas now deemed “U.S. territories”, namely, Puerto Rico, Guam, Hawai’i (state), and the many U.S. covert invasions of Latin American countries. Again, immigrants are in the United States because the United States has either had history or continues to create history in the immigrant’s country of origin!

According to Dr. Chomsky (2007), “Immigrants are blamed for a host of social ills and compared unfavorably to previous generations of immigrants. Noncitizens make easy targets and convenient scapegoats since they are legally deprived of many of the rights that U.S. citizens enjoy, including the right to vote, therefore elected officials and the general public can marginalize, blame, punish and discriminate against them with little repercussion.”

In another Perez article, “*The Closing Immigration Window*” (2009), “El espacio es pequeño” (The window of opportunity is small), said Rep. Luis Gutierrez, D-Ill., as he framed a tiny window with his hands on a Spanish-language TV network interview recently. “We have to do it in February or early March of next year (2010).” Gutierrez told *Univision’s* Jorge Ramos that the new legislation, still being written, will be introduced in both the House and the Senate in late January or early February, that Sen. Charles Schumer, D-N.Y., will be his counterpart in leading the fight in the Senate, and that the bill is likely to be very liberal. He said that seeing as the legislation is likely to be somewhat diluted by amendments from opponents of immigration reform, he and other proponents of the reforms have come to the conclusion that offense is the best defense.

Educating ourselves and taking action within our local community are vital to winning comprehensive immigration reform for our nation. Especially given the fact that America’s future depends on it; the Immigration Policy Center reports:

- A 2007 report from the White House Council of Economic Advisers concluded that immigration as a whole increases the U.S. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by roughly \$37 billion each year because immigrants increase the size of the total labor force, complement the native-born workforce in terms of skills and education, and stimulate capital investment by adding workers to the labor pool.

- Immigrant purchasing power (\$450 billion) is enormous—and growing: Latino buying power totaled \$951 billion in 2008 and is expected to increase to \$1.4 trillion by 2013, while Asian buying power totaled \$509.1 billion in 2008 and is expected to increase to \$752.3 billion by 2013. Since 1990, Latino purchasing power has increased by 349% and Asian buying power by 92%, according to the Selig Center for Economic Growth at the University of Georgia.
- Immigrant businesses create jobs: In 2002, 1.6 million Hispanic-owned firms provided jobs to 1.5 million employees, had receipts of \$222 billion, and generated payroll of \$36.7 billion. The same year, 1.1 million Asian-owned firms provided jobs to 2.2 million employees, had receipts of \$326.4 billion, and generated payroll of \$56 billion, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.
- Foreign-born and foreign-educated scientists and engineers in the United States are overrepresented among authors of the most cited scientific papers and inventors holding highly-cited patents. Likewise, foreign-born entrepreneurs are involved in over 25 percent of high-tech start-up companies. (Ohio Dept of Development, 2007)
- 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).

Below are additional views on immigration from authoritative entities:

**The Catholic Bishops of the United States** has been strong supporters of comprehensive immigration reform:

- ⇒ A broad based legalization (permanent residency) of the undocumented of all nationalities;
- ⇒ Reform of our family-based immigration system to allow family members to reunite with loved ones in the United States;
- ⇒ Reform of the employment-based immigration system to provide legal pathways for migrants to come and work in a safe, humane, and orderly manner;
- ⇒ Abandonment of the border "blockade" enforcement strategy;
- ⇒ Restoration of due process protections for immigrants.

**The National Association of Evangelicals** building upon biblical revelation concerning the migration of people and the values of justice and compassion championed in “For the Health of the Nation: An Evangelical Call to Civic Responsibility,” urge:

- ⇒ That immigrants be treated with respect and mercy by churches. Exemplary treatment of immigrants by Christians can serve as the moral basis to call for government attitudes and legislation to reflect the same virtues.
- ⇒ That the government develops structures and mechanisms that safeguard and monitor the national borders with efficiency and respect for human dignity.
- ⇒ That the government establishes more functional legal mechanisms for the annual entry of a reasonable number of immigrant workers and families.
- ⇒ That the government recognize the central importance of the family in society by reconsidering the number and categories of visas available for family reunification, by dedicating more resources to reducing the backlog of cases in process, and by reevaluating the impact of deportation on families.
- ⇒ That the government establishes a sound, equitable process toward earned legal status for currently undocumented immigrants, who desire to embrace the responsibilities and privileges that accompany citizenship.
- ⇒ That the government legislate fair labor and civil laws for all residing within the United States that reflect the best of this country’s heritage.
- ⇒ That immigration enforcement is conducted in ways that recognize the importance of due process of law, the sanctity of the human person, and the incomparable value of family.

## **Conclusion**

Captivatingly, many if not most of the research found (data, individuals and/or organizations) to develop this synopsis on immigration echoed the same message: ***Immigration is an American issue that affects us all; Immigration is only a segment of the real issue facing the U.S; and, Immigration is a global system.*** Further echoed was ***the call to legalize the undocumented population*** and create more visas for workers to enter legally, this way we better know who is in the country and who is coming, thus making us safer as a nation.

Real reform must establish policies that address the needs of the country now and in the future. Recognizing that factors shaping immigration patterns are not purely domestic, the U.S.

should look at foreign policy opportunities that alleviate push factors driving immigrants from their countries of origin. As we saw above these matters are not mutually exclusive. Rather, they are part and parcel of the solution that the American public demands – one that restores the rule of law, secures our borders, strengthens our economy, and upholds the value of equal opportunity, which is the cornerstone of our democracy (NCLR, 2009).

In closing, given the numerous authoritative views throughout this synopsis on the importance of reforming immigration in the United States of America it makes one wonder why it has yet to be accomplished! To iterate, educating ourselves and our community about immigration, and taking action within our local community are all critical to winning comprehensive immigration reform in 2010; make no mistake, at stake is the thriving future of the United States of America.

### **Best Practices and Strategies**

Given the information above...

What is it that we *know*?

What is it that we must *stop* doing?

What is it that we need to *start* doing?

**We *know*:**

- Hispanics constitute USA future workforce
- Legalizing immigration is part of the answer to US economic recovery
- It will take an *entire* community to reform immigration.

**We must *stop*:**

- Placing blame anywhere, but especially on the Hispanics as scapegoat of the nation's ills
- Denying the humanity of immigrants
- Making unsubstantiated harmful assumptions about immigrants
- Being complacent to immigration issues; thinking it is not your issue
- Forgetting that immigration is part of a global system

**We need to *start*:**

- Taking responsibility for U.S. dysfunctional history on immigration

- Work together to create a new favorable reality for all people in the U.S. and the world
- Advocating for comprehensive immigration reform in 2010
- Acknowledging we have the wherewithal to uncompromisingly rewrite America's future.

Below is a list of initiatives worthy of your support.

- ❖ **Cleveland Council on World Affairs:** For more than 80 years, the Cleveland Council on World Affairs has been the premiere organization in Northeast Ohio providing understanding about and engagement in international relations and global issues.
- ❖ **Greater Cleveland Partnership:** The GCP is one of the nation's largest chambers of commerce, with more than 17,000 members. 2009/2010 Public Policy Agenda is focused on how to best improve northeast Ohio's economic climate- was created by more than 30 private-sector leaders.
- ❖ **The Catholic Diocese of Cleveland:** Campaign for Immigration Reform - [www.justiceforimmigrants.org/](http://www.justiceforimmigrants.org/)
- ❖ **The Ohio Commission on Hispanic/Latino Affairs:** Created in 1977 with seventeen mandates proscribed in sections 121.32 and 121.33 of the Ohio Revised Code. These mandates fall into one of three categories:
  - TO ADVISE the Governor, the Ohio General Assembly, and state government agencies on all matters affecting Hispanic Ohioans, by issuing reports, proposing programs, commenting on legislation, and conducting policy-related research.
  - TO CONNECT the diverse Latino communities across the State of Ohio by serving as a hub of information for and about Hispanic Ohioans by hosting meetings, conducting surveys, promoting collaboration, encouraging communication, and endeavoring to assure access to decision-making bodies.
  - TO BUILD the capacity of Latino community organizations, especially those of, for, and by Hispanic Ohioans, by applying for and accepting grants in partnership with organizations, subcontracting programs to local groups, and conducting education programs to enhance and strengthen community organization staff and leadership.

- ❖ **North Central District of Nazarene Churches:** Under the direction of Pastor Max Rodas, of Nueva Luz, humanitarian services are provided to congregants and other immigrants seeking assistance. “No one is turned away.” Jennifer Peyton who is a board member of Nueva Luz is one of the leading immigration lawyers, who provides Immigration law training to mainstream lawyers, and in return they commit to hours of pro bono work for immigrant counseling.
  
- ❖ **Hispanic Roundtable’s 2008 Convencion Hispana: Immigration, Faith-Based, and Social Services Area Team Community Resolutions.**

Note: Details of immigration proposal is provided below. Please retrieve the Area’s Team resolution details for social services and faith-based initiatives from [http://www.convencionhispana.org/files/resolutions07/ssat\\_reso07\\_en.pdf](http://www.convencionhispana.org/files/resolutions07/ssat_reso07_en.pdf)

1. TO ADVOCATE FOR THE RECRUITMENT, RETENTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF A QUALIFIED, LINGUISTICALLY- AND CULTURALLY-COMPETENT WORKFORCE TO PROVIDE QUALITY SOCIAL SERVICES TO THE LATINO COMMUNITY AND OTHER UNDERSERVED LIMITED-ENGLISH SPEAKING COMMUNITIES
2. SUPPORT OF THE FLOC CAMPAIGN
3. IMMIGRATION PROPOSAL (detailed below)
4. TO INCREASE QUALITY, PRO BONO/AFFORDABLE IMMIGRATION REPRESENTATION FOR LATINOS/AS AND OTHER UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES IN NORTHERN OHIO BY SECURING FUNDING TO SUPPORT COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS THAT DELIVER THESE SERVICES
5. TO CREATE A COLLABORATIVE, SOCIAL SERVICE NETWORK OF PROVIDERS THAT WILL PROVIDE AN EVIDENCE-BASED CONTINUUM OF QUALITY CARE TO THE LATINO COMMUNITY AND OTHER UNDERSERVED ETHNIC GROUPS OF NORTHERN OHIO

**IMMIGRATION PROPOSAL**

... BE IT RESOLVED, the Immigration, Faith-Based, and Social Services Area Team will support the call for comprehensive immigration reform to guarantee a path to legal residency for current undocumented workers and their families, to reunite and strengthen families, and to support immigrant workers rights.

... BE IT RESOLVED, the Immigration, Faith-Based, and Social Services Area Team will call on Convencion Hispana 2007 to support Ag Jobs, a proposal that would legalize farm workers and strengthen their labor rights.

... BE IT RESOLVED, the Immigration, Faith-Based, and Social Services Area Team will call on Convencion Hispana 2007 to support the DREAM Act, a proposal that would enable undocumented students to finish their education and would put them in a path to legalize their status.

... BE IT RESOLVED, the Immigration, Faith-Based, and Social Services Area Team calls for the formation of an Immigration Task Force to research the impact of current immigration laws and

policies on the State of Ohio and to formulate proposals that would benefit the State on immigration related matters.

...BE IT RESOLVED, the Immigration, Faith-Based, and Social Services Area Team requests the Governor of the State of Ohio make driver licenses available to newcomers with no criminal record, to increase the number of insured motorists and make the roads of Ohio safer.

...BE IT RESOLVED, the Immigration, Faith-Based, and Social Services Area Team will oppose any and all English Only laws in the State of Ohio.

...BE IT RESOLVED, the Immigration, Faith-Based, and Social Services Area Team calls on the Governor of the State of Ohio to intervene in efforts by local law enforcement to enforce federal immigration laws.

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 additional resources below).
- ✚ 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 official 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 agenda.
- ✚ 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 Hispanic in Northeast Ohio; including immigration reform agenda.
- ✚ Honor and recognize those who champion working with immigrants and comprehensive immigration reform initiatives.

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## **Additional Resources**

In addition to above **References and Bibliography of websites and publications**, the following list of resources has been provided for additional research and inquiry. As always worthy of your time is participating in a reading club to study the issues to better affect change.

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U.S. Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, Office of Citizenship, Expanding *ESL, Civics, and Citizenship Education in Your Community: A Start-Up Guide*. Washington, DC, 2009. [www.bookstore.gpo.gov](http://www.bookstore.gpo.gov) ISBN 978-0-16-082476-0.

### **Reading Materials**

“His Panic: Why Americans Fear Hispanics in the U.S.” by Geraldo Rivera

“Latinos in the Making of the United States” by James D. Cockcroft

“Christians at the Border: Immigration, the Church, and the Bible” by M. Daniel Carroll R

“Faith Works” by Jim Wallace

“The Presumed Alliance: The Unspoken Conflict between Latinos and Blacks and What It Means for America” by Nicolas C. Vaca

“The Disuniting of America: Reflections on a Multicultural Society” by Arthur Schlesinger, Jr

"The Politics of the Census: A Reflection of the Dilemmas in U.S. Society" Proceedings of the Joint Canada-United States Conference on Measurement of Ethnicity Washington, DC: GPO, September, 1993. By Leobardo Estrada

“The Hispanic Challenge” by Samuel Huntington March/April 2004 [www.foreignpolicy.com](http://www.foreignpolicy.com)

“The Other Face of America: Chronicles of the Immigrants Shaping Our Future” by Jorge Ramos

“They Take Our Jobs!” and 20 other myths about immigration” by Aviva Chomsky