



The Facts on Immigration Today

Ann Garcia August 14, 2013

Below are the latest and most essential facts about immigrants and immigration reform in our nation today. The facts are broken down into the following sections:

- 1 Today's immigrant population
- 2 Demographics and political power of Latinos and Asian Americans
- 3 Immigrants and the economy
- 4 Federal immigration policy
- 5 Public opinion polling on immigration

Foreign-born population

- **The immigrant population in the United States grew considerably over the past 50 years.** In 2011 there were 40.4 million foreign-born people residing in the United States, whereas the immigrant population in 1960 was 9.7 million.¹ Broken down by immigration status, the foreign-born population in 2011 was composed of 15.5 million naturalized U.S. citizens,² 13.1 million legal permanent residents,³ and 11.1 million unauthorized migrants.⁴
- **The foreign-born share of the U.S. population has more than doubled since the 1960s.** The immigrant population was 5.4 percent of the total U.S. population in 1960, when 1 in 20 residents were foreign-born. In 2011 immigrants made up 13 percent of the total U.S. population, meaning that they were one in every eight U.S. residents. Still, today's share of the immigrant population as a percentage of the total U.S. population remains below its peak in 1890, when 14.8 percent of the U.S. population had immigrated to the country.⁵
- **Two in three immigrants living in the United States arrived before 2000.** Of the foreign-born population living in the United States in 2011, 38 percent arrived before 1990 and 27 percent arrived between 1990 and 1999.⁶
- **The past decade saw a large increase in the foreign-born population.** Between 2000 and 2011 there was a 30 percent increase in the foreign-born population. The immigrant population grew from 31.1 million to 40.04 million.⁷
- **The countries of origin of today's immigrants are more diverse than they were 50 years ago.** In 1960 a full 75 percent of the foreign-born population residing in the United States came from Europe, while today only 12 percent of the immigrant population emigrated from Europe. In 2010 11.7 million foreign-born residents—29 percent of the foreign-born population—came from Mexico. About 2.2 million immigrants residing in the United States came from China; 1.8 million came from each India and the Philippines; 1.2 million immigrated from each Vietnam and El Salvador; and 1.1 million arrived from each Cuba and Korea.⁸
- **Immigrants today are putting down roots across the United States, in contrast to trends we saw 50 years ago.** In the 1960s two-thirds of U.S. states had populations with less than 5 percent foreign-born individuals, but the opposite is true today. In 2010 two-thirds of states had immigrant populations above 5 percent. In 2010, 67 percent of the

¹ Estimates do not add up to the total because they are taken from various sources.

foreign born lived in the West and the South—a dramatic shift since the 1960s, when 70 percent of the immigrant population lived in the Northeast and Midwest.⁹

- **Females outnumber males in the foreign-born population today.** In 2011, 51.1 percent of the U.S. immigrant population was female.¹⁰ Until the 1960s immigrant men outnumbered immigrant women, but by the 1970s the number of female immigrants caught up and even surpassed male immigrants. In 2011 there were 96 immigrant men arriving in America for every 100 immigrant women.¹¹
- **There are almost 1 million lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender, or LGBT, adult immigrants in the United States today.** The estimated 904,000 LGBT adult immigrants are more likely to be young and male compared to the overall immigrant population.¹²
- **Immigrants have a diverse set of educational backgrounds.** About 68 percent of the foreign-born population have attained a high school diploma, GED, or higher, compared to 89 percent of the native-born population. Approximately 11 percent of immigrants have a master's degree, professional degree, or doctorate degree, compared to 10.2 percent of the native-born population.¹³
- **More than half of the foreign-born are homeowners.** Around 52 percent of immigrants own their own homes, compared to 67 percent of native-born individuals. Among immigrants, 66 percent of naturalized citizens own their own homes.¹⁴
- **The 20 million U.S.-born children of immigrants are significantly better off financially than their immigrant parents.** The median annual household income of second-generation Americans is \$58,100, just \$100 below the national average. This is significantly higher than their parents' median annual household income of \$45,800.¹⁵
- **U.S.-born children of immigrants are more likely to go to college, less likely to be living in poverty, and equally likely to be homeowners as the average American.** About 36 percent of U.S.-born children of immigrants are college graduates—5 percent above the national average. Eleven percent of U.S.-born children of immigrants are in poverty—well below the national average of 13 percent. And around 64 percent of them are homeowners—just 1 percent under the national average.¹⁶
- **Immigrants are less likely to commit crimes or be incarcerated than native-born Americans, and higher rates of immigration are not associated with higher crime rates.** A 2007 study finds that the incarceration rate for immigrant men ages 18 to 39 in 2000 was 0.7 percent, while the incarceration rate for native-born men of the same age group was 3.5 percent. While the foreign-born share of the U.S. population grew from 8 percent to 13 percent between 1990 and 2010, FBI data indicate that violent crime rates fell about 45 percent, while property crime rates fell 42 percent across the United States.¹⁷

Undocumented immigrant population

- **The growth of the undocumented immigrant population has slowed in recent years.** In 2000 there were an estimated 8.4 million undocumented persons residing in the United States. This population peaked in 2007 at 12 million, but decreased to 11.1 million by 2009¹⁸ and remains stable at 11.1 million in 2011.¹⁹
- **People from Mexico account for a large part of the undocumented population living in the United States.** 6.8 million people, or 59 percent of the undocumented population, are from Mexico. Another 6 percent of the undocumented population is from El Salvador; 5 percent is from Guatemala; 3 percent is from Honduras; and 2 percent is from China and the Philippines.²⁰
- **The majority of undocumented immigrants are well-settled in the United States.** About 63 percent of undocumented immigrants have been living in the United States for 10 years or longer.²¹
- **Undocumented immigrants are often part of the same family as documented immigrants.** 16.6 million people are in “mixed-status” families—those with at least one undocumented immigrant. Nine million of these families have at least one U.S.-born child.²²
- **Undocumented immigrants are more likely than native-born Americans to be raising children.** About 46 percent of undocumented immigrants, or about 4.7 million people, are part of families with children. By comparison, the figure for U.S. native adults and documented immigrants who live in families with children is 29 percent and 38 percent, respectively.²³
- **Millions of U.S.-citizen children have undocumented parents.** 4.5 million U.S.-born children had at least one unauthorized immigrant parent in 2010, an increase from 2.1 million in 2000.²⁴
- **There are more than a quarter of a million LGBT undocumented adult immigrants in the United States today.** The estimated 267,000 LGBT undocumented adult immigrants are more likely to be male and younger relative to all undocumented immigrants.²⁵ Around 71 percent of LGBT undocumented adults are Hispanic, and 15 percent are Asian American or Pacific Islander.²⁶
- **Nearly half of settled undocumented immigrants are homeowners.** Among undocumented immigrants who had lived in the United States for 10 years or longer, 45 percent were homeowners in 2008. Among undocumented immigrants who have lived in the United States for less than 10 years, 27 percent were homeowners in 2008.²⁷

- **Undocumented immigrants comprise a disproportionately large percent of the labor force relative to their numbers.** About 5.2 percent of the U.S. labor force consisted of undocumented immigrants in 2010, even though they comprised only 3.7 percent of the U.S. population.²⁸
- **More than half of the undocumented immigrant population has a high school degree or higher.** Fifty-two percent of undocumented immigrants have a high school diploma or higher, and 15 percent have a bachelor's degree or higher.²⁹

Growing in numbers

- **Latinos and Asian Americans comprise significant and growing segments of the U.S. population.** Latinos comprised 16.9 percent of the total U.S. population in 2012, while Asian Americans made up 5.1 percent of the population.³⁰ The Latino population is relatively young compared to other populations in the United States; the median age of Hispanics is 27, while the median age is 42 for non-Hispanic whites and 36 for Asian Americans.³¹
- **Hispanics accounted for more than half of the U.S. population growth in the past decade.** Hispanics accounted for 55.4 percent of U.S. population growth from 2000 to 2011, while Asian Americans accounted for 15.8 percent of the population growth.³²
- **By 2041 there will be no clear racial or ethnic majority in the United States.** By 2041 Latinos are expected to make up 30 percent of the U.S. population, and the Asian American population will grow to 8 percent of the total U.S. population.³³

A political force to be reckoned with

- **President Barack Obama was re-elected in 2012 with the support of 71 percent of Latino voters and 73 percent of Asian American voters.** These groups are a key part of the emerging multiethnic, multiracial, and cross-class progressive coalition, which also includes African Americans, women, young people, professionals, and economically populist blue-collar whites. These groups generally support a strong government that will expand opportunities and personal freedom for all Americans.³⁴
- **Record numbers of Latinos and Asian Americans are eligible to vote today.** Between 2008 and 2012 the number of eligible Latino voters in the United States grew from 19.5 million to 23.3 million—a 19 percent surge. As a result of that increase, Hispanics comprised 10.8 percent of eligible U.S. voters in 2012. The Asian American voting-eligible population also grew by an impressive 16 percent over four years, from 6.9 million voters in 2008 to 8 million voters in 2012. To put that growth into context, consider that the African American voting-eligible population grew by 6 percent, while there was just a 1 percent increase in the non-Hispanic white voting-eligible population over the same time period.³⁵
- **Even so, a majority of eligible Latino and Asian American voters stayed home on Election Day, pointing to room for improvement in voter participation.** While a record 11.2 million Latinos cast votes in the 2012 presidential election, 12.1 million eligible Latino voters did not vote, giving Latinos a 48 percent voting participation rate. Similarly, only 3.7 million of the 8 million eligible Asian American voters cast

ballots on Election Day in 2012, giving Asian Americans a 47 percent voting participation rate. The voter turnout rate for non-Hispanic whites in 2012 was 64 percent, and for African Americans it was 67 percent.³⁶

- **The fast-paced growth of the Latino electorate and slow or negative growth among non-Hispanic whites will change the voter makeup in the United States by 2016.** Over the next four years, the number of eligible Latino voters nationwide is projected to increase by more than 4 million people to 27.7 million. By 2016 we can expect the state of Texas to have 905,500 new Latino voters, making up 58.1 percent of the net increase in all eligible voters in the state.³⁷
- **Much of the growth in the number of eligible Hispanic voters can be attributed to the relative youth of the Hispanic population.** More than 90 percent of Hispanics under the age of 18 are U.S. citizens, and about 800,000 of them turn 18 and become eligible to vote every year.³⁸
- **Asian Americans are the fastest-growing electorate in the United States.** They are a diverse and multiethnic group, comprising 3 percent of voters in 2012—up 1 percentage point from 2008. The number of Asian American voters increased by 128 percent from 1996 to 2008.³⁹
- **Millions of legal permanent residents are eligible to become U.S. citizens and vote.** 8.5 million legal permanent residents, or green card holders, were eligible for naturalization in 2011. In 2012 a total of 757,434 people naturalized and became eligible to vote.⁴⁰
- **Immigrant women are the drivers of naturalization in their families.** Approximately 84 percent of the women surveyed in a February 2011 poll by New America Media wanted to become citizens. Around 91 percent of women immigrants from Vietnam and 90 percent from Latin American and Arab nations indicated a desire to naturalize. And 58 percent of women immigrants surveyed said they felt the strongest in their household about becoming citizens.⁴¹

The economic imperative for immigration reform

- **Immigration reform will decrease the deficit by hundreds of billions of dollars.** The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, or CBO, found that S. 744—the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act, as passed by the Senate—will reduce the budget deficit by \$158 billion in the first decade after the bill's passage and by an additional \$685 billion in the second decade.⁴²
- **Permitting undocumented immigrants to gain legal status will significantly expand economic growth.** If the 11 million undocumented immigrants in our nation are granted legal status in 2013, the 10-year cumulative increase in U.S. gross domestic product, or GDP, will be \$832 billion.⁴³
- **Granting legal status to undocumented immigrants will create jobs and increase tax revenues.** If undocumented immigrants acquire legal immigration status in 2013, the economy will add an average of 121,000 new jobs per year, and formerly unauthorized workers will pay an additional \$109 billion in federal, state, and local taxes over a 10-year period.⁴⁴
- **Immigration reform will increase the earnings of all Americans.** Immigration reform that includes a path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants, such as S. 744, will increase the earnings of all American workers by \$470 billion over the next decade.⁴⁵
- **Legalization and naturalization of undocumented immigrants will bolster their wages.** The annual income of unauthorized immigrants will be 15.1 percent higher within five years if they are granted legal status starting in 2013. In addition, if undocumented immigrants earn their citizenship, their wages will be an additional 10 percent higher.⁴⁶
- **Undocumented immigrants pay billions of dollars in taxes annually.** Households headed by unauthorized immigrants paid \$10.6 billion in state and local taxes in 2010. This includes \$1.2 billion in personal income taxes, \$1.2 billion in property taxes, and more than \$8 billion paid in sales and excise taxes. Immigrants—even legal immigrants—are barred from most social services, meaning that they pay to support benefits they cannot even receive.⁴⁷
- **Research shows that immigrants complement, rather than compete with, native-born American workers—even less-skilled workers and less-skilled African American workers.** Research by renowned economists such as David Card, Gianmarco Ottaviano, Giovanni Peri, and Heidi Shierholz continually shows that American work-

ers are not harmed by—and may even benefit from—immigration because immigrants tend to be complementary workers, helping Americans be more productive.⁴⁸

- **The unemployment rates of native-born Americans will be unaffected by immigration reform.** The CBO estimates that during the five-year period following passage of immigration reform, unemployment will increase by 0.1 percent. This small increase falls entirely upon the undocumented and is the short-term effect of growth in the labor force and of the labor market adjusting to undocumented workers positioning themselves to be productive for decades to come.⁴⁹
- **State tax revenue will get a boost from immigration reform.** The CBO's estimated increase in payroll taxes indicates that state tax revenue would increase by about \$748 billion by 2033 under S. 744. While state spending on things such as education and Medicare will also rise, the \$748 billion in additional revenues will more than cover any rising costs.⁵⁰
- **Taxes paid by legalized immigrants more than offset any use of social programs.** The CBO found that increases in costs to social programs are modest and will be more than paid for by the tax contributions of immigrants. The increase in spending in Social Security and Medicare from 2024 through 2033, for example, will be \$65 billion—just 4.4 percent of the total increase in tax revenues.⁵¹
- **Immigrants will pay substantially more into Social Security than they will take out, and their contributions will be essential in supporting retiring Baby Boomers.** Assuming that 85 percent of undocumented immigrants gain legal status and citizenship, immigrants will provide a net \$606.4 billion contribution to Social Security over the next 36 years—the very same time period when retiring Baby Boomers will place the greatest strain on the system.⁵²
- **As Baby Boomers retire en masse over the next 20 years, immigrants will be crucial to fill job openings and promote growth in the labor market.** More than two-thirds of new entrants into the labor market will replace retiring workers. But while we will need 58.6 million new workers to fill these retirements, only 51.3 million native-born people are projected to enter the workforce, meaning that immigrants and their children will be crucial in filling the additional 7.3 million openings while also furthering growth in the labor market.⁵³
- **Passing the DREAM Act will inject billions of dollars into the American economy while creating more than a million jobs.** The DREAM Act would provide a pathway to legal status for eligible young people who complete high school and some college or military service. At least \$329 billion and 1.4 million jobs will be added to the American economy over the next two decades if the DREAM Act becomes law.⁵⁴

The price of inaction or mass deportation

- **Maintaining the status quo is not cost neutral.** Every day that Congress fails to pass immigration reform that enables the undocumented population to earn legal status and citizenship is a lost economic opportunity and a cost to all Americans. With only one-third of unauthorized immigrants working in the formal economy and contributing about \$12 billion in payroll taxes each year, the United States loses around \$20 billion in payroll tax revenue each year. This lost revenue would go a long way toward funding the retirement of Americans across the country.⁵⁵
- **The current immigration system has kept millions of people from fully participating in their local communities and economies.** This is perhaps most evident in the context of the housing market, where immigrants' desires to purchase homes and contribute to our economy is stifled. While 66 percent of naturalized citizens are homeowners, just 35 percent of unauthorized immigrant households own their own homes.⁵⁶
- **A "self-deportation" regime would cost our economy trillions of dollars.** If all undocumented immigrants in the country were deported or were to "self-deport"—meaning they choose to leave the country because life is too difficult—the United States cumulative GDP would suffer a hit of \$2.6 trillion over 10 years.⁵⁷
- **Mass deportation of the undocumented immigrant population would cost billions of dollars.** Deporting the entire undocumented population would cost \$285 billion over a five-year period, including continued border and interior enforcement efforts.⁵⁸ For that price, we could hire more than 1 million new public high school teachers and pay their salaries for five years.⁵⁹
- **It costs taxpayers more than \$20,000 to carry out the deportation of a single individual.** Apprehending, detaining, processing, and transporting one individual in the deportation process cost \$23,482 in fiscal year 2008.⁶⁰

The Senate's bipartisan immigration reform bill

On June 27, 2013, by a vote of 68 to 32, the U.S. Senate passed a comprehensive immigration reform bill. As of this writing, the House of Representatives has several—mostly enforcement—bills pending.⁶¹ The Senate bill remains viable for reconciliation with a House bill until the 113th Congress ends on December 31, 2014.

- **The Senate-passed immigration reform bill, S. 744, provides an achievable path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants.** The bill would put the majority of the 11 million undocumented immigrants on a 13-year pathway to citizenship. In the meantime, registered provisional immigrants—the first step on the pathway—who have met certain requirements, passed background checks, and paid fees and fines will be able to live in the United States, work, and travel abroad without fear of deportation.⁶²
- **S. 744 significantly increases border security.** The bill mandates significant increases in technology, personnel, fencing, and funding to ramp up border security to an unprecedented level. The bill mandates that the Department of Homeland Security, or DHS, complete 700 miles of pedestrian fencing, increase the number of full-time Customs and Border Protection agents from 18,412 today to 38,405 by 2021, and deploy a litany of technology on the southern border.⁶³
- **S. 744 puts substantial resources toward increasing enforcement in the interior.** The bill mandates that all employers in the country use E-Verify—the government's Internet-based work-authorization system—within five years of the bill's enactment as a means of ensuring that unauthorized immigrants are not granted employment. It also creates a full electronic entry-exit system that can check machine-readable passport, visa, and biographic information for all immigrants leaving by airports and seaports by the end of 2015. Moreover, it creates a pilot program to put a full biometric exit system in the most heavily trafficked airports and seaports.⁶⁴
- **S. 744 includes the most generous DREAM Act provision yet.** The bill allows anyone who entered the country before the age of 16, who has completed high school and some college or military service, and who has been in registered provisional immigrant status for at least five years to apply for permanent residence and citizenship.⁶⁵
- **S. 744 clears the long backlog of people who have been approved for a green card.** The bill ensures that the 4.4 million people who have been approved for a green card but have been waiting for years, even decades, to come to the United States because of the long backlogs in the system can finally reunite with the family members, clearing out the backlog within a decade.⁶⁶

- **S. 744 modernizes our immigration system.** The bill creates a new category of merit-based green cards for individuals who meet certain criteria that are determined to be in the national interest. It expands the number of green cards for highly skilled, advanced-degree professionals; creates a new lesser-skilled “W” visa category; and establishes a bureau tasked with analyzing economic, labor, and demographic data to help set annual limits on each type of visa.⁶⁷
- **S. 744 protects farmworkers and stabilizes the agricultural industry.** The bill authorizes farmworkers who continue working in agriculture to apply for permanent residence five years after the bill’s enactment.⁶⁸
- **S. 744 equips immigrant workers with rights that will decrease workplace violations.** The Senate bill stops employers with a recent history of workplace violations from applying for guest workers. Workers on a “W” visa for less-skilled workers, as well as agricultural workers, will be given greater labor-market mobility; these workers will be permitted to seek employment with another registered employer. S. 744 also ensures that all workers—even those without status—are entitled to full remedies under U.S. employment and labor laws.⁶⁹

Administrative action and Supreme Court decisions

- **The Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA, directive went into effect in August 2012.** In June 2012 the Obama administration announced that it would use its inherent executive authority to explicitly protect a group of “DREAM Act eligible” undocumented youth from deportation. The program allows this population to apply for temporary protection from deportation and for work authorization. U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services data show that 2,614 young immigrants apply for the DACA program every day. As of June 2013, 400,562 applicants were granted deferred action.⁷⁰
- **In December 2012 Immigration and Customs Enforcement announced it would tailor its detainer policy.** The agency will no longer issue a “detainer” request to local police directing them to hold someone identified as a potentially undocumented immigrant unless that person has been charged with a serious crime or convicted of multiple misdemeanors. The announcement aligns with the agency’s evolving effort to apply so-called prosecutorial discretion to immigration cases: prioritizing criminals for detention and deportation rather than long-settled and hardworking immigrants.⁷¹
- **In March 2013 U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services changed its policy to better observe its principle of family unification.** Effective March 2013, the U.S. government reduced the amount of time that spouses and minor children of U.S. citizens are separated from their families when applying for legal permanent resident status. The new rule allows qualified applicants to apply for a hardship waiver while still in the United States. In the waiver, the applicant must establish that if the family were to

be separated, extreme hardship would be suffered by the applicant's spouse or parent with citizenship or legal permanent resident status.⁷²

- **In June 2012 the U.S. Supreme Court ruled on the constitutionality of Arizona's anti-immigrant law—S.B. 1070—striking down three of its main provisions but allowing the insidious “papers please” provision to remain intact.** This provision, section 2(B), mandates that police check the status of anyone who they reasonably suspect is in the country without legal status. It opened the door to serious racial profiling concerns in Arizona and in states that passed copycat laws.⁷³
- **In June 2013 the Supreme Court overturned Section 3 of the Defense of Marriage Act, or DOMA—an important step toward giving equal treatment to same-sex binational couples under immigration law.** The Supreme Court's historic decision to strike down DOMA, which forced the federal government to ignore legal marriages of same-sex couples, permits legally married same-sex U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents to sponsor their foreign-born spouses and the spouses' children for green cards and protects LGBT domestic violence survivors from deportation, among other benefits.⁷⁴

Building a 21st century border

- **All of the border-security benchmarks written into the Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act of 2007 have been met or surpassed, even though that bill did not become law.**
 - **Border agents:** 21,394 Border Patrol agents patrolled the borders in 2012—1,394 more than the goal set in 2007.⁷⁵
 - **Fencing:** 651 total miles of fencing have been built along the southwest border as of 2012, just one mile shy of what the Secure Fence Act of 2006 mandates. That includes 352 miles of pedestrian fencing and 299 miles of vehicle barriers.⁷⁶
 - **Surveillance:** 179 mobile and video surveillance systems and 168 radar and camera towers have been installed along the border—more than what the 2007 benchmarks required. The increase in unmanned aircraft systems and mobile surveillance systems surpassed the 2007 goals by 2 and 47, respectively.⁷⁷
 - **Increased consequences:** The Department of Homeland Security has the resources available to detain 1,300 more people per day than the 2007 goal set out to meet. The Border Patrol ended the process of “catch and release,” a practice where two out of every three border crossers apprehended from outside of Mexico were released into the United States pending removal hearings. The Department of Homeland Security instead expanded the “consequence delivery system” to the entire border. This system steps up criminal penalties for people caught illegally crossing the border, and often returns immigrants to unfamiliar and far-away border cities in an effort to cut the migrant off from the smuggler who helped with their previous border-crossing attempt.⁷⁸

- **“Operational control”**: Eighty-one percent of the U.S. border with Mexico meets one of the Department of Homeland Security’s three highest standards of security: controlled, managed, or monitored. The remaining sections of the border are in the most inaccessible and inhospitable areas of the border.⁷⁹ That marks significant progress since FY 2006, when only 23 percent of the U.S.-Mexico border was deemed to be under “operational control.”⁸⁰ Total control of the border is impossible, but Customs and Border Protection continues to make great strides in gaining control of important sectors.
- **The number of people apprehended crossing the border has decreased to the lowest level in 40 years.** Even though border agents now patrol every mile of the U.S. border daily, and in many places they can view nearly all attempts to cross the border in real time, 27 percent fewer individuals were apprehended in 2011 than in 2010.⁸¹
- **Net undocumented migration from Mexico is now at or below zero.** Heightened border enforcement and a worsening U.S. job market together have caused a sharp drop in unauthorized migration from Mexico to the United States. In the future we can expect that improved Mexican economic conditions and falling birth rates in Mexico will continue this trend, even as the American economy recovers from the Great Recession.⁸²

Immigration enforcement is in overdrive

- **President Obama’s administration deported 1.5 million immigrants during his first term in office.** In FY 2012, 409,849 people were deported. Though 96 percent of deportations fell under the Immigration and Customs Enforcement “priority removals” category, the total number of deportations last year sets a record high in the United States.⁸³
- **In 2011 at least 5,100 citizen children of undocumented immigrants were living in foster care because their parents were detained or deported.** If the rules are not changed, 15,000 more children will face a similar fate by 2016. An estimated 200,000 parents of children who are U.S. citizens were deported between 2010 and 2012.⁸⁴
- **The average daily population of immigrant detainees being held has increased by 1,000 detainees per fiscal year since 2007.** On average, Immigration and Customs Enforcement detained 34,069 people on any given day in FY 2012. Keeping these individuals in detention while proper authorities determine their fates costs taxpayers roughly \$2 million a day, and the average detainee spent 26.5 days in detention in FY 2012.⁸⁵
- **The Department of Homeland Security’s immigration enforcement program—Secure Communities—is active in 97 percent of jurisdictions.** The Secure Communities program checks the immigration status of those booked into county jails in participating jurisdictions. It was expanded from 14 jurisdictions in 2008 to 3,074 jurisdictions

in 2012, but several states and cities such as Washington, D.C., Illinois, and New York, have expressed concerns that the program interferes with local policing priorities and inevitably leads to racial profiling.⁸⁶

- **Expansion of the E-Verify system will only work in tandem with a legalization program.** E-Verify, an online system to check an employee's work authorization status, is currently used by 409,000 businesses in the United States. But the program contains significant flaws, including failing to accurately identify unauthorized immigrants 54 percent of the time. If the program became mandatory for all employers today, it would cause 770,000 legally present and legally authorized workers to lose their jobs. Even if E-Verify was fine-tuned, expanding the program to cover all employers could only work in concert with a legalization program that allows the 5 percent of the labor force currently in the shadows to come out and work legally.⁸⁷
- **The federal government has stepped up enforcement against employers who hire undocumented workers by auditing I-9 forms.** All workers and employers upon hiring an employee must complete this federal paperwork. Immigration and Customs Enforcement conducted more than 3,000 worksite audits in FY 2012, up from the 2,496 in the previous fiscal year, and from the 503 that were carried out in FY 2008.⁸⁸

Americans want immigration reform with a road map to citizenship

- **An overwhelming majority of the American public supports immigration reform that includes a road map to citizenship.** A July 2013 Gallup poll found that 88 percent of all Americans support a path to citizenship for the 11 million undocumented immigrants living in the United States as part of immigration reform. Broken down by political ideology, the results showed that 83 percent of conservatives, 92 percent of moderates, and 91 percent of liberals support a road to citizenship.⁸⁹
- **Just a sliver of the American public would like to see the House pass a bill that eliminates the Senate bill's provisions that provide eventual citizenship for unauthorized immigrants.** A United Technologies/National Journal Congressional Connection survey released in July 2013 found that only 13 percent of Americans want the House to strip the eventual road map to citizenship measure from the bill that passed in the Senate.⁹⁰
- **Republican primary voters broadly support immigration reform that includes the path to citizenship.** Polling conducted in July 2013 by Basswood Research found that 70 percent of Republican primary voters support a described proposal that includes increased border security, a requirement that employers verify the legal status of job seekers, and a pathway to U.S. citizenship for the 11 million undocumented immigrants currently living in the country. Seventy-nine percent of these same voters say it is “very important” to fix the current immigration system.⁹¹
- **Voters in key Republican congressional districts support immigration reform with a path to citizenship.** Public Policy Polling surveys in seven key congressional districts in California, Colorado, Minnesota, Nevada, and New York, released in July 2013, unequivocally show that Republican and independent voters want Congress to fix our country's broken immigration system and that many are less likely to support Republicans if immigration reform stalls.⁹²
- **There is solid support among African American voters for immigration reform that includes a road map to citizenship.** Lake Research Partners polling from May 2013 found that 66 percent of African Americans support immigration reform that includes a path to citizenship for the undocumented population living in the United States.⁹³
- **Strong majorities of small-business owners favor the main provisions included in the bipartisan immigration reform plan passed by the U.S. Senate.** A March 2013 poll conducted by Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research and American Viewpoint on behalf of Small Business Majority found that 84 percent of small-business owners and 86 percent of Republican small-business owners support the Senate's comprehensive immigration reform plan.⁹⁴

- **More Americans than ever view immigration as a good thing for the country.** A July 2013 Gallup poll found that 72 percent of Americans think immigration is a good thing for the country. This is the highest level of public support for immigration since the question was first asked in 2001.⁹⁵

Latino voters have a deep connection to immigration and want reform

The following points cite research by Latino Decisions, a national polling and research firm. Latino Decisions is a leader in Latino political opinion research and has produced consistently reliable polls, predictions, and analysis of the Latino electorate.

- **Immigration reform has become the number-one political issue for Latino voters.** In a July 2013 poll, 53 percent of registered Latino voters cited immigration reform as the top priority that Congress and the president should address. That figure is up from 35 percent in November 2012.⁹⁶
- **Latino voters are paying attention to congressional action on immigration.** A June 2013 poll showed that 80 percent of Latino registered voters had heard or read news about immigration reform being considered in Congress.⁹⁷
- **Hispanic voters have a direct and personal connection to the immigration debate.** A June 2013 poll found that 67 percent of Latino registered voters personally know an undocumented immigrant. Among those who know undocumented immigrants, 51 percent say they are family and friends.⁹⁸
- **Latino voters overwhelmingly support establishing a road map to citizenship for undocumented immigrants while working to fully secure the border.** A June 2013 poll found that 81 percent of registered Latino voters—and 76 percent of Latino voters who voted for a Republican candidate in the past—support accompanying any increased border security with a path to citizenship for the undocumented immigrant population.⁹⁹
- **A majority of Hispanic voters would be more likely to support Republicans if the party supported immigration reform with a road to citizenship.** In a June 2013 poll, 52 percent of registered Hispanic voters said they would be more likely to support a Republican candidate in future elections if the Republican Party helps pass an immigration reform package that includes a road map to citizenship.¹⁰⁰
- **Latino voters strongly support immigration reform legislation that includes LGBT couples.** A poll released in March 2013 found that 64 percent of Latinos favor inclusive immigration reform that allows LGBT people to sponsor their partners for residency in the United States. Among Latino Catholics, support in this category reached 71 percent.¹⁰¹

Endnotes

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