

FACTS ON IMMIGRATION

With Congress considering taking up immigration reform, workable policies can best be advanced with facts and data that confirm the many benefits immigration provides our country and the economy. This fact sheet offers unbiased information to inform a constructive dialogue about policy reform.

A NATION OF IMMIGRANTS



1 in 8

residents of the United States were born in **another country**



Immigrants make up **13% of the US Population**
~ 40 million people



1 in 2

immigrants in the United States **are citizens**

88% of employment-based green card holders live in the US



VS



38% of family-based green card holders live in the US

ECONOMIC BENEFITS



In an area where **1** high-skilled visa holder is hired, an average of **2.8** native-born Americans are also hired.



In an area where **1** low-skilled visa holder is hired, an average of **4.6** native-born Americans are also hired.



A foreign born graduate with a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) degree is associated with an additional **2.6 jobs** for native-born Americans.

IMPACT ON BUSINESS



Immigrants are **2x** more likely than natives to start businesses.

During the decade 1995-2005, American companies founded by immigrants:

- ➔ **Employed 450,000 workers in the United States**
- ➔ **Generated \$52 Billion in sales**



50%

of Silicon Valley startups are **founded by immigrants**

REFORM IS ESSENTIAL

6% of American green cards are employment-based vs **50-70%** of European green cards. **America's future prosperity depends on continued immigration.**

Employment-based immigration



↑ **Increase**
real GDP
by **3.2%**

↓ **Reduce** the Federal deficit
by **\$150 billion**
over the next decade

MYTHS OF IMMIGRATION

MYTH

America needs a pathway to citizenship.

A pathway to citizenship already exists: **The United States welcomes over 1 million legal immigrants each year.** In raw numbers, that makes the US the most immigrant-friendly country in the world. But when measuring the flow of immigrants as a percentage of the population, the US is currently ranked #22 in the world. The current immigration flow is much lower than it has been historically.

FACT

MYTH

Most immigrants in the United States are illegal.

Most immigrants coming to the US follow the rules and come here legally. In fact, **3 in 4 immigrants are legal residents.** Research shows that these immigrants are overwhelmingly positive for the US economy, a reality reflected by 72% of the American public that thinks immigration is a good thing.

FACT

MYTH

America needs more border security.

Security is important, but *border security* is not the key issue. There are now more than 20,000 border security agents, more than double the number in 2000. However, **only 3 in 5 illegal immigrants cross the border illegally**, while the other 40% arrive on legal visas, but then overstay the visa time permitted.

FACT

MYTH

There is not a strong demand for high-skilled workers (H-1B visas) in the United States.

Many critical skills are in demand in the US labor market. All 2014 **high-tech H-1B visas were issued within the first week** that they became available.

FACT

MYTH

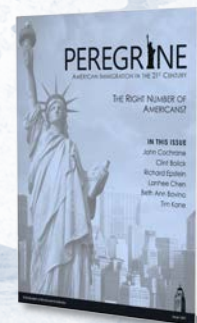
Immigrants do not try to assimilate.

Assimilation can be measured by how well immigrants acquire English. While only 35% of first-generation Hispanic immigrants speak English well, **91% of their children speak English well**, as do 97% of their grandchildren. But fears of non-assimilation echo the initial native hostility toward foreigners in previous centuries, a reality faced by Irish, Polish, Jewish, and Asian immigrants to the U.S. in the late 1800s and early 1900s.

FACT

Sources listed at <http://www.hoover.org/taskforces/immigration-reform>.

For more ideas and a deeper discussion of immigration reform, subscribe to *Peregrine*, a product of the Hoover Institution Conte Initiative on Immigration Reform. *Peregrine* seeks consensus on incremental and appropriate reforms to US immigration policy. Each issue of this free online journal addresses a different aspect of immigration reform and seeks to educate and inform the ongoing debate.



This fact sheet is a publication of the Hoover Institution's Conte Immigration Initiative, which was established to generate innovative ideas to improve America's current immigration system. Composed of Hoover fellows and leading affiliated thinkers from across the political spectrum, its membership is united by a common theme: our current immigration system is broken and needs to be reformed. For media inquiries or to speak with an expert on this topic, please contact Tom Church at tvchurch@stanford.edu.

SOURCES FOR THE FACTS

A Nation of Immigrants

- "1 in 8 residents of the United States were born in another country."
 - Source: 2013 CPS, March Supplement
- "Immigrants make up 13% of the US population."
 - Source: 2013 CPS, March Supplement
- "1 in 2 immigrants in the United States are citizens."
 - Source: 2013 CPS, March Supplement
- "88% of employment-based green card holders live in the US. 38% of family-based green card holders live in the US."
 - Source: [2012 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics](#), Department of Homeland Security, Table 6: Persons Obtaining Legal Permanent Resident Status by Type and Major Class of Admission: Fiscal Years 2003 to 2012.

Economic Benefits

- H-1B, H-2B, STEM immigrant benefits
 - Source: Madeline Zavodny, "[Immigration and American Jobs](#)," American Enterprise Institute, 2011.

Impact on Business

- "Immigrants are 2x more likely than natives to start businesses."
 - Source: "[Open For Business: How Immigrants Are Driving Small Business Creation In The United States](#)," *The Partnership for a New American Economy*, August 2012.
- "50% of Silicon Valley startups are founded by immigrants."
 - Source: Vivek Wadwha, AnnaLee Saxenian, Ben Rissing, Gary Gereffi, "[America's New Immigrant Entrepreneurs](#)," *Duke Science, Technology & Innovation Paper No. 23*, January 4, 2007.
- "During 1995-2005, employed 450,000 workers in the United States and generated \$52 billion in sales."
 - Source: Vivek Wadwha, AnnaLee Saxenian, Ben Rissing, Gary Gereffi, "[America's New Immigrant Entrepreneurs](#)," *Duke Science, Technology & Innovation Paper No. 23*, January 4, 2007.

Reform is Essential

- 6% of American green cards are employment based vs. 50-70% of European green cards.
 - Source: OECD, International Migration Outlook, 2008. Note: 55% of all US green cards issued through "employment preferences" go to spouses and dependents of workers. See [2012 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics](#), Table 7.
- "Employment based immigration. Increase real GDP by 3.2%. Reduce Federal deficit by \$150 billion in the next decade."
 - Beth Ann Bovino, "[Adding Skilled Labor to America's Melting Pot Would Heat Up U.S. Economic Growth](#)," *Standard & Poor's*, March 19, 2014.

Myths of Immigration

- Pathway to citizenship. Welcomes 1 million legal immigrants each year.
 - Source: "[U.S. Legal Permanent Residents: 2012](#)," Department of Homeland Security.
- Most immigrant friendly country vs. #22 in the world as a percentage of population.
 - Source: OECD, [International Migration Database](#). Cited in Adam Ozimek, "[Is the U.S. the most immigrant friendly country in the world?](#)," *Forbes Online*, November 18, 2012.
- 3 in 4 immigrants are legal residents.
 - Source: Anna Brown and Eileen Patten, "[Statistical Portrait of the Foreign-Born Population in the United States, 2012](#)," *Pew Research Hispanic Trends Project*, April 29, 2014.
- 72% of the American public thinks immigration is a good thing.
 - Source: [Gallup Poll](#), July 11, 2013.
- Number of border security agents.
 - [U.S. Border Patrol Fiscal Year Staffing Statistics](#), *U.S. Customs and Border Protection*, Department of Homeland Security.
- 40% of illegals overstayed their visas.
 - Source: Sara Murray, "[Many in the U.S. Illegally Overstay Their Visas](#)," *Wall Street Journal Online*, April 7, 2013.
- Demand for high-skilled, H-1B visas.
 - Source: "[USCIS Reaches FY 2015 H-1B Cap](#)," *U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services*, Department of Homeland Security, April 10, 2014.
- Assimilation by immigrants.
 - Source: Stuart Anderson, "[Immigrants and English](#)," *Immigration Reform Bulletin*, CATO Institute, October 2010.