

Should We Open the Southern U.S. Border to Immigration?

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Objectives:

The objectives of this debate is to increase awareness, encourage critical thinking, and persuade those listening of the following thesis: The U.S. Southern Border should be open to immigration in order to promote economic growth, social cohesion, and human rights.

Strategy:

The aforementioned objectives will be completed by presenting quantitative research in an opening statement, questioning possible misconceptions in cross-examination questions, and emphasizing the main points along with sharing one's personal experience with immigration in a closing statement.

Opening Statement:

- **Promotes Economic Growth**
 - The U.S. economy is benefitted by immigrants because they promote business and industry.
 - Within the U.S. businesses are 30% more likely to be started by immigrants, and new businesses create more jobs (“Pros and Cons,” 2018).
 - One in six healthcare professionals are foreign-born, that is roughly 17% of the healthcare industry (Batalova, J., Altorjai, S. 2017)
 - Immigrants contribute to the U.S. government more than they take.

- According to an article from George Eaton, host countries actually gain from immigration because migrants are generally younger, healthier, and contribute more to taxes than they receive (Eaton, 2017).
- Senator Cortez Masto reported that the National Academy of Sciences National Research showed that immigrant families will contribute over \$80,000 in taxes more than they obtain from public benefits during their lives (“Pros and Cons,” 2018).
- In 2014, immigrants earned \$1.3 trillion, which generated \$105 billion in State and local taxes and approximately \$224 billion in Federal taxes (“Pros and Cons,” 2018).
 - Less of the federal budget will be spent on border control
 - Research by MIT estimated that building a wall on the U.S. Southern border would cost close to \$40 billion (Brandys, Laurent, & Knox, 2018).
- **Promotes Social Cohesion**
 - Opening borders not threaten social cohesion, rather it would increase opportunities to embrace diversity and culture.
 - Maria Abascal, a sociologist from Princeton University, pointed out that research showed that diversity does not deteriorate a sense of community and trust among people.

She holds poverty, discrimination, and unemployment responsible for the lack of social cohesion in society (Bregman, 2018).

- Currently, there is no correlation between terrorists and immigration.
 - In 36 years, 97 mass shootings have been carried out--54% of these were done by white men (Mitchell, 2018).
- Open borders would decrease violence at the border.
 - Carla Denti's research showed that two-thirds of migrants and refugees surveyed on a migrant route have endured violence ("International Migrants Day," 2016).

- **Promotes Human Rights**

- Opening the border would give all people an equal opportunity to seek better educational and economic opportunities.
- Open borders would eliminate discrimination against people based on where they are born, which is out of anyone's control.
 - The act of detaining and expelling illegal and legal immigrants based on prejudice is shown in that federal courts noted a 367% spike in the number of prosecutions related to immigration activity, and immigrants with no criminal records made up the 77% of the 1 million people tried in court (Ewing, 2015)
- Opening the borders would allow families to be reunited.

Cross-Examination Questions:

- How does one measure the importance of one life over another or thereby limit the opportunities of one life over the other when it is in one's power to do good for another?
- You have pointed out the potential dangers of allowing immigrants into this country. If we were to change the terminology used to define domestic acts of terror, would we find that the average white male is more dangerous than the newly arrived immigrant?
- If the border continues to become more strict on who is let into the country or not, then those who are attempting to cross over will take more radical measures to get inside. What would you do differently to keep these people out?
- I heard you claim that opening the borders would be a safety risk because of the terrorists and criminals that would enter, but what makes you think that people outside of the U.S. have less morality?

Closing Statement:

The history of the United States is steeped in immigration. From the first boats, which arrived with pilgrims to the first step taken over the Mexican-United States border, immigration is and will always be a poignant part of American history. When debating the issue of opening the U.S. Southern Border, U.S. citizens need to acknowledge the hard facts, statistical data, and first hand accounts of why the border should not be closed to immigrants from Central and South America.

We believe that the U.S. Southern Border should be open to immigration for the rich benefits that U.S. citizens would experience, including a bolstered economy, greater social cohesion, and moral values that better support the American Dream. As a country, fear needs to be put aside and social change should be embraced in order to truly see this country achieve greatness while lifting up oppressed groups. By doing this, many lives will be forever impacted.

Jose Deschamps legally immigrated with his family to the United States from the Dominican Republic. Although he was still under his parent's care, he remembers the financial stress it imposed on his family and how others would discourage them from trying due to the difficulty of the process. Nevertheless, they persisted and finally moved to Florida ten years after his family made the initial application. He described the process as demanding, expensive, and long--yet well worth it in order to gain the educational and financial opportunities that he has discovered in the U.S. Since immigrating here, Jose has completed college and attained financial independence by maintaining a job as a nurse (J. Deschamps, personal communications, November 14, 2018).

Numerous people who are honestly looking for better lives do not have the financial means or time to invest in immigrating to the U.S. For many, it is nearly impossible, and the American Dream will remain nothing but a dream. Opening the borders opens up the opportunity for many more invaluable human lives to achieve a better quality of life. We believe that U.S. citizens will discover an increase in their own quality of life by letting go of their fears in order to embrace great opportunities. Every individual is left with the choice to focus on the difficulty in opportunities or the opportunity in difficulties.

Specialized Terminology:

- **Secure Communities:** A program implemented in 2008 and again in 2017. It was designed to give a comprehensive view of a person's past misdemeanors, felonies, and other criminal charges. This allows for an invasion of privacy under the guise of promoting safer communities by expelling immigrants from housing areas.
- **DHS:** Department of Homeland Security; works in conjunction with ICE to implement law enforcement
- **ICE:** Immigration and Customs Enforcement
- **NIJC:** National Immigrant Justice Center; responsible for outing ICE & DHS' shady practices and acts of withholding information. They forged the Freedom of Information Act in order to get those two departments to release information about facilities, the condition of detainees, and other relevant information. This act was constructed so that the public may scrutinize the actions of ICE/DHS

Core Social Work Values:

Promoting open borders is strongly supported by social work values. The dignity and worth of a person is fundamental to social work values. By opening the Southern U.S. borders, Americans would be acknowledging that the people on the other side of the border possess the same worth and should have the same opportunities regardless of where they were born. By seeking equal opportunity for immigrants and advocating for those who are oppressed, the value of social justice is exhibited. Opening the borders would allow more families to stay together, which is supported by the value of human relationships.

Summary of Data Collection:

The evidence that gives credibility to the statements above was taken from internet sources, written sources, and an interview. The majority of the quantitative data was found on government or credible organizations websites. Articles from the Mckee Library Database also provided relevant information. Quantitative data was collected by interviewing Jose Deschamps. Since he immigrated for the Dominican Republic, he provided personal insight on the immigration process.

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