

Written Debate Outline: Increasing US immigration quotas is beneficial for Americans

Southern Adventist University

October 27, 2022

Debate Objectives - Madison

The purpose of our debate is to stimulate critical thinking about the issue of immigration in the US and the importance of immigration policy. We will demonstrate through research how immigration quotas positively affect not only the immigrants but also Americans and America as a whole. We will also dispel some common myths that are perpetuated in US society about immigrants, immigration, and its effects on the US economy and workforce.

Outline of Strategy

Opening Statement/Data Summary - Laura (Nowrasteh)

01 “Immigrants will take American jobs, lower wages, and especially hurt the poor.”

At worst, immigrants only negatively affect the wages of a small number of American workers while raising them for the rest.

- Immigrants have different skill levels 29 % are dropouts as opposed to 9% of natives
- Differences in language ability means immigrants push native born workers into better jobs
- Immigrants are about twice as likely to start a business than natives, creating jobs
- Investors increase capital stock, tools that help workers produce goods and services in response to a rise in population
- Scale effect, bigger economy increases demand for labor

Mariel boatlift increased population of Miami by 7% in 42 days in 1980 and is one of the most referenced studies in the immigration debate.

02 “It is easy to immigrate here legally. Why don’t illegal immigrants just get in line?”

It’s very difficult to immigrate legally to the United States. Immigration law is second only to the income tax code in legal complexity.

Green Card Categories

- Relatives of other legal immigrants and American citizens.
- Skilled immigrant workers sponsored by American firms.
- Refugees and asylum seekers.

- Diversity green card lottery. For 2023 there were over 7 million qualified entries. Of those entries, approximately 119,262 applicants were notified that they are eligible to submit an immigrant visa application.

03 “Immigrants abuse the welfare state.”

Immigrants use significantly less welfare than native-born Americans.

- In 2006, illegal immigrant non-elderly adults consumed about \$1.1 billion in government healthcare benefits out of \$88 billion spent by governments in that year for that age group- a rate far below their share of the population
- If native-born Americans used government benefits at the same rate and consumed the same value of benefits as immigrants, the welfare state would shrink by 43 percent, or by more than \$1.3 trillion.
- Immigrants also make large net contributions to Medicare and Social Security because of their ages, ineligibility, and greater likelihood of retiring in other countries.

04 “Immigrants increase the budget deficit and government debt.”

Immigrants in the United States have about a net zero effect on government budgets-they pay about as much in taxes as they consume in benefits.

- Higher immigrant fertility and the long-run productivity of those people born in the United States generates tax revenue
- Scale effect, grow the economy and increase tax revenue overall.
- Many immigrants come when they are relatively young, but not young enough to be in public schools. They work and pay taxes without consuming money in education and welfare benefits first. They are more likely to pay taxes immediately without receiving benefits.
- Between 50-75 percent of illegal immigrants comply with federal tax law

05 “Immigrants increase economic inequality.”

Maybe. The evidence on how immigration affects economic inequality in the United States is mixed-some research finds relatively small effects, and some finds substantial ones. The standard of living is much more important than the income distribution.

- About a third of the real estate price increase from 1970 to 2010 in American cities can be explained by the increase in immigration.

- There is a big difference in outcomes between a study that measure how immigration affects economic inequality only among natives and another study that includes immigrants and their earnings.

06 “Today’s immigrants don’t assimilate as immigrants from previous eras did.”

Immigrants to the United States-including Mexicans-are assimilating as well as or better than immigrant groups from Europe over a hundred years ago.

- Assimilation is never perfect and always takes time, but it’s going very well. According to the National Academies of Sciences’ 2015 book *The Integration of Immigrants into American Society*, a thorough summary of the relevant academic literature about immigrant assimilation.
- Indicators of Immigrant Integration 2015 analysis immigrant and second-generation integration on 27 measurable indicators across developed nations says that the findings for the United States are quite positive.
- Economist Jacob Vigdor at the University of Washington concludes that “...evidence does not support the notion that this wave of migration poses a true threat to the institutions that withstood those earlier waves. Basic indicators of assimilation, from naturalization to English ability, are if anything stronger now than they were a century ago.”
- Ethnic attrition complicates how we measure immigrant assimilation
- Despite current violence towards immigrants, violence towards Catholic immigrants during the 19th and 20th centuries puts current violence in perspective, and while assimilation is always tough, our current trends are positive.

07 “Immigrants are a major source of crime.”

Immigrants, including illegal immigrants, are less likely to be incarcerated in prisons, convicted of crimes, or arrested than native-born Americans.

- Government commissions and academic papers about immigration and crime found no relationship between crime and immigration in 1896, 1909, 1931, 1994, or more recent years.
- Some immigrants do commit violent and property crimes but, overall, they are less likely to do so.
- Cities with more immigrants and their descendants tend to have less crime.
- All immigrants have a lower criminal incarceration rate, and there are generally lower crime rates in the neighborhoods where they live.

- Being an illegal immigrant in the United States is not a crime, but rather a civil infraction. The difference being that crimes are punished with jail time and civil infractions are remedied by correcting the infraction.
- 49 states do not record the immigration statuses of those in prison or convicted of a crime.

08 “Immigrants pose a unique risk today because of terrorism.”

The annual chance of being murdered in a terrorist attack committed by a foreign-born person on U.S. soil from 1975 through the end of 2017 was about 1 in 3.8 million per year.

- Immigration is not correlated with terrorist attacks and the risk of being murdered in an attack committed by a foreign-born terrorist is also small
- More than 98 percent of the people murdered by foreign-born terrorists on U.S. soil were murdered on 9/11 and the attackers entered on tourist visas and one student visa, not immigrant visas
- A single deadly terrorist entered as a result of a vetting failure for every 379 million visas or status approvals from 2002 through 2016.

09 “The United States has the most open immigration policy in the world.”

The annual inflow of immigrants to the United States, as a percentage of our population, is below that of most other rich countries in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

- More immigrants come to the United States legally each year than to any other country. However, the annual inflow of immigrants as a percentage of our population is below that of most other rich countries. The percentage of our population that is foreign-born is about 13.5 percent- below historical highs in the United States.

10 “Amnesty or a failure to enforce our immigration laws will destroy the Rule of Law in the United States.”

America’s current immigration laws violate every principal component of the Rule of Law. Enforcing laws that are inherently capricious and that are contrary to our traditions is inconsistent with a stable Rule of Law.

- Through arbitrary quotas and other regulations, the immigration laws are applied differently according to people’s country of birth.
- For the rule of Law to be present, good laws are required not just strict adherence to and government enforcement of bad laws.

- Enforcing bad laws poorly is better than enforcing bad laws uniformly despite the uncertainty that the action generates.

11 “Illegal immigration or expanding legal immigration will destroy American national sovereignty.”

Different immigration policies do not reduce the U.S. government’s ability to defend American sovereignty.

- Keeping out nonstate actors who do not intend to commit violence that would replace or overthrow the state is not necessary for the continued existence of the U.S. government
- The main effect of our immigration laws is to prevent willing foreign workers from selling their labor to Americans who wish to voluntarily purchase it.
- From 1790 to 1875 the federal government place no restriction on immigration, and the open immigration policy did not stop the United States from fighting three major wars: the War of 1812, the Mexican-American War, and the Civil War.
- To argue that open borders would destroy American sovereignty is to argue that the United States was not a sovereign country when it had open borders during the presidential administrations of George Washinton, Andrew Jackson, Abraham lincoln, and others. We do not have to choose between immigration and U.S. national sovereignty.

14 “The brain drain of smart immigrants to the United States impoverishes other countries.”

The flow of skilled workers to rich nations increases the incomes of people in the destination country, enriches the immigrants, and helps (or at least does not hurt) those left behind.

- Remittances that immigrants send home are often large enough to offset any loss in home country income through emigration.
- The potential to emigrate and the higher returns from education increase the incentive for workers in the developing world to acquire skills that they otherwise might not have, thereby increasing the quantity of human capital.
- Economic development should be about increasing the incomes of people and not the amount of economic activity in specific geographical regions. Immigration and emigration do just that.

15 “Immigrants will increase crowding, harm the environment, and [insert misanthropic statement here].”

People, including immigrants, are an economic and environmental blessing and not a curse.

- Reforming or removing local land use laws that prevent development would go a long way to alleviating any concerns about overcrowding.

Closing Statement - Madison 3 mins

- A. America has been known as the land of opportunity for over two hundred years. As we have demonstrated today, expanding immigration quotas contributes to that opportunity, not only for immigrants but also for Americans as a whole. There are many benefits to immigration which we discussed today: economic growth, increased employment opportunities for Americans, and contributions to the culture such as food, music, and arguably the most valuable: a different perspective on life.
- B. Many people who wish to immigrate to the US do not come because they want handouts or have ill intentions.. For example, one family who lived in Nicaragua had to uproot their life because the stepfather was being threatened by a bloodthirsty gang. The parents and their two young teen sons fled from their home in the middle of the night, with only what they could carry in a few suitcases. This family set eyes on America because they needed work to get the money necessary for survival. As they neared the border to cross into America, the mother and stepfather were suddenly kidnapped by unknown men with machine guns. The two boys escaped and, not knowing what else to do, made for the border. At much peril to themselves, these young boys managed to cross the border alone and were taken in at a processing center in the US. While being processed, the oldest son finally confided to a social worker, “I don’t know if my mom is alive”. As he shared this, the young boy began experiencing an intense panic attack from all the physical, mental,

and emotional stress he had been carrying from this dangerous journey to the US border (M. S. Valez LCSWA, personal communication, October 23, 2022) What a burden for these young boys to carry alone! Thankfully, this story has a happy ending and the boys were safely reunited with their family, but many such stories do not end as nicely. Immigrants from many countries come to seek work and opportunities in America, the land of opportunity, yet they face so many perils and obstacles in this endeavor. By changing our immigration policies and quotas, we can make a change for these people and for our country. While the change may have its benefits and losses, no significant change comes without short term loss. Isn't it worth the small cost, for the great reward that can be received?

Cross Examination Questions - Rafael

1. As students of Southern Adventist University, we are to reflect God in our actions and words. Even though within the bible it states in Acts 20:35, "In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" Do the main viewpoints of both Social Work and God's will not share similarities and by not serving those in need it contradicts our faith?
2. Within the NASW Code of Ethics 4.02 under "Discrimination" states that " Social Workers should not practice, condone, facilitate, or collaborate with any form of discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or expression, age, marital status, political belief, religion, immigration status, or mental or physical ability. As social workers, it is our duty to assist and empower those that may not be able to reach out to those necessary resources

because of their unfortunate situation. Many immigrants who come to this nation want to simply provide for themselves and others and seek a better life than wherever they come from. These people use any means to reach that goal and is it not our duty to provide those opportunities as professionals who have the ability to reach out?

3. If we as social workers believe that foreigners who come into this country are devaluing and misrepresenting the national ideology, would this not be in violation of another section of the NASW Code of Ethics under section 4.06” Misrepresentations” which states that social workers must make clear and concise separation of professional and individual beliefs? That they represent the wellness of both the institution that is dedicated to helping those who seek opportunity and the care given is not based on any negative conceptions that we have?

Key Terms - Laura

Displacement effect - pushing natives out of jobs

Scale effect - when a bigger economy increases demand for labor.

Capital stock - tools that help workers produce goods and services in response to a rise in population

Ethnic Attrition - When immigrants and their descendants shed their identification with an ethnic or country-of-origin identity.

Social Work Values

We believe because of our position in this debate, that all social work values are applicable. The topic of immigrMORGANation has always been consistently debated on the impact that it has on our nation. The core value that can be the umbrella term is the dignity and worth of a person which all people have. These people come from a wide variety of backgrounds

and complications that led them to seeking refugee in a country that they believe to be a new opportunity. Those that are looking for new opportunities should be treated with the correlating amount of respect and care so that they continue to strive for better. As social workers and Christians, it is our duty to apply these values to the maximum reach that is within our power and support growth within our country. Social Workers are called to amplify the voice of those who do not have the ability to do so and provide those sources that go against those who would wish to degrade and contribute to their struggles of providing for themselves and family

Interview

(M. S. Valez LCSWA, personal communication, October 23, 2022)

References - Madison

- Andrew C. Forrester et al., “Do Immigrants Import Terrorism?” *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization* 166 (October 2019): 529—43; Alex Nowrasteh, “Terrorists by Immigration Status and Nationality: A Risk Analysis, 1975–2017,” *Cato Institute Policy Analysis* no. 866, May 7, 2019.
- Brian Duncan and Stephen Trejo, “Socioeconomic Integration of U.S. Immigrant Groups over the Long Term: The Second Generation and Beyond,” *National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper* no. 24394, March 12, 2018; Ran Abramitzky, Leah Platt Boustan, and Katherine Eriksson, “Cultural Assimilation during the Age of Mass Migration,” *National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper* no. 22381, September 2017.
- Elena Fairley and Rich Jones, “Colorado’s Undocumented Immigrants: What They Pay, What They Cost in Taxes,” *Bell Policy Center*, April 22, 2011; Wayne A. Cornelius and Jessa

M. Lewis, eds., *Impacts of Border Enforcement on Mexican Migration: The View from Sending Communities* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2007).

English Standard Version Bible. (2001). ESV Online. <https://esv.literalword.com/>

George Borjas, *Immigration Economics* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), p. 120; National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, “The Economic and Fiscal Consequences of Immigration,” Table 8-14, 2017, pp. 235–37.

Gianmarco Ottaviano and Giovanni Peri, “Rethinking the Effect of Immigration on Wages,” *Journal of the European Economic Association* 10, no. 1 (2012): 152–97.

George Borjas, “The Wage Impact of the Marielitos: A Reappraisal,” *Industrial and Labor Relations Review* 75, no. 5 (2017).

Giovanni Peri and Vasil Yasenov, “The Labor Market Effects of a Refugee Wave,” *Journal of Human Resources* 54 (2019): 267–309.

Graham C. Ousey and Charis E. Kubrin, “Immigration and Crime: Assessing a Contentious Issue,” *Annual Review of Criminology* 1 (January 2018): 63–84.

(June 2013): 1153–60; Stuart Anderson, “The Contribution of Legal Immigration to the Social Security System,” *National Foundation for American Policy Analysis*, March 2005.

Jacob Vigdor, “The Civic and Cultural Assimilation of Immigrants to the United States,” working paper, Sanford School of Public Policy, Duke University. See also Benjamin Powell, *The Economics of Immigration: Market-Based Approaches, Social Science, and Public Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015).

Key facts about U.S. immigration policies and Biden’s proposed changes. (2022, January 11). Pew Research Center.

<https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2022/01/11/key-facts-about-u-s-immigration-policies-and-bidens-proposed-changes/>

Lawrence Kahn, “The Impact of Employment Protection Mandates on Demographic Temporary Employment Patterns: International Microeconomic Evidence,” *Economic Journal* 117, no. 521 (June 2007): F333–F356.

Leah Zallman et al., “Immigrants Contributed an Estimated \$115.2 Billion More to the Medicare Trust Fund than They Took Out in 2002–09,” *Health Affairs*

Migration Policy Institute, “U.S. Immigrant Population and Share over Time, 1850–Present,” chart, <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub/charts/immigrant-population-over-time>;

Alex Nowrasteh, “Defending Green Cards,” *Cato at Liberty* (blog), July 21, 2016.

Michael A. Clemens and Lant Pritchett, “The New Economic Case for Migration Restrictions: An Assessment,” *Journal of Development Economics* 138 (May 2019): 153–64.

Michael A. Clemens and Jennifer Hunt, “The Labor Market Effects of Refugee Waves: Reconciling Conflicting Results.” *ILR Review* 72, no. 4 (August 2019): 818–57.

Michael T. Light, Ty Miller, and Brian C. Kelly, “Undocumented Immigration, Drug Problems, and Driving under the Influence in the United States, 1990–2014,” *American Journal of Public Health* 107 (2017): 1448–54.

National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, *The Economic and Fiscal Consequences of Immigration* (Washington: National Academies Press, 2017), Table 8-14.

Nowrasteh, A. (n.d.). *The most common arguments against immigration and why they're wrong*. www.cato.org.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1lfuAruuxCvFm5kOIIcORKro-UDvBzuWL/view?ts=6355acd8>

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and European Union, *Indicators of Immigrant Integration 2015: Settling In* (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2015).

Orrenius, P. (2016). *Benefits of immigration outweigh the costs*. Benefits of Immigration Outweigh the Costs.

<https://www.bushcenter.org/catalyst/north-american-century/benefits-of-immigration-outweigh-costs.html>

Federal Bureau of Investigation, “Expanded Homicide Data Table 10: Murder Circumstances by Relationship, 2018,” [https://ucr.fbi.gov/crime-in-the-Relationship, 2018,](https://ucr.fbi.gov/crime-in-the-u.s.-2018/tables/expanded-homicide-data-table-10.xls) [u.s/2018/crime-in-the-u.s.-2018/tables/expanded homicide-data-table-10.xls](https://ucr.fbi.gov/crime-in-the-u.s.-2018/tables/expanded-homicide-data-table-10.xls).

Pew Research Center, “Support for Free Market System,” infographic, October 7, 2014, <http://www.pewglobal.org/2014/10/09/emerging-and-developing-economies-much-more-optimistic-than-rich-countries-about-the-future/inequality-01/>.

The Holy Bible, English Standard Version Bible. (2016) Biblegateway. (Original work published 2001)