

## **FSA ARGUMENTATIVE PROMPT**

After you read the passages, write an essay in which you take a position on whether or not immigrants are helping or hurting the workforce. Use the information presented in the texts to support your points.

Make sure to include information from all the passages in your essay.

### **Manage your time carefully so that you can**

- read the passages;
- plan your essay;
- write your essay; and
- revise and edit your essay.

### **Be sure to**

- include a claim;
- address counterclaims;
- use evidence from multiple sources; and
- avoid overly relying on one source.

## **An Aging U.S. is Revitalized by Immigrants**

*David Dyssegaard Kallick is a senior fellow at the [Fiscal Policy Institute](#).*

JANUARY 6, 2015

[HTTP://WWW.NYTIMES.COM/ROOMFORDEBATE/2015/01/06/DO-IMMIGRANTS-TAKE-JOBS-FROM-AMERICAN-BORN-WORKERS/AN-AGING-US-IS-REVITALIZED-BY-IMMIGRANTS](http://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2015/01/06/do-immigrants-take-jobs-from-american-born-workers/an-aging-us-is-revitalized-by-immigrants)

We are seeing job growth in the United States. That's very welcome news.

To say all of the net gain in employment since 2007 has gone to immigrants, as a recent backgrounder from the Center for Immigration Studies does, is a strained interpretation of the facts, not to mention an odd way to spin positive economic results as something vaguely dark and threatening.

*The increase in the number of immigrant workers has offset the decline in the U.S.-born prime working age population.*

Immigrants are part of America's DNA. Rather than looking for scapegoats in an economy that is growing we should concentrate on improving opportunities for all Americans, both immigrants and U.S.-born.

Why is net growth in the number of jobs held by U.S.-born workers slow? Part of the story is that many are retiring. Between 2007 and 2014 the U.S.-born population in prime working age — between 25 to 54 years old — [declined](#) by 1.9 million. And, among people in prime working age, U.S.-born workers seem to do better at finding a job.

At the same time, the number of immigrant workers has increased by 1.7 million, nearly offsetting the decline in the U.S.-born prime working age. The number of immigrant *employers* has increased as well. Immigrants are both employees and employers: they are [a little more likely than the rest of the population to own a business](#), and, [as an upcoming report will explore in detail](#), they are frequent contributors to local economic growth. There is no doubt that it would be better to replace our broken immigration system with one that functions well. A [nonpartisan commission](#), as former labor secretary Ray Marshall has proposed, could make employment-based visas responsive to labor market conditions in the U.S. — when there are shortages there would be more visas, and when there are not there would be fewer.

President Obama's executive action is also a step in the right direction. It does not significantly add workers to the labor force, but it helps those who are already working avoid being taken advantage of by employers. That's good for them, but it's good for their nonimmigrant co-workers as well. And it will allow immigrants to seek a better job match, which [will modestly increase both productivity and tax revenue](#).

## Unskilled Workers Lose Out to Immigrants

*Steven A. Camarota is the director of research at the Center for Immigration Studies.*

JANUARY 6, 2015

<http://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2015/01/06/do-immigrants-take-jobs-from-american-born-workers/unskilled-workers-lose-out-to-immigrants>

There are an estimated [11 million illegal immigrants](#) in the country and we also admit over a million permanent [legal immigrants](#) each year, leading to enormous implications for the U.S. labor market. Bureau of Labor Statistics data [show](#) that there are some 58 million working-age (16 to 65) native-born Americans not working — unemployed or out of the labor market entirely. This is roughly 16 million more than in 2000. Equally troubling, wages have stagnated or declined for most American workers. This is especially true for the least educated, who are most likely to compete with immigrants (legal and illegal).

*1.5 million fewer native-born Americans are working now than in 2007, yet 2 million more immigrants are working.*

Anyone who has any doubt about how bad things are can see for themselves at the bureau's [website](#), which shows that, as of November, there were 1.5 million fewer native-born Americans working than in November 2007, while 2 million more immigrants (legal and illegal) were working. Thus, all net employment gains since November 2007 have gone to immigrants.

The decline in work has particularly affected those under age 29, and the less-educated, who are the most likely to be in competition with immigrants. A [study](#) by the economist George J. Borjas and others found that immigration reduces the employment of less-educated black men. [Another study](#) came to the same conclusion. A recent analysis by Federal Reserve economist [Christopher Smith \(2012\)](#) found that immigration reduces the employment of U.S. teenagers.

Despite this, many members of Congress and President Obama support giving work permits to illegal immigrants and increasing legal immigration even further. Once given work authorization, illegal immigrants can compete for better-paying jobs now unavailable to them because they require background checks and valid Social Security numbers — as security guards, interstate truckers, and public sector employees. This despite a record number of adults not working and stagnant wages. Economists debate how much immigration impacts natives, but agree that the data show no labor shortage.

Despite this, last year the Senate passed [S.744](#), which would have given virtually all illegal immigrants work authorization, created a new guest worker program, and expanded family-based immigration. The Congressional Research Service estimated that bill would have roughly doubled the level of future legal immigration to 2 million a year for at least the first decade.

"We are a nation of immigrants," we are often told by the most affluent and educated segments of our society, who face the least competition from immigrants, so we shouldn't restrict immigration or enforce our laws. But this ignores the very real harm to poorer Americans affected by current high levels of immigration.

## Immigrants Are Replacing, Not Displacing, Workers

*[Maria E. Enchautegui](#) is a senior research associate at the Urban Institute.*

UPDATED JANUARY 6, 2015, 8:58 PM

[HTTP://WWW.NYTIMES.COM/ROOMFORDEBATE/2015/01/06/DO-IMMIGRANTS-TAKE-JOBS-FROM-AMERICAN-BORN-WORKERS/IMMIGRANTS-ARE-REPLACING-NOT-DISPLACING-WORKERS](http://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2015/01/06/do-immigrants-take-jobs-from-american-born-workers/immigrants-are-replacing-not-displacing-workers)

The Center for Immigration Studies' [report](#) rekindles the debate over how immigration affects U.S.-born workers. Most research suggests that the effects are small or zero, but a few [studies](#) put some of those results [into question](#) — at the very least, [showing that the issue is still complicated](#).

*U.S.-born workers are getting more educated. More jobs require little education, and they are being taken by immigrants.*

The C.I.S. notes that the employment gains of immigrants in the past few years have been large compared with the small gains by U.S. workers. [Idescribed](#) similar trends in an earlier research brief.

But larger employment gains don't necessarily mean that immigrants are displacing U.S.-born workers. Whether and how much immigrant workers are displacing U.S.-born workers depends on whether they are competing for the same jobs.

About half of all workers ages 18 to 64 without a high school diploma are immigrants. We know that many of these immigrants are unauthorized and do not speak English well. As such, they tend to work in different occupations than U.S.-born workers — often, occupations that require little interaction with the public, that do not require licensing, and that do not require supervisory skills. Giovanni Peri and Chad Sparber [argue](#) that immigration allows for an efficient sorting of workers, so displacement of U.S.-born workers by immigrants is unlikely.

The number of U.S.-born workers with no college education has declined by almost 5 million since 2007, according to my analysis of Census data. That means fewer U.S. born workers are competing for jobs requiring less education, the kind immigrants generally get. So immigrants are replacing, not displacing U.S. born workers. This trend should continue. Of the top 10 occupations with the most projected employment growth, eight do not require a high school diploma, [according](#) to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Would granting temporary status to more than 4 million undocumented immigrants mean more competition with U.S.-born workers? I would think so, unless the differences in skill levels are so large that these immigrants can't take advantage of the ability to now apply for a wider range of jobs. But with less uncertainty about deportation, these deferred-action immigrants may decide to invest in new job skills, making them more likely to face competition from U.S.-born workers.

## Immigration

"We didn't raise the Statue of Liberty with her back to the world, we did it with her light shining as a beacon to the world. And whether we were Irish or Italians or Germans crossing the Atlantic, or Japanese or Chinese crossing the Pacific; whether we crossed the Rio Grande or flew here from all over the world — generations of immigrants have made this country into what it is. It's what makes us special."

— *President Obama, November 21, 2014*

---

America's immigration system is broken. Too many employers game the system by hiring undocumented workers, and there are 11 million people living in the shadows. Neither is good for the economy or the country. President Obama is eager to work with both the House and the Senate on a comprehensive solution to immigration reform, similar to the bipartisan legislation that passed the Senate in 2013.

President Obama's push for legislation to fix our broken immigration system garnered broad bipartisan support both among the public and in the Senate and addressed all of the core problems our system faces. He spent over a year giving House Republicans room to act on the Senate bill or their own version of legislation to fix the system. Unfortunately, House Republicans refused to give the Senate bill an up-or-down vote.

That's why the President took action to fix as much of the broken system as he could through his immigration accountability executive actions. These actions will help secure the border, prioritize felons, not families, and hold undocumented immigrants accountable by requiring them to pass a criminal background check and pay their fair share of taxes, and modernizes the legal immigration system. These are common-sense steps, but only Congress can finish the job.

Three critical elements of the President's executive actions are:

- **Cracking Down on Illegal Immigration at the Border:** The President's actions increase the chances that anyone attempting to cross the border illegally will be caught and sent back. Continuing the surge of resources that effectively reduced the number of unaccompanied children crossing the border illegally this summer, the President's actions will also centralize border security command-and-control to continue to crack down on illegal immigration.
- **Deporting Felons, Not Families:** The President's actions focus on the deportation of people who threaten national security and public safety. He has directed immigration enforcement to place anyone suspected of terrorism, violent criminals, gang members, and recent border crossers at the top of the deportation priority list.
- **Accountability – Criminal Background Checks and Taxes:** The President is also acting to hold accountable those undocumented immigrants who have lived in the U.S. for more than five years and are parents of U.S. citizens or Lawful Permanent Residents. By registering and passing criminal and national security background checks, millions of undocumented immigrants will start paying their fair share of taxes and temporarily stay in the U.S. without fear of deportation for three years at a time.

The President's actions will also streamline legal immigration to boost our economy and will promote naturalization for those who qualify.

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/issues/immigration>