

IMMIGRATION TRENDS IN TEXAS

By the Numbersⁱ

- About 16% of Texas' total population is foreign born / immigrant (3.74 million in 2006), of which over 1 in 3 are unauthorized.
- The top countries of origin are Mexico (62.1%), El Salvador (4.2%) and Vietnam (3.6%).ⁱⁱ
- 3 out of 4 Texan immigrants are working age (73.9% between the ages of 18-54 in 2007).
- Almost 1 in 3 immigrants in Texas are naturalized US citizens (30.9% in 2007). Naturalized citizens make up 7.4% of those eligible to vote in Texas.
- Almost 7 out of 10 children in Texas public schools are children of color (65% in 2007).ⁱⁱⁱ
- Almost 1 in 3 children in Texas belong to immigrant families (31% in 2007).^{iv}
- The #1 most popular boy's name for Texan born babies, for ten years running, is José.^v

Unauthorized Immigrants^{vi}

- About 1.45 million unauthorized immigrants currently reside in Texas.
- Almost 1 in 10 workers in Texas are unauthorized immigrants (7.9% in 2008).
- Unauthorized immigrants are concentrated in physically demanding, low-paying occupations including farming, maintenance, masonry, food prep, production, and truck driving.

Economic Impact of Unauthorized Immigrants: Win-Win for Texas State Economy & Budget^{vii}

The Comptroller's Office estimates that the absence of an estimated 1.4 million undocumented immigrants (in FY 2005) would have represented a loss to the Texan economy along the lines of:

- \$17.7 Billion in Gross State Product (productive economic activity in Texas)
- \$424.7 Million in *Net* State Revenue (\$1.15 Billion in costs - \$1.58 Billion in state taxes)

This is consistent with most economists' studies indicating that unauthorized immigrants bring a net benefit to the national economy and budget. There is widespread recognition that states generally bear the brunt of immigration costs without the full benefit of immigrant revenue. Texas, however, is an exception; its budget relies mostly on sales and property taxes – mostly inescapable by state residents.

The CATO Institute estimates that wholesale legalization of *all* unauthorized immigrant workers, in addition to an expanded visa program, would benefit US households by about \$180 billion per year (\$1.8 Trillion over 10 years). In contrast, the current singular focus on enforcement *costs* the US over \$80 billion annually.^{viii}

ⁱ Migration Policy Institute (2006). *Immigrants and Voting: 2008 Election Profile – Texas*.

ⁱⁱ Migration Policy Institute (2009). *Texas Social & Demographic Characteristics*. 2007 figures.

ⁱⁱⁱ Center for Public Policy Priorities (2009). *Texas KIDS COUNT Annual Data Book 2008-09*.

^{iv} Mather, Mark (2009). *Reports on America: Children in Immigrant Families Chart New Path*. Population Reference Bureau.

^v Social Security Online. *Popular Names by State*. <http://www.ssa.gov/OACT/babynames/namesbystate.html>

^{vi} Passel & Cohn (2009). *Portrait of Unauthorized Immigrants in the US*. Pew Hispanic Center.

^{vii} Texas Comptroller (2006). *Undocumented Immigrants in Texas: A Financial Analysis of the Impact to the State Budget & Economy*.

^{viii} Dixon & Rimmer (2009). *Restriction or Legalization? Measuring the Economic Benefits of Immigration Reform*. CATO.