Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, November 2026
The Economics of Public Policy Issues

University Of Minnesota

Host: Geoffrey Woglom, Director
National Economic Education Delegation

1

Available NEED Topics Include:

- US Economy
- Healthcare Economics
- Climate Change
- Economic Inequality
- Economic Mobility
- Trade and Globalization
- Minimum Wages
- Immigration Economics
- Housing Policy
- Federal Budgets
- Federal Debt
- Black-White Wealth Gap
- Autonomous Vehicles
- US Social Policy

2

Course Schedule

Contemporary Economic Policy

- Week 1 (10/8): Economic Update & Changes at the Fed, Geoffrey Woglom, Amherst College
- Week 2 (10/15): Climate Change Economics, Galina Hale, UC Santa Cruz
- Week 3 (10/22): The Future of Money, Geoffrey Woglom, Amherst College
- Week 4 (10/29): The Economics of Tariffs, Tibor Besedes, Georgia Institute of Technology
- **Week 5 (11/5): Economics of Immigration, Tibor Besedes, Georgia Institute of Technology**
- Week 6 (11/12): Gender Pay Gap, Tibor Besedes, Georgia Institute of Technology

3

Submitting Questions

- **I encourage questions. Please put questions in the chat and I will answer them periodically during the talk,**
- **We will do a verbal Q&A once the material has been presented.**
- **Slides are available from the NEED website https://needecon.org/delivered_presentations.php.**

4



The Economics of Immigration

Tibor Besedes
Georgia Institute of Technology



5

Credits and Disclaimer

- **This slide deck was authored by:**
  - Anna Maria Mayda, Georgetown University
  - Robert Gitter, Ohio Wesleyan University
  - Roger White, Whittier College
- **This slide deck was reviewed by:**
  - Kirk Doran, Notre Dame
  - Ethan Lewis, Dartmouth College
- **Disclaimer**
  - NEED presentations are designed to be nonpartisan.
  - It is, however, inevitable that presenters will be asked for and will provide their own views.
  - Such views are those of the presenter and not necessarily those of the National Economic Education Delegation (NEED).

6

Outline

- Why do people migrate?
- The nature of immigration to the U.S.
- Economics of immigration
- Recent immigration issues

NATIONAL ECONOMIC EDUCATION DELEGATION

7

Why do people migrate?

US immigration trends

NATIONAL ECONOMIC EDUCATION DELEGATION

8

8

Why Do People Migrate?

- **Push factors:**
  - Disparities in income/standards of living, and the availability of jobs, violence/war, climate change, natural disasters, population pressures, economic dislocation, religious persecution, and denial of political rights.

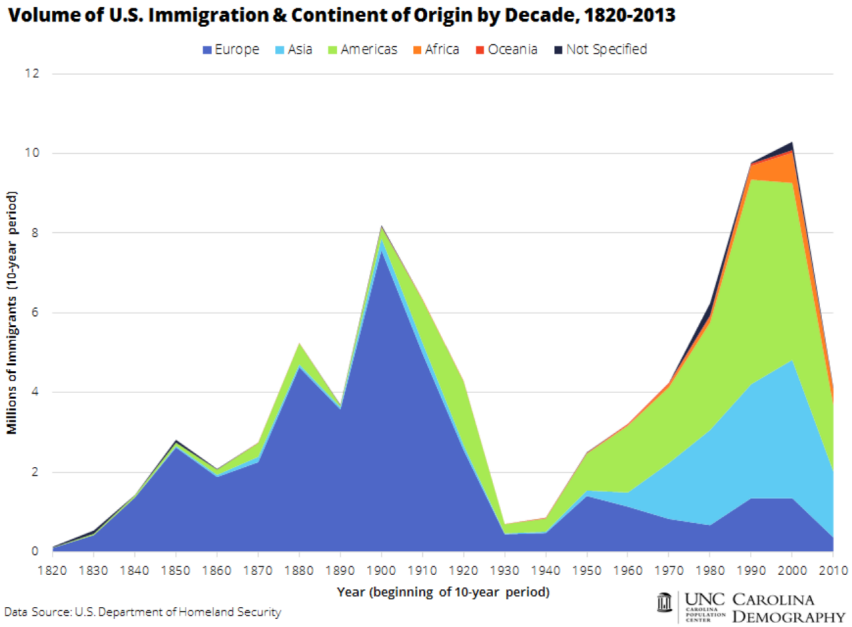
- **Pull factors:**
  - Potential for economic prosperity (higher wages, job opportunities), physical security, political freedom, and religious liberty.

NATIONAL ECONOMIC EDUCATION DELEGATION

9

Source: Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History.

9

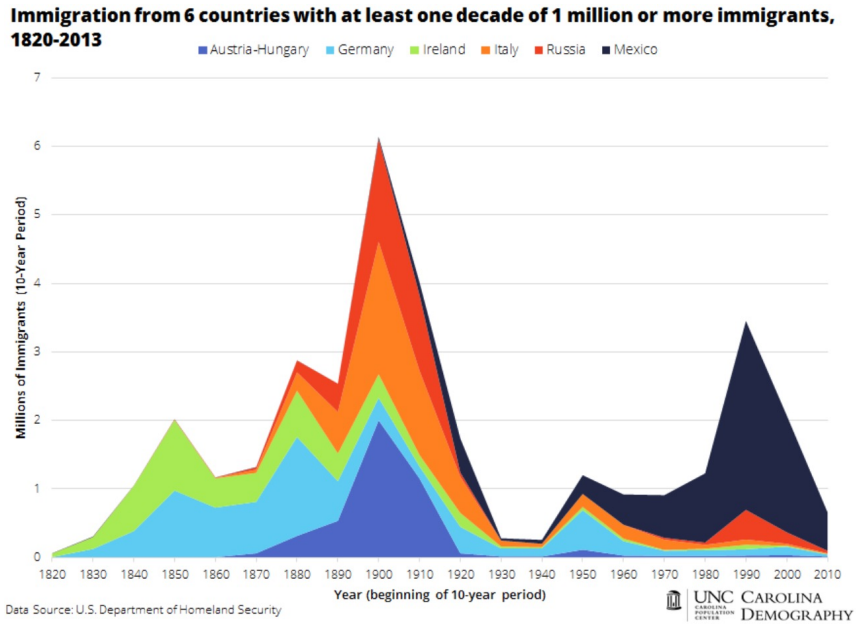


NATIONAL ECONOMIC EDUCATION DELEGATION

10

Source: https://carolinademography.cpc.unc.edu/2015/04/27/u-s-immigration-flows-1820-2013/

10



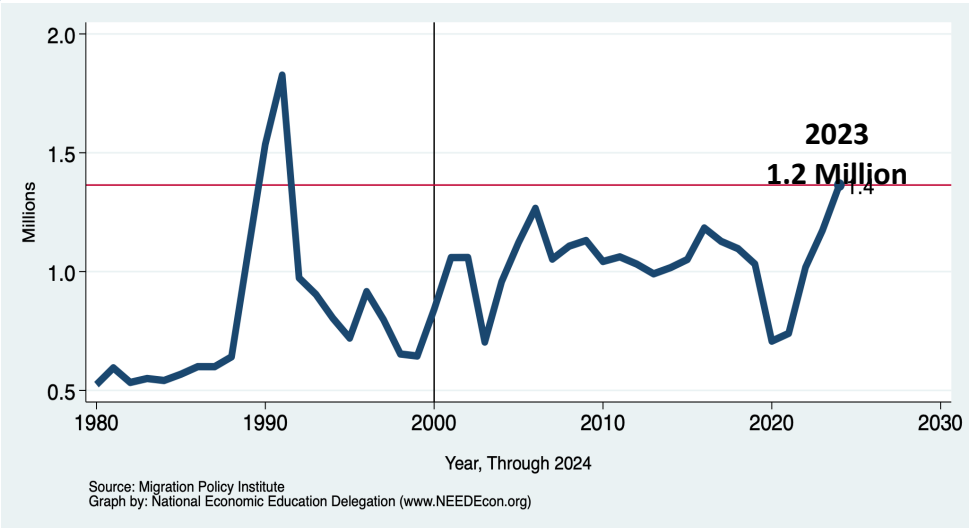
NATIONAL ECONOMIC EDUCATION DELEGATION

11

Source: https://carolinademography.cpc.unc.edu/2015/04/27/u-s-immigration-flows-1820-2013/

11

Recent Trends in Authorized Immigration

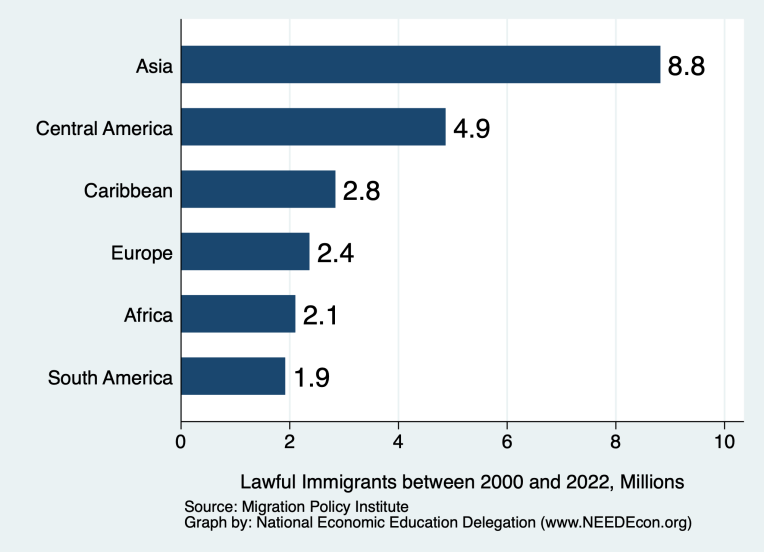


NATIONAL ECONOMIC EDUCATION DELEGATION

12

12

Authorized Immigration by Region (2000-2022)

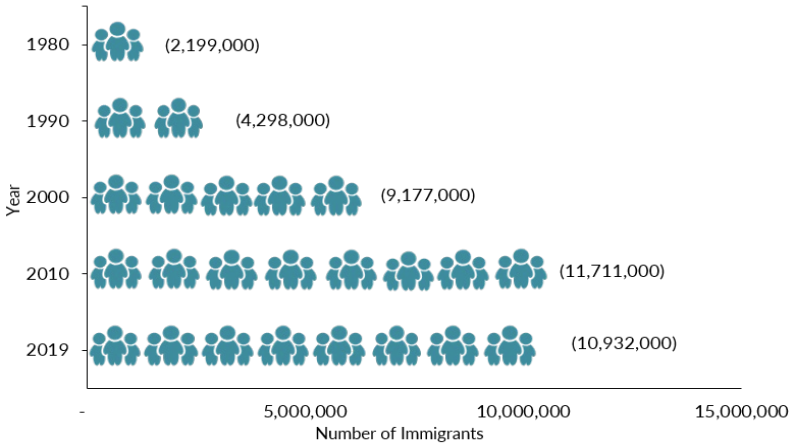


NATIONAL ECONOMIC EDUCATION DELEGATION

13

13

Mexican-Born People in the US



About 11 million in mid-2023 (Latest data)

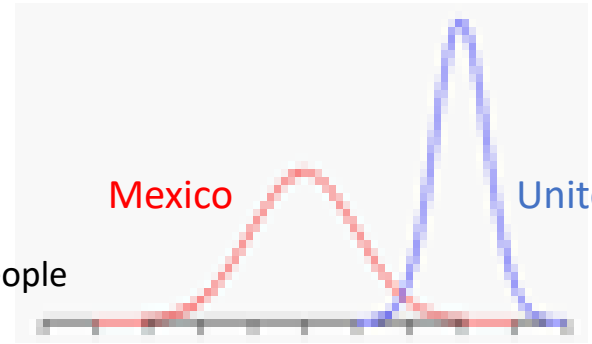
1 in 14 people born in Mexico currently lives in the US

NATIONAL ECONOMIC EDUCATION DELEGATION

14

14

Distribution of Income

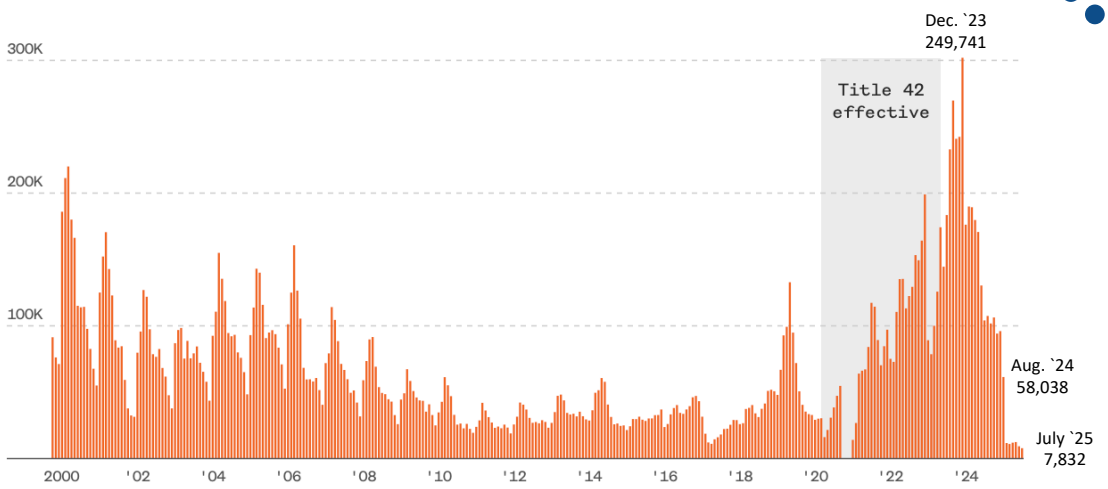


15

UNauthorized Immigration

16

Encounters w/Migrants at the U.S.-Mexico Border



NATIONAL ECONOMIC EDUCATION DELEGATION

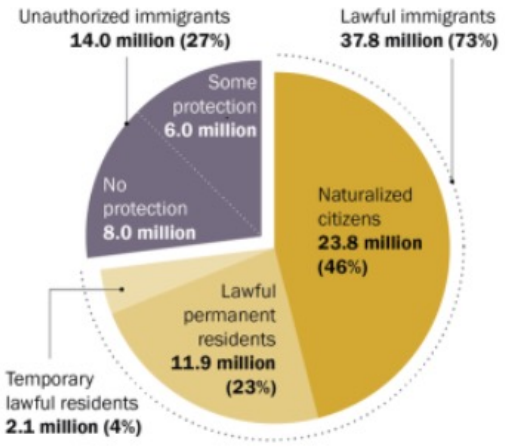
17

Source: https://www.nbcnews.com/data-graphics/us-immigration-tracker-follow-arrests-detentions-border-crossings-rcna189148

17

Unauthorized immigrants were 27% of the U.S. foreign-born population in 2023

Foreign-born population estimates, 2023



Total Foreign-Born (2023) Population: 51.8 million

Total Foreign-Born (June/25) Population: 51.8 million

NATIONAL ECONOMIC EDUCATION DELEGATION

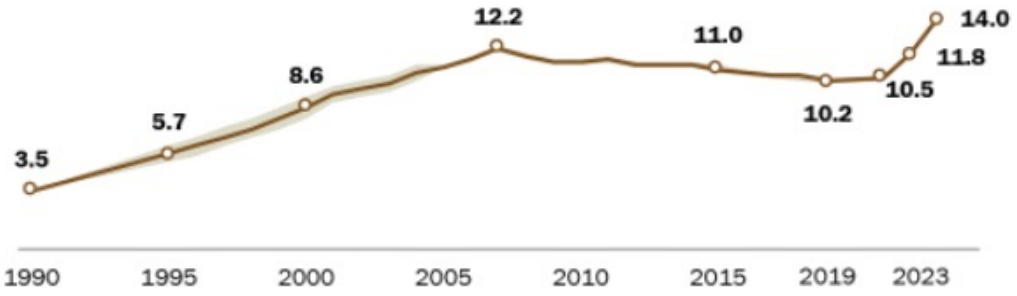
18

Source: Pew Research Center, U.S. Unauthorized Immigrant Population Reached a Record 14 Million in 2023, August 21, 2025

18

U.S. Unauthorized Immigration Totals, to 2023

U.S. immigrant population without full legal status, in millions



NATIONAL ECONOMIC EDUCATION DELEGATION

19

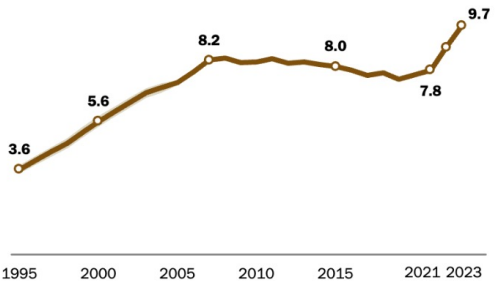
Source: Pew Research Center, What we know about unauthorized immigrants living in the U.S., July 22, 2024

19

U.S. Unauthorized Immigration: Labor Force

The number of unauthorized immigrants in the U.S. workforce grew from 2019 to 2023

Unauthorized immigrants in the U.S. civilian labor force, in millions



Note: The civilian labor force includes those working or looking for work. Shading shows the range of the estimated 90% confidence interval. The data points labeled are 1995, 2000, 2007, 2015, 2021 and 2023.
Source: Pew Research Center estimates based on augmented U.S. Census Bureau data (IPUMS).
"U.S. Unauthorized Immigrant Population Reached a Record 14 Million in 2023"
PEW RESEARCH CENTER

5% of labor force
3% of population

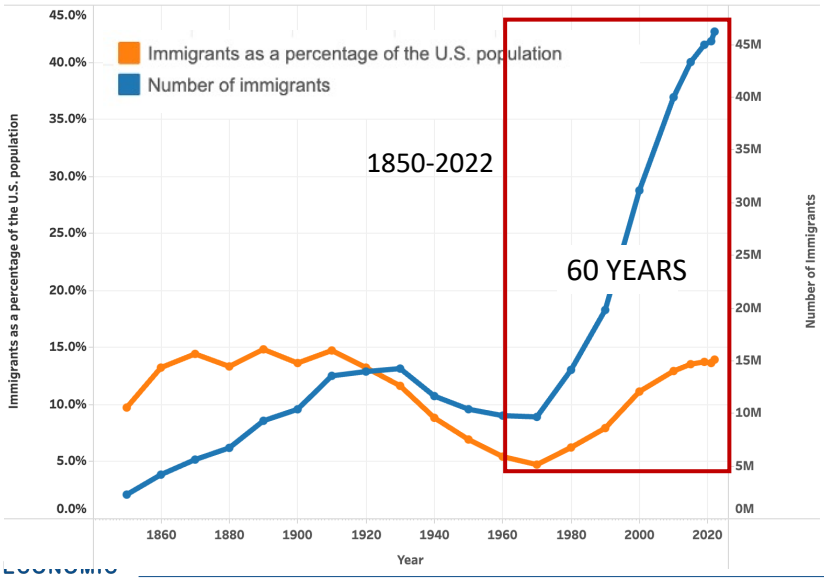
NATIONAL ECONOMIC EDUCATION DELEGATION

20

Source: Pew Research Center, What we know about unauthorized immigrants living in the U.S., July 22, 2024

20

U.S. Immigrant Population and Share over Time

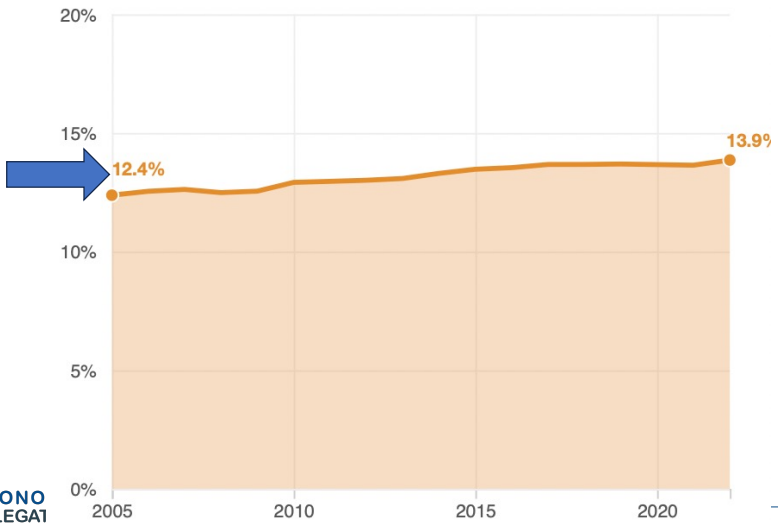


NATIONAL ECONOMIC EDUCATION DELEGATION

21

Immigrant Share of US Population

12.4 %



13.9 %

NATIONAL ECONO EDUCATION DELEGAT

22

Economics of Immigration

23

Why Do We Care? Economic Implications

- Conventional Wisdom Issues:
  - **Labor markets: Wages and Jobs**
  - **Government Revenue and Spending**
  - **Crime**
- Other issues (that don't get talked about much):
  - **Gross Domestic Product (GDP)**
  - **Innovation and Entrepreneurship**

24

GDP: How Does This Work?

- **What determines the size of an economy?**
  - Physical capital
  - Technology/productivity
  - The number of workers
    - Immigration adds to the number of workers.
- **Number of immigrants in the labor force is high**
  - 32.2 million foreign-born persons ages 16+ in the labor force in Aug/25.
  - 18.8% of the total US workforce.
- **Evidence**
  - Immigrants added 11% to GDP ($2 trillion) in 2016.

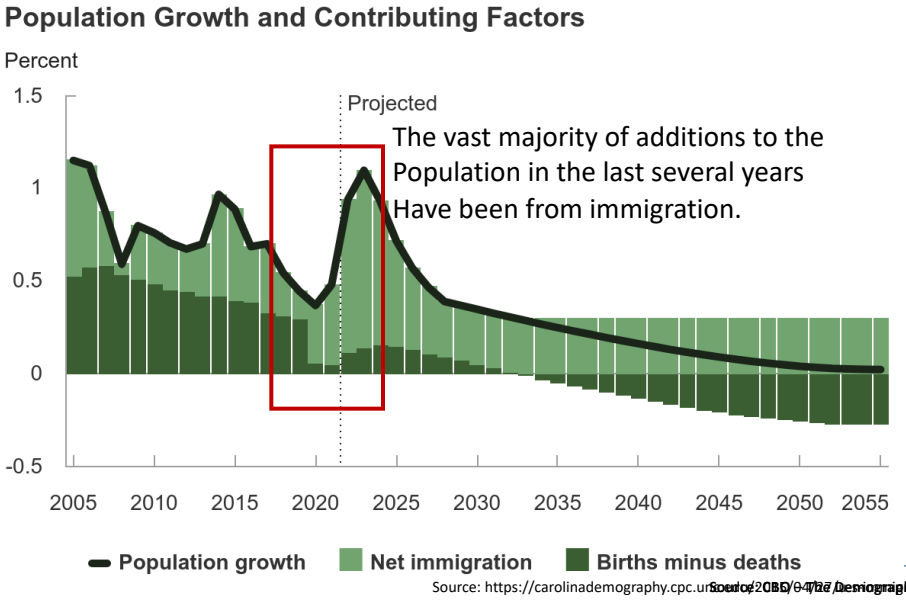
NATIONAL ECONOMIC EDUCATION DELEGATION

Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis (https://fred.stlouisfed.org/)
National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (2017) "The Economic and Fiscal Consequences of Immigration".

25

25

Is Immigration Saving the Day?



Source: https://carolinademography.cpc.unc.edu/2025/04/the-demographic-outlook-2025-2055/

26

26

Jobs: Conventional Wisdom…Upended

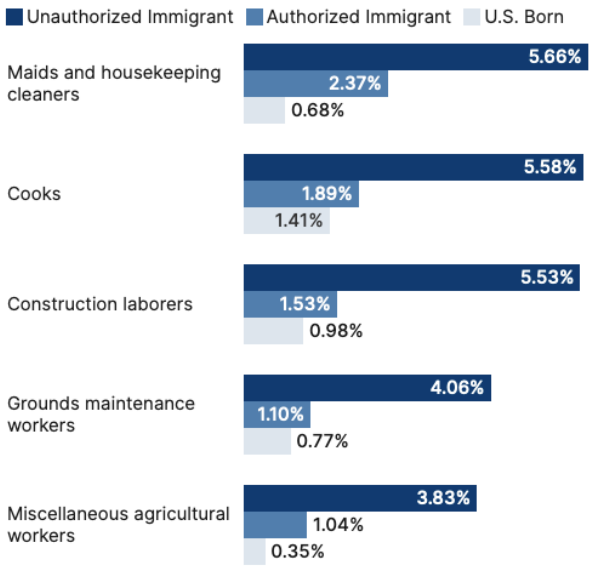
- **What is the conventional wisdom?**
  - Low-skilled immigrants come in and take jobs from low-skilled native-born individuals.
    - 1-1 tradeoff.
- **What does new research show?**
  - Low-skilled immigrants contribute positively to the economy.
    - Every 100 low-skilled immigrants: create 9 jobs for low-skilled native-born.
    - They create opportunities for low-skilled native-born workers.
  - Low-skilled immigrants take jobs that native-born don't want.

NATIONAL ECONOMIC EDUCATION DELEGATION

27

27

Share of Workers in Each Occupations



NATIONAL ECONOMIC EDUCATION DELEGATION

28

28

Pathway of Wage and Employment Effects

Inflows of Low-Skilled Immigrants

↓

Previous Immigrants

↓

Disadvantaged Minorities

↓

Native-born HS Dropouts

}

Order of Impact

Impact is negative,
But is smaller
at each step.

Positive influence on wages and employment of other workers.

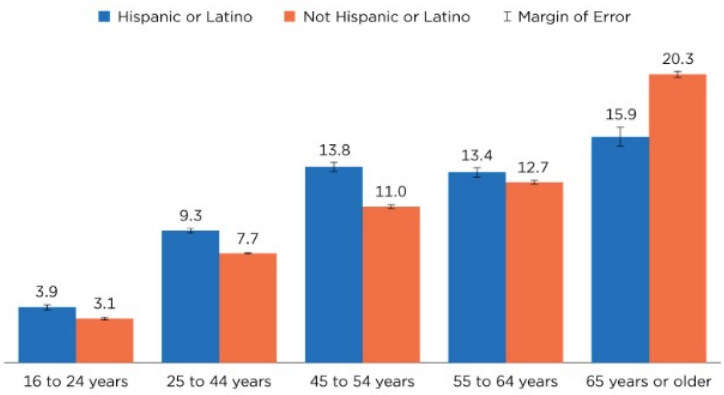
Skilled Immigrants and Innovation

- **1% increase in the share of the immigrant college graduate population**
  - 9-18% increase in patenting per capita
  - Increased immigration increases patenting by native-born population.
- **In the 1990s**
  - Increased skilled immigration can account for **one-third of increased patenting** in that decade.
  - This translates into a **1.4-2.5% increase in GDP** per capita by the end of the decade.

Source: Hunt and Gauthier-Loiselle (2008).

Immigrants and Entrepreneurship

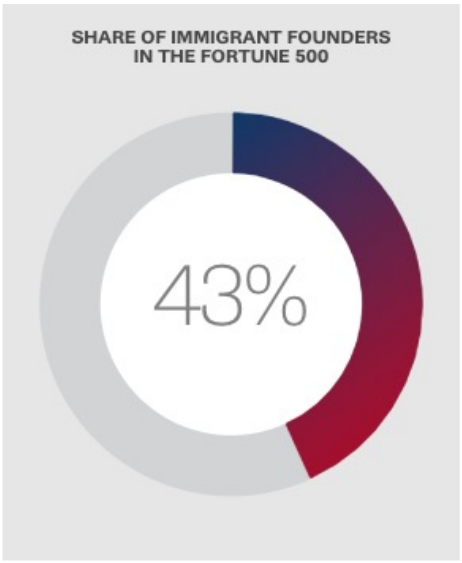
Share of Self-Employed Workers by Age and Ethnicity: 2023
(In percent)



Note: Includes civilian labor force population 16 years and over that worked in the past 12 months. For more information about the American Community Survey (ACS), refer to <www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/>.
Source: 2023 American Community Survey 1-year estimates.

Source: Magnus Lofstrom from Current Population Survey Data.

Fortune 500: First- and Second-Generation Founders



Seven *of the 10 most valuable and recognizable brands in the world were launched by immigrants or children of immigrants.*



NATIONAL ECONOMIC EDUCATION DELEGATION

33

Government Revenues and Expenditures

NATIONAL ECONOMIC EDUCATION DELEGATION

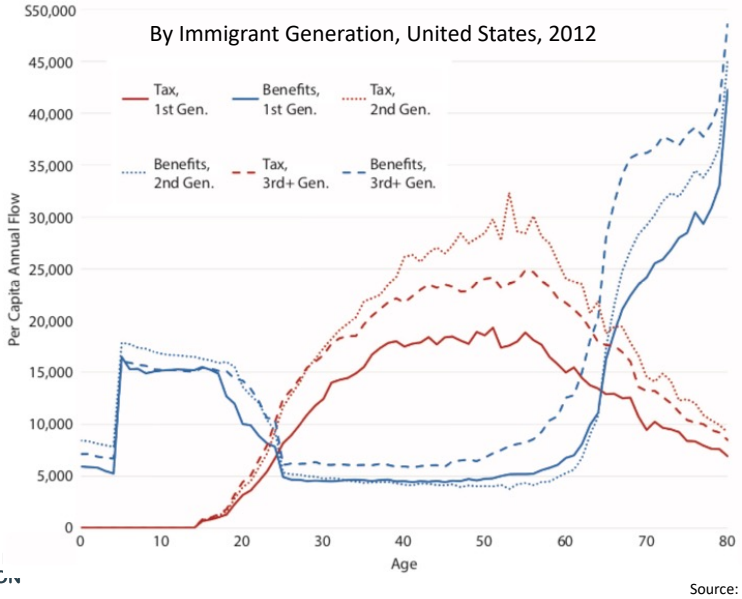
34

Topics?

- **Basic Question:**
  - Taxes (income, sales, and other) immigrants pay vs. government expenditures on public benefits and services they receive.
- **More complicated:**
  - Immigrants also affect the fiscal equation for many native-born residents.
    - Indirectly through labor and capital markets.
    - Changes in wages and the return to capital.

35

Age-Specific Taxes and Benefits



Source: Blau & Mackie (2017), p. 325.

36

What Do We Know?

- **Immigrants who arrive while of working age:**
  - Are, on average, net contributors.
  - 21-year-old with a high school diploma: +$126,000 over a lifetime
    - Though this value gradually declines with age at arrival.
    - Turns negative for arrivals of age 35+
- **Net contribution crucially depends on characteristics**
  - Age distribution, family composition, health status, fertility patterns
  - Temporary or permanent relocation
  - Employment in the legal labor market
  - Authorized or unauthorized

Bottom Line/Consensus of Estimates

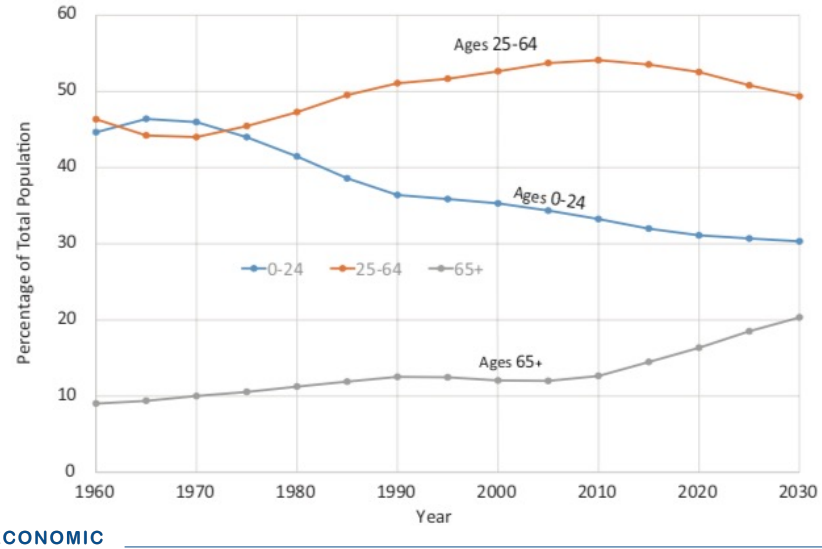
- **Federal** level: fiscal impact is generally **positive**.
- **State and local** level: typically **negative** fiscal impact.

Implications for Major Federal Programs

- **Documented immigrants are less likely to use Social Security and Medicare.**
- **Unauthorized immigrants are ineligible.**
  - They will pay into the system but cannot receive benefits.
- **Medicaid: not available to legal residents for the first five years.**
- **Provide a source of revenue for an aging population.**

39

The Aging US Population

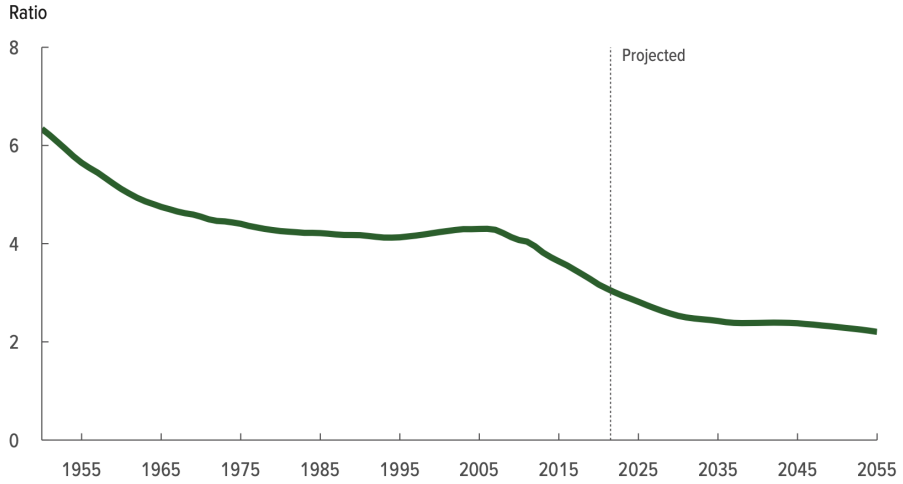


Source: Blau & Mackie (2017), p. 63.

40

Implications for Social Security

The Population Ages 25 to 64 Relative to the Population Age 65 or Older



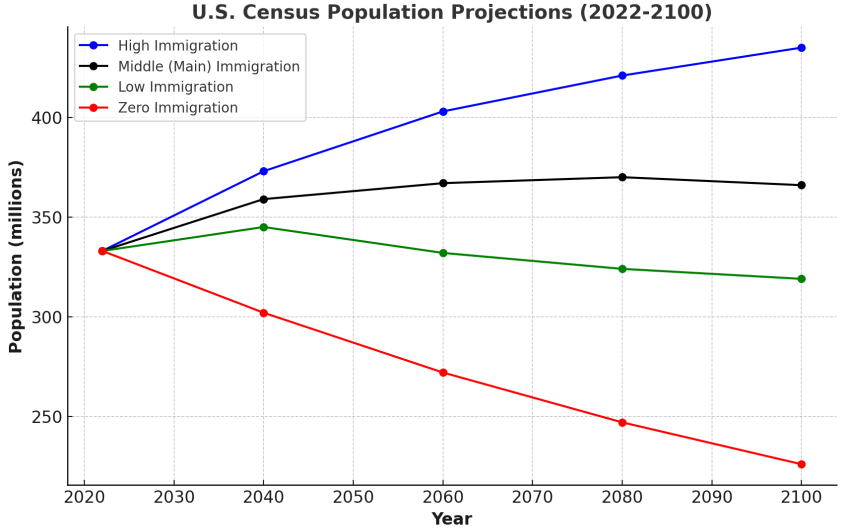
The ratio of people ages 25 to 64 to people age 65 or older will be 2.8 to 1 in 2025, CBO projects. That ratio is projected to decline to 2.2 to 1 by 2055.

Source: Blau & Mackie (2017).

41

Is Immigration Saving the Day?

U.S. Census Population Projections (2022-2100)



100 Million Lower in 2100

Source: CBO – The Demographic Outlook, 2023-2053

42

Immigrants and Crime Rates

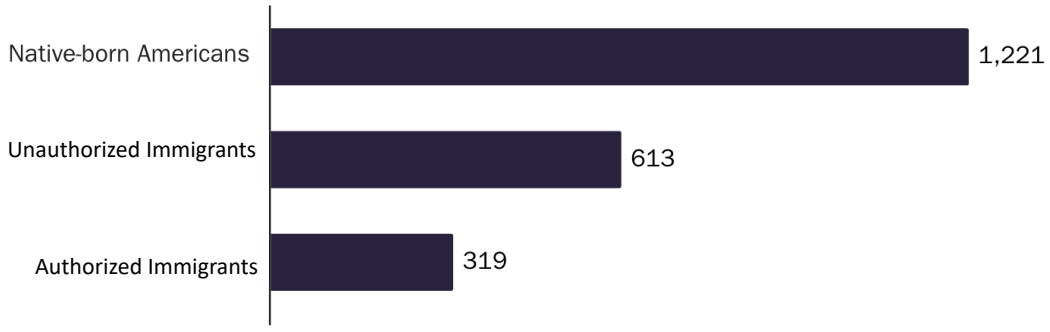
- **Conventional wisdom:**
  - Immigrants commit crimes more frequently than do native-born residents.
  - Rising immigration leads to rising crime.

Let's Have a Look!

43

Incarceration by Immigration Status, 2023

Incarceration rates by immigration status in 2023, ages 18–54



Source: Authors' analysis of the American Community Survey data.
Note: Rates are per 100,000 residents in each subpopulation.

Source: Cato Institute, https://www.cato.org/policy-analysis/illegal-immigrant-incarceration-rates-2010-2023#incarcerations

44

Immigrants and Crime Rates

- **Conventional wisdom:**
  - Immigrants commit crimes more frequently than do native-born residents.
  - Rising immigration leads to rising crime.
- **What do the data say?**
  - Rates of incarceration are lower for the foreign born than US born.
  - Neighborhoods with more immigrants have lower crime rates.
  - There is no evidence that deporting noncitizen immigrants affects crime rates.

45

Summary

- **Immigration can be thought of as increasing the population of the United States.**
  - But they are a select group.
- **This brings economic growth and opportunity, just as does increasing the native-born population.**
  - But not crime.
- **Unauthorized immigrants do increase the supply of low-skilled workers.**
  - This may lower the wages of SOME low-skilled workers.
  - But also increases labor force participation among highly skilled workers.

46

At the Same Time….

- **Immigrants are often a select group:**
  - Willing to incur an enormous personal or familial cost to better their lives.
- **As a result:**
  - Immigrants tend to be entrepreneurial and to add significantly to economic growth.
- **Although there are distributional issues:**
  - Immigration is an important contributor to economic growth.
  - Immigration helps to sustain vital government programs.

About Conventional Wisdom

- **Native-born unskilled workers**
  - There may be some negative impact on their wages.
  - But who wins and loses depends on the skill mix of immigrants.
- **Crime**
  - Immigrants, both authorized and unauthorized, commit crimes at much lower rates than do native-born residents.
- **Government programs**
  - **Federal**: immigrants are a source of revenue and stability for some important programs.
  - **State and local**: Because education is funded at the local level, this can be a drain on local government coffers.

Recent Immigration Issues

49

Recent Immigration Issues

- The Northern Triangle
- Mass Deportations
- H1B Visas



50

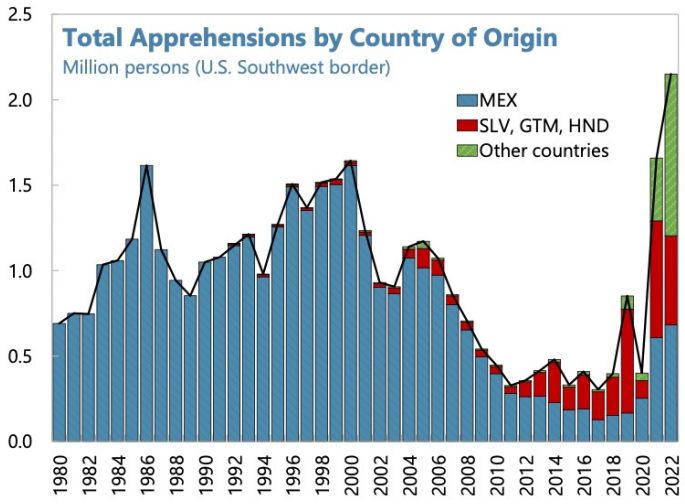
The Northern Triangle



51

Northern Triangle Apprehensions

(Northern Triangle Countries in Red)

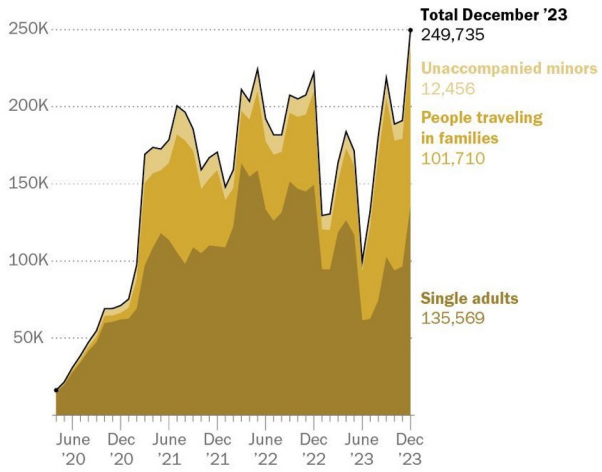


Also:
- Venezuela
- Haiti
- Cuba

52

Growing #s of People Traveling in Families

Monthly migrant encounters by U.S. Border Patrol at U.S.-Mexico border involving ...



NATIONAL ECONOMIC EDUCATION DELEGATION

53

Source: Pew Research Center, US Customs and Border Protection

53

Mass Deportations

- **Immigrants work different jobs than do native-born workers.**
- **Immigrants contribute to the local economy.**
  - GDP losses of up to $1.7 trillion annually.
- **Immigrants keep prices low: in particular, food!**
- **Deportations impact tax revenues.**
  - $1,300 more in on average than out, annually.
  - Unauthorized immigrants: $22.6 billion in social security and $5.7 billion in Medicare payments.
- **Deportations are expensive ($13,000 each).**
  - Total cost $315 billion.
- **They rob people of their dignity.**

NATIONAL ECONOMIC EDUCATION DELEGATION

54

54

Migrants in ICE Detention

Data current through Sept. 11, 2025

58,381

29.4% with criminal convictions

25.5% with pending criminal charges

45.8% listed as "other immigration violator"

11.1% fast-tracked for deportation

NATIONAL ECONOMIC EDUCATION DELEGATION

55

Source: https://www.nbcnews.com/data-graphics/us-immigration-tracker-follow-arrests-detentions-border-crossings-rcna189148

55

H1B Visas

- **What are they?**
  - Visas for immigrants with specialized labor:
    - 65,000 per year.
  - Visas for immigrants with a master's degree from a U.S. university:
    - 20,000 per year.
- **Details**
  - They are valid for 3 years, with extension possible up to 6 years.
  - There is almost always more demand for visas than there is supply.
    - Lottery is then used to allocate the visas.

NATIONAL ECONOMIC EDUCATION DELEGATION

56

56

H1B Visas

- **Pros**
  - Companies have an easier time finding appropriate workers.
  - Immigrants are sometimes complementary to U.S. workers.
    - Creating job opportunities for U.S. workers.
  - Immigrants spend in the U.S., stimulating the economy.
- **Cons**
  - Immigrant H1B holders sometimes take jobs from skilled American workers.

- **Overall: the program expands the number of immigrants that are here in an authorized way. This may be helpful to the economy.**

57

H1B Visas: $100,000 fee? (Was: $2,000 to $5,000)

- **Pros**
  - Perhaps less use of H1B visas to exploit foreign workers.
    - May benefit U.S. workers.
  - Prioritized the highest-skilled immigrants.
  - Source of funds for immigration services.
- **Cons**
  - Many fewer applications, which will lower U.S. economic activity.
    - Inaccessible to many small businesses.
  - Economic disruption.

- **Overall: That depends.**

58

Summer 2026 Update

*AI generated (Claude)

NATIONAL ECONOMIC EDUCATION DELEGATION

59

59

U.S. Immigration Policy Update

Where Things Stand — Summer 2026

An overview for a general audience | July 2026

ICE Detention | H-1B Visas | Birthright Citizenship | DACA | Asylum & Humanitarian

NATIONAL ECONOMIC EDUCATION DELEGATION

60

The Big Picture: A Year of Rapid Change

Since January 2025, the federal government has pursued the largest expansion of interior immigration enforcement in modern U.S. history — while federal courts have emerged as the principal check on many of these policies.

$45B

Approved by Congress for ICE detention (July 2025), funding up to ~135,000 detention beds through FY 2029

70,766

People in ICE detention on Jan. 24, 2026 — the highest single-day total ever publicly recorded

600%

Reported increase in "at-large" community arrests since the start of the current administration

Takeaway: nearly every major policy in this presentation is being contested in federal court — the status quo can shift quickly.

61

ICE Detention & Enforcement: Record Levels

- Detention population crossed 70,000 for the first time on record (Jan. 2026); it remains above any pre-2025 level even after a spring decline.
- Roughly 7 in 10 people in ICE custody (April 2026) had no criminal conviction; growth has come mostly from non-criminal cases.
- Removals are on a record pace: ~356,000 in the first 284 days of FY 2026, projected to reach ~460,000 for the year.
- Fewer releases on bond ("no release" posture); discretionary releases fell 87% by late 2025.
- New "mega-facilities" are expanding capacity; oversight groups report deaths in custody and conditions concerns.

70,766

record single-day detention (Jan. 24, 2026)

~71%

of detainees with no criminal conviction (Apr. 2026)

47

deaths in ICE custody since Jan. 2025

62

H-1B Visas: The $100,000 Fee Fight

A September 2025 proclamation imposed a one-time $100,000 fee on certain new H-1B petitions — courts have since split, and the fee's fate is now on appeal.

Sept. 19, 2025
Presidential proclamation: $100K fee on new H-1B petitions (consular processing)

Dec. 24, 2025
D.C. federal court upholds the fee; 20 states file a separate challenge

June 8, 2026
Massachusetts court strikes fee down as an unconstitutional tax (APA violation)

June 12, 2026
Ruling stayed pending appeal — the fee still applies for now

Also new: DHS finalized a wage-weighted selection process for the FY 2027 H-1B lottery, favoring higher-paid positions — a significant shift from the random lottery.

63

Birthright Citizenship: Settled — For Now

6–3

Trump v. Barbara
June 30, 2026

Majority opinion by
Chief Justice Roberts

- The Supreme Court struck down the Day-One 2025 executive order that sought to deny citizenship to U.S.-born children of undocumented or temporary-status parents.
- The Court held such children are “subject to the jurisdiction” of the U.S. and are citizens at birth under the 14th Amendment.
- The order never took effect — lower courts had blocked it since 2025, even after Trump v. CASA limited nationwide injunctions.
- Three conservative justices dissented; the President has said he will pursue the issue through legislation, though scholars doubt a statute could override the constitutional ruling.

64

DACA: Alive, but in Limbo

≈525,000 people currently hold DACA — most have been in the U.S. since childhood.

Renewals: OPEN

USCIS is processing renewals and work permits nationwide, including Texas. Recommended filing window: 120–150 days before expiration.

New applications: FROZEN

First-time applications are accepted but cannot be approved under a court injunction in place since July 2021.

Litigation: PENDING

The Fifth Circuit (Jan. 2025) found DACA unlawful but preserved renewals; the district court must still decide how to implement the ruling — including Texas work permits.

New risk (Apr. 2026)

The Board of Immigration Appeals ruled DACA alone does not stop deportation proceedings from moving forward.

Bottom line: current recipients keep protection and work authorization for now, but no permanent fix exists without Congress.

65

Asylum: The Right Exists, Access Has Narrowed

- Decision pause: since December 2025, an indefinite pause has halted most final asylum decisions; it was partially relaxed in March 2026 for “non-high-risk” countries.
- Border access: executive actions sharply restricted asylum at the southern border; in April 2026 a federal appeals court ruled that a blanket border asylum ban is unlawful — but access remains inconsistent.
- Travel restrictions: nationals of ~39 fully or partially restricted countries face major barriers to entry and to having claims considered.
- Daily life harder: new rules delay or limit work permits for applicants, and a March 2026 rule bars new commercial driver's licenses for asylum seekers.
- Screening upstream: visa applicants abroad are now asked whether they fear harm at home — effectively filtering potential asylum seekers before arrival.

Key point for audiences: applying for asylum remains legal — but the process is slower, more restricted, and litigation-dependent.

66

Also on the Radar: TPS & Travel Restrictions

Two related developments round out the summer 2026 picture — and directly affect hundreds of thousands of long-term U.S. residents.

Temporary Protected Status (TPS)

- On June 25, 2026, the Supreme Court ruled the government may end TPS for Haiti and Syria.
- Terminations for several other countries (e.g., Venezuela) have moved forward since 2025.
- Many losing TPS have lived and worked lawfully in the U.S. for years or decades.

Travel Restrictions ("Travel Ban 2.0")

- Full or partial entry restrictions cover ~39 countries, including Afghanistan, Haiti, Iran, Cuba, and Venezuela.
- In June 2026, a court set aside the policy of treating these nationalities as a "negative factor" in immigration applications.
- Entry restrictions themselves remain in effect and continue to shape family, student, and work travel.

67

Common Threads & What to Watch

1. **Courts are the battleground**

   Nearly every policy — the H-1B fee, asylum limits, birthright citizenship, DACA — has been shaped or blocked by federal litigation. Expect more Supreme Court activity in the 2026–27 term.

2. **Funding drives capacity**

   The July 2025 spending law transformed enforcement scale; detention and removal numbers reflect budget as much as policy.

3. **Congress is the missing actor**

   Durable answers on DACA, legal immigration levels, and asylum reform require legislation — none has passed. Post-ruling, birthright citizenship debate may shift to Congress.

4. **Local impacts are uneven**

   Enforcement intensity, state responses, and community effects (labor markets, schools, mixed-status families) vary widely across the country.

68

Let's Hear from You!

Questions?

Tibor Besedes

Contact NEED: Info@NEEDEcon.org

Support NEED: www.NEEDEcon.org/donate.php

NATIONAL ECONOMIC EDUCATION DELEGATION

69

69