



IMMIGRATION POLICY CENTER

...providing factual information about immigration and immigrants in America

For Immediate Release

Experts Extol Economic Benefits of Immigration Reform
Data Shows Legalizing Immigrants Would Help Boost Income, Working Conditions, and Economy

April 13, 2009

Washington, DC - During an event hosted by the Immigration Policy Center (IPC), economic and labor experts affirmed the benefits of comprehensive immigration reform in the wake of a renewed commitment from both the White House and members of Congress to introducing immigration legislation this fall. Today's speakers asserted that now is the time to bring undocumented immigrants out of the shadows and level the playing field for all workers -- fair and square.

In conjunction with today's event, the IPC has released a wide-ranging review of academic and government data that shows what legalizing undocumented immigrants would mean for the U.S. economy. The data helps confirm today's overwhelming conclusion that comprehensive immigration reform which includes a path to legalization for undocumented immigrants would pay for itself in the form of increased wages, buying power, and tax contributions that would benefit all working people.

In addition to reducing the exorbitant cost associated with an "enforcement-only" approach to immigration, legalizing undocumented workers would eliminate the "trap door" that artificially suppresses wages and allow workers to compete fairly for the first time. Labor leader Esther Lopez (United Food and Commercial Workers Union) confirmed: "Comprehensive immigration reform is the only way we can level the playing field for all workers. By bringing people out of the shadows and by having legalization be part of a broader immigration reform, we can create an immigration system that works for the American worker. We can't, in this economy, leave 12 million undocumented workers out in the shadows."

Comprehensive immigration reform would also bring in critical new revenue by integrating more people into the economy as workers, taxpayers, and consumers. According to Dan Siciliano, Associate Dean at Stanford University, "We know, from experience and analysis, that a legalization program helps grow the economy. Being undocumented causes immigrants not to invest in themselves, in their community, or their skills. Enfranchised consumers who are part of the above ground economy are more invested consumers. They

are more likely to invest extra time, money, and effort into their children and themselves."

David Dyssegaard Kallick, Senior Fellow at the Fiscal Policy Institute, also added "...people don't just vanish and imagine what would be involved in driving out 12 million undocumented immigrants. Mass deportation isn't realistic. What is realistic is making sure immigrants work in the above-ground economy. Immigration reform isn't about being pro-immigrant or anti-immigrant -- it's about having an immigration system that functions and addresses what I think everyone recognizes as a broken system."

During this time of economic hardship, Americans are seeking real solutions to our nation's problems. There is no better place to start than protecting our workers, raising wages, and getting our economy moving again with immigration reform.

More Information from the Immigration Policy Center:

[The Economics of Immigration Reform](#) (Fact Check)

[Data Supports Benefits of Immigration Reform in a Bear Market Economy](#) (Blog Post)

[Listen to the telebriefing](#) (MP3)

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The Immigration Policy Center (IPC), established in 2003, is the policy arm of the American Immigration Law Foundation. IPC's mission is to shape a rational national conversation on immigration and immigrant integration. Through its research and analysis, IPC provides policymakers, the media, and the general public with accurate information about the role of immigrants and immigration policy on U.S. society. IPC is a non-partisan organization that neither supports nor opposes any political party or candidate for office.

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