

The Federation for American Immigration Reform's

Immigration 101

A Primer on Immigration and the Need for Reform

Contents

Introduction

Legal Immigration

Illegal Immigration

Historical Perspective

Social Problems

Population Problems

**The Recommendations of the U.S. Commission on
Immigration Reform**

The Findings of the National Academy of Sciences

Recommendations from FAIR

Modern Immigration Laws

Other Resources

Introduction

For previous generations, immigration was a topic confined to history class. But in the last thirty years, changes in federal immigration policy have created an unprecedented rise in the number of immigrants admitted to this country every year. Under this new legislative system, immigration has changed from a topic in history textbooks to an issue in today's newspapers.

As this new era of mass immigration continues, more and more communities — and the people who live in them — are coming to realize the enormous effects of immigration on their lives. To help you understand the issue, we at the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR) have prepared this publication, *Immigration 101: A Primer on Immigration and the Need for Reform*.

This is certainly not all you need to know about immigration, but it is a start. If you need more information, go to our website, www.fairus.org. Not only does it cover all these topics more fully, it also has pages dedicated to the effects of immigration on your state and, in some cases, your city as well.

We wish you luck with your research and thank you for your interest in the need for immigration reform.

Sincerely,

Scipio Garling
Director of Research
Federation for American Immigration Reform

Copyright
Federation for American
Immigration Reform 2000

ISBN 0-935776-29-X

*Immigration 101: A Primer on
Immigration and the Need for
Reform.*

Additional Publications of
Interest from FAIR (available on
our website or Amazon.com)

*How to Win the Immigration
Debate*

The Immigration Dilemma

*The Environmentalist's Guide
to a Sensible Immigration
Policy*

*The Century of the New
American Sweatshop*

*Ten Steps to Ending Illegal
Immigration*

*A Tale of Ten Cities:
Immigration's Effect on the
Family Environment in
American Cities*

*Immigration Report,
a newsletter issued
ten times a year*

Legal Immigration

The Number of Immigrants per Year

Legal immigration has averaged 1,000,000 a year in the 1990s — a decade which will set an all time record for U.S. immigration. In fiscal 2000, the most recent year for which statistics are available, legal immigration totaled just under 850,000. It would have been higher, but for INS delays in processing applications. When you include the 700,000 illegal aliens that the Urban Institute enter and remain in the U.S. each year, total immigration rises to 1,500,000 annually.

Immigration Categories

Most legal immigration is classified into six immigration categories:

- *Immediate Relatives*
- *Family-Based*
- *Employment-Based*
- *Refugees*
- *Asylees*
- *Lottery Admissions*

Distribution Among Categories & Countries

- 69 percent of all legal immigrants were admitted due to kinship relationships (Immediate Relatives or Family-Based Admissions).
- 13 percent were employment-based admissions (note: half were actual workers; the other half were their dependent families).
- 9 percent were admitted as either refugees or asylees.
- 6 percent, obtained visas through a lottery available to nationals of countries calculated to be less well represented in the regular immigration flow.
- 50 percent of all admissions come from just nine of the world's more than two hundred countries.

Annual Immigration, 2000

<i>Categories & Preferences</i>	<i>Quotas</i>	<i>Actual</i>
Immediate Relatives of U.S. Citizens	Unlimited	348,879
1st Family Pref. Unmarried Adult Children of U.S. Citizens	23,400	27,707
2nd Family Pref. Spouses and Unmarried Adult Children of Legal Immigrants	114,200	124,595
3rd Family Pref. Married Adult Children of U.S. Citizens	23,400	22,833
4th Family Pref. Siblings of U.S. Citizens	65,000	60,145
1st Employ. Pref. Priority Workers	40,040	27,706
2nd Employ. Pref. Professionally Exceptional	40,040	20,304
3rd Employ. Pref. Skilled Workers and Professionals	40,040	49,736
4th Employ. Pref. Special Immigrants	9,940	9,052
5th Employ. Pref. Investors	9,940	226
Lottery	55,000	50,945
Refugees	90,000	65,941
Asylees	10,000	6,858
Miscellaneous		34,880
<i>Legal Immigrants, Total</i>		<i>849,807</i>
<i>Illegal Alien Settlers</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>700,000</i>

Annual Immigration

1,549,807

Illegal Immigration

The Size of the Illegal Alien Population

There are at least an estimated 8.7 million illegal aliens residing in the United States, according to Census Bureau estimates. At any given time, there are also roughly 1 million additional transient illegal aliens. The estimated resident illegal population is more than three the number of illegal aliens who received amnesty under the 1986 immigration act.

Recent changes in enforcement have increased the annual number of deportations of illegal aliens from 40,000 to about 125,000. However, despite deportations, the illegal alien population is estimated by the Urban Institute to increase by another 700,000 every year.

Entering Illegally or Staying Illegally

It is estimated that 60 percent of illegal aliens entered the country illegally. 40 percent entered legally (as tourists, for example), and stayed illegally past the expiration date of their temporary visa.

There have been improvements in border security to impede the 60 percent who enter illegally. But there has been little, if any, improvement in dealing with the other 40 percent of visa overstayers.

How Illegal Immigrants Go Undetected

In theory, illegal aliens cannot get jobs or welfare in the United States. In reality, they do, because of document fraud. In many cities, false documents can be bought on the street for as little as \$40. With false documents, an illegal alien's eligibility for work or welfare goes unquestioned. With the cost of displacing American workers, the cost of giving welfare to needy illegal aliens, and the cost of providing them general services, it is estimated that the annual cost of illegal immigrants is \$20 billion (even after counting their tax contributions).

Document fraud is possible because the U.S. has no centralized database for determining who is eligible for work or welfare. Such a system of ID verification is essential to controlling illegal immigration, particularly visa overstayers.

In 1986, Congress passed the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) giving amnesty — legal forgiveness — to all illegal aliens who had successfully evaded justice for four years or more or were illegally working in agriculture. As a result, 2.7 million illegal aliens were admitted as legal immigrants to the United States. [In addition, they have so far brought in an additional 142,000 dependents.]

According to a study by the Center for Immigration Studies, the total net cost of the amnesty (the direct and indirect costs of services and benefits to the ex-illegal aliens, minus their tax contributions) after ten years came to over \$78 billion. (*Measuring the Fallout: The Cost of the IRCA Amnesty After 10 Years*, Center for Immigration Studies, May 1997).

An amnesty sends the message that it is okay to break the law. Eventually, it says, you will be forgiven, even rewarded for doing so. Furthermore, it makes a mockery of the legal immigration process, wherein those who obey the rules wait years to immigrate (instead of “jumping the line” and hoping for absolution later.)

Historical Perspective

A Comparison

As the graph below shows, present levels of immigration are very high compared to other periods of American history (immigration before 1820 was even lower than during the eras depicted). Average annual legal immigration in the 1990s is twice what it was in the 1970s, and three times what it was in the 1950s.

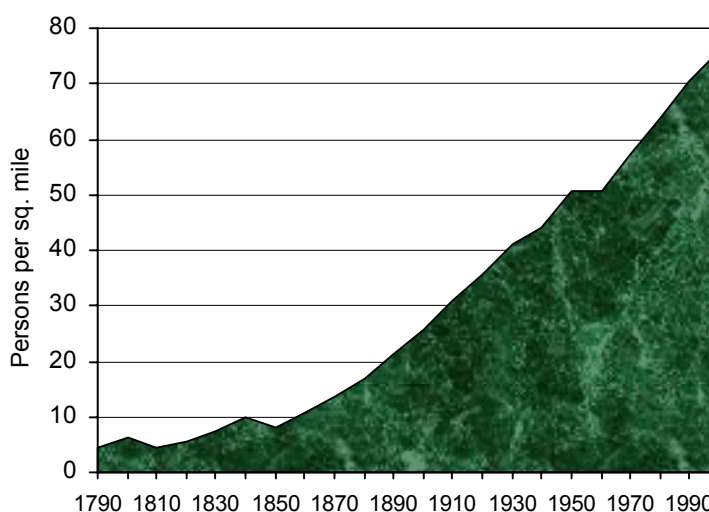
The Lesson of History

The last time immigration got this high, the social and economic problems it caused led to a change in the immigration laws, resulting in lower levels of annual immigration.

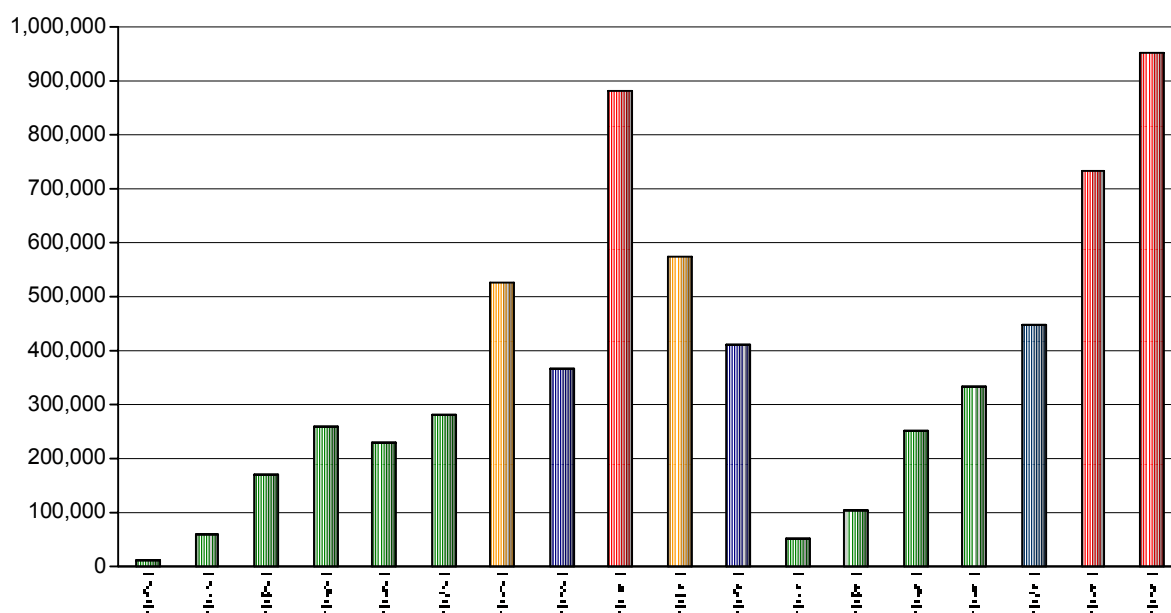
Now More Than Ever

At that time, the United States was a much emptier country, more capable of handling an expanding population. Now that we have a greater population density, our society is more crowded and our ecology less able to sustain more people.

U.S. Population Density



Average Annual Immigration, by Decade



Social Problems

There are many statistics that evidence the problems that mass immigration is causing the nation. What follows is a representative sample compiled from various sources on numerous issues.

Population Growth

Immigration is directly responsible for over sixty percent of population growth in America,¹ and three quarters of all Americans feel that overpopulation is a serious threat to their children and grand-children in the next twenty-five years.²

Urban Sprawl

An estimated 1774 acres are “developed” every week due to immigrant population growth, and the additional public infrastructure costs for immigrant population growth come to \$1.37 billion a year.³

Unemployment

An estimated 1,880,000 American workers are displaced from their jobs every year by immigration; the cost for providing welfare and assistance to these Americans is over \$15 billion a year.⁴ In 1997, while there were nearly seven and a half million unemployed American workers, the U.S. admitted 798,000 immigrants.⁵

Wage Depression

Half of all wage depression among high-school dropouts in America is attributable to job competition from immigrants.⁶ Because too much immigration keeps wages low, wage increases in low-immigration cities have been 48 percent higher than in high-immigration cities.⁷

Inefficiency

Poor English skills among foreign-born residents cost more than \$175 billion a year in lost productivity, wages, tax revenues and unemployment compensation.⁸

Housing

The share of overcrowded housing is seven times higher in high immigration cities (at twenty-two percent) than in low immigration cities (at three percent).⁹

Health Care

Forty-three percent of immigrants under 65 have no health insurance, and the cost of their healthcare is passed on to the public: the annual bill to taxpayers for immigrant Medicaid is \$14 billion and for Medicare \$6.1 billion.

Labor Market

Although it is projected that twenty-two million new jobs will be created over the next ten years for seventeen million net new native workers, this job creation will be cancelled out by the 6.5 million immigrants expected to enter the job market.

Crime

One fourth of the federal prison population is foreign-born, and the INS must deport over 30,000 criminal aliens every year.¹⁰

1. U.S. Census Bureau.

2. *Sustainable Development: The New American Dream*, Roper/Starch, March 1996.

3. *Per Capita Costs of Population Growth to Local Communities*, Carrying Capacity Network, April 1997.

4. *The Net Costs of Immigration*, Donald Huddle, Rice University, October 1996.

5. Bureau of Labor Statistics Unemployment Division, and the INS Statistics Division.

6. “Skill Differences and the Effect of Immigrants on the Wages of Natives,” Bureau of Labor Statistics, December 1995.

7. “Linked Migration Systems: Immigration and Internal Labor Flows in the United States,” *Economic Geography*, July 1992, Richard Wright.

8. Ohio University economist Lowell Gallaway, *USA Today*, February 28, 1997.

9. *A Tale of Ten Cities: Immigration's Effect on the Family Environment in American Cities*, Scipio Garling, 1995.

10. INS Statistics Division.

Social Problems, *continued*

Schools

By 2002, the school population will grow from 49 million to 55 million—because of immigration.¹¹ Without school-age immigrants (about 250,000 a year) and the children of immigrants (about 725,000 a year), school enrollment would not be rising at all.¹² The estimated cost to the American taxpayer for the education of immigrants' children is over \$30 billion a year.¹³

Skill Levels

The median education level for adult immigrants is less than a ninth grade education. And the gap between native education level and immigrant education levels has quadrupled in the last twenty-five years¹⁴

Energy

Half of the increase in U.S. use of energy since 1970 has been due to immigration, and, on average, an immigrant's use of energy more than doubles after arriving in the United States.¹⁵

Welfare

The immigrant rate of using means-tested welfare programs (at 20.7 percent) is nearly fifty percent higher than native rate of usage (at 14.1 percent). That gap between the native and immigrant rate of welfare usage has doubled in the last ten years. Total immigrant receipt of benefits in 1996 came to \$180 billion.¹⁶

Graduate School

There is a glut of science Ph.D.s coming out of our graduate schools (about twenty-two percent more than are needed); more than a third of them are foreign students, an estimated fifty percent of whom remain in the country after getting their degrees.¹⁷

11. The National Center for Educational Statistics.

12. The Center for Immigration Studies.

13. *The Net Costs of Immigration: The Facts, The Trends, and The Critics*, Donald Huddle, October 22, 1996.

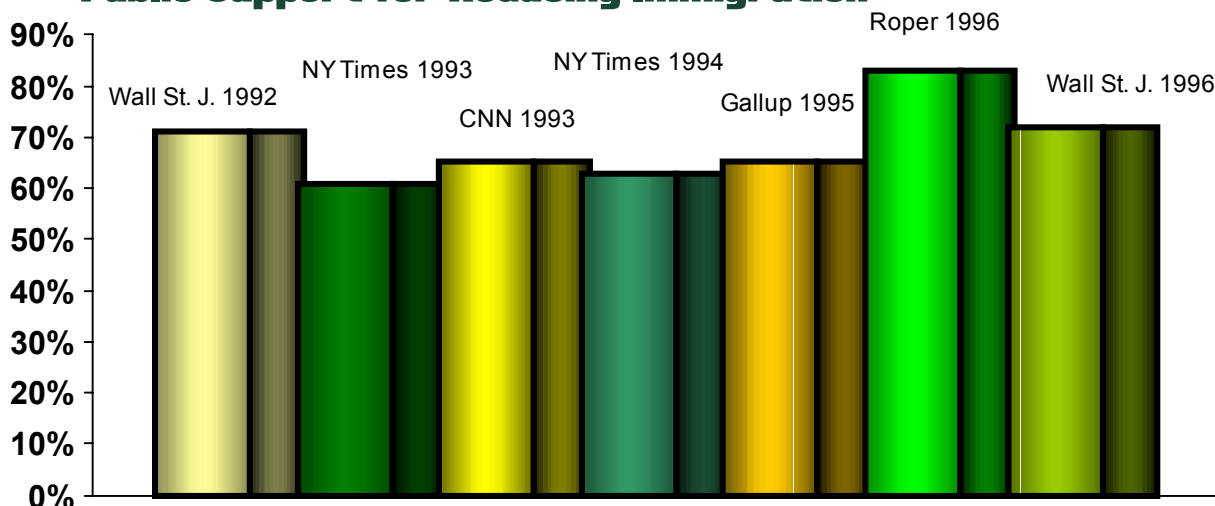
14. U.S. Department of Education.

15. *The Environmental Impact of Immigration into the United States*, Jason DinAlt, 1994.

16. *Immigration and the Welfare State*, George Borjas and Lynette Hilton, Working Paper Series #5372, National Bureau of Economic Research, December 1995.

17. "The Future of the Ph.D." *Science*, October 6, 1995.

Public Support for Reducing Immigration



Population Problems

The Extent of Recent Population Growth

Since 1970 our population has grown by about 65 million people. About half of that growth came from immigrants and their descendants.

The Speed of Present Population Growth

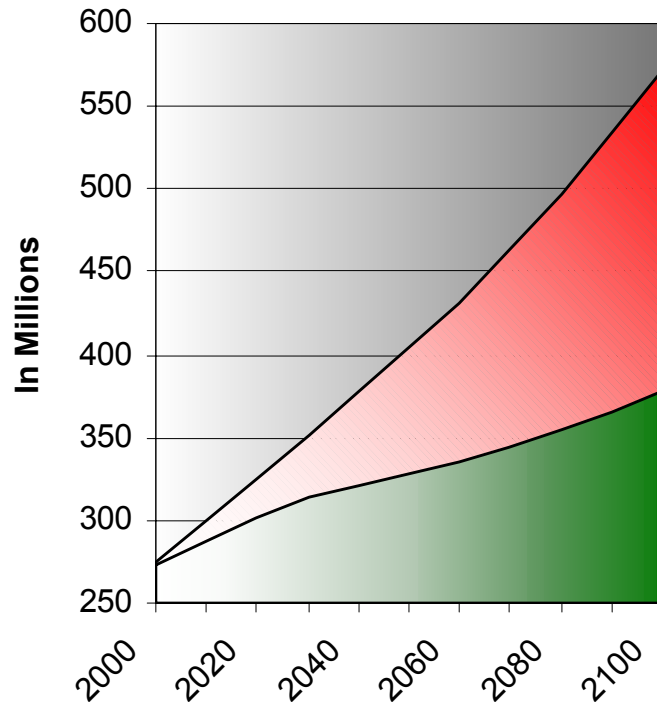
At present our population is growing by about 2 million people a year; yet legal and illegal immigration are adding about 1 million people a year — about 50 percent.

The Outcome of Future Population Growth

According to the Census Bureau, by the year 2020, the U.S. population will increase from the 2000 level of 275 million to 404 million — a 47 percent increase. Of those additional 129 million people, 76 million — 59 percent — will be post-2000 immigrants and their descendants.

According to the Census Bureau, by the year 2100, the U.S. population will increase from the 2000 level of 275 million to 571 million — twice as many people. Of those additional 296 million people, 194 million — 66 percent — will be post-2000 immigrants and their descendants.

U.S. Population Projections With and Without Immigration



U.S. Population Projections (In Millions)

	<i>With Immigration</i>	<i>Without Immigration</i>
2000	275.306	273.818
2010	299.862	287.71
2020	324.927	301.636
2030	351.07	313.219
2040	377.35	321.167
2050	403.687	327.641
2060	432.011	334.724
2070	463.639	343.815
2080	497.83	354.471
2090	533.605	365.689
2100	570.954	377.444

The Recommendations of the U.S. Commission on Immigration Reform

Legal Immigration

1. Limit immigration to 550,000 per year.
2. Eliminate the visa categories for adult offspring, siblings, and the diversity lottery.

Illegal Immigration

3. Restrict the eligibility of illegal aliens for publicly-funded assistance.
4. Implement a nationwide system for easily verifying authorization to work (specifically, a computerized registry based on a secure social security card).
5. Increase the resource for border management and interior enforcement.

Reorganization

- Restructure the immigration system's four principal functions as follows:
6. For immigration enforcement at the border and in the interior of the United States, create a Bureau for Immigration Enforcement within the Department of Justice.
 7. For adjudicating eligibility for immigration benefits, create an Undersecretary for Citizenship, Immigration, and Refugee Admissions within the Department of State.
 8. Delegate enforcement of immigration-related employment standards to the Department of Labor.
 9. For appeals of administrative decisions on immigration, create an independent Agency for Immigration Review.

Recognizing the need for immigration reform, the 1990 Immigration Act created a joint Congressional-Presidential Commission on Immigration Reform. At left are the recommendations in the Commission's report, *Legal Immigration: Setting Priorities*.

As the report says, "The Commission supports the basic framework of current immigration policy—family reunification, employment-based immigration, and refugee admissions. At the same time, the Commission is convinced that our current immigration system must undergo major reform to ensure that admissions continue to serve our national interests. Hence, the Commission recommends a significant redefinition of priorities and a reallocation of existing admission numbers to fulfill more effectively the objectives of the immigration system.

"The Commission further recommends a renewed emphasis on Americanization. The United States is the most successful multiethnic nation in history. It has united immigrants and their descendants from all over the world around a commitment to democratic ideals and constitutional principles. Those ideals and principles have been embraced by persons from an extraordinary variety of religious and ethnic backgrounds, partly because they permit and protect religious and cultural diversity within a framework of national political unity. Naturalization is the most visible manifestation of Americanization."

The Findings of the National Academy of Sciences

If there is any economic gain from immigration, it is modest. “The most plausible magnitudes of the impacts of immigration are modest for those who benefit from immigration!...]... The domestic gain may be run on the order of \$1 billion to \$10 billion a year... modest relative to the size of the U.S economy[.]”

Whatever gain there is from immigration is not spread equally; it harms workers with whom the immigrants compete.

Immigration has been responsible for increasing the supply of high school dropouts by 15 percent since 1980.

Since 1980, immigration has been responsible for 44 percent of the decline in wages among high school dropouts.

The skill gap between foreign-workers and native workers has widened dramatically in recent years due “essentially to a single factor — the fact that those who have come most recently have come from poorer countries, where the average education and wage skills level are far below those in the United States.”

On average, immigrant pay considerably lower taxes than do others, and overall they and their native-born children pay about one third less than does the rest of the population.

Immigration is a net fiscal drain on American taxpayers. Even though there are only one ninth as many immigrant households as native households, each native household has to pay \$166 to \$266 a year to support those immigrant households.

Because the fiscal cost of immigration is not, in fact, spread out over the nation, the impact on heavy-immigration states is actually much worse. For example, in New Jersey, the net fiscal burden from immigrant households is estimated to be \$232 for each native households; in California, the cost is \$1,778 to each native household.

In 1995, the U.S. Commission on Immigration Reform asked the National Research Council / National Academy of Sciences to study the economic and fiscal effects of immigration. At left are the principle findings of their extensive analysis, published in 1997 as *The New Americans: Economic, Demographic, and Fiscal Effects of Immigration* (ISBN 0-309-06356-6).

As the report says, “Once in the United States, the foreign-born on average earn less than native workers. This gap between foreign-born and native workers has widened recently. Among both men and women, those who have arrived most recently and those who come from Latin America earn the lowest wages. Even though recent new arrivals are better educated than their earlier counterparts, the education of the native-born has improved even more, so that the gap in skills, and thus in wages, has widened. This relative decline in immigrant skills and wages can be attributed essentially to a single factor—the fact that those who have come most recently have come from poorer countries, where the average education and wage and skill levels are far below those in the United States.”

Recommendations from FAIR

Reduce chain migration.

The system of categories of who is eligible to immigrate is responsible for legal immigration numbers growing so high. It makes everyone in an immigrant's family of origin eligible to immigrate after them. The problem could be solved by limiting eligibility to the "family of choice" (spouse and minor children), thus making parents, brothers, sisters, and adult children ineligible. Similar recommendations were made by the U.S. Commission on Immigration Reform (Jordan Commission).

To reduce the overall level, other categories should also be eliminated, including:

- the diversity visa lottery,
- non-exceptional immigrant workers;
- investor visas.

Improve interior enforcement.

Increased security at the borders must be complemented by a system for detecting illegal aliens within the borders. Existing identification documents should be made as secure as technology allows; like any credit card, the authenticity of such ID should be verifiable by any employer or benefit agency through an easy-to-access central database. More federal resources must be redirected to interior enforcement personnel, systems, and strategies.

Restructure INS.

In its present construction, the INS operates at cross-purposes with itself, and enforcement priorities are often hampered by an administrative preference for the provision of benefits. The three principal INS functions of enforcing the law against illegal aliens, of providing services to legal immigrants, and of deciding who is here legally and who is here illegally should be spun off into separate but cooperative agencies.

The Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR) is a national nonprofit public interest organization of concerned citizens who share a common belief that our nation's immigration policies must be reformed to serve the national interest.

FAIR advocates a workable immigration policy is one that would allow us to regain control of our borders and restore overall levels of immigration to more traditional levels of about 300,000 a year.

FAIR believes America can and must have an immigration policy that is nondiscriminatory and is designed to serve the social, economic, and environmental needs of our country. It is an idea that all recent polls show has the overwhelming support of the American public.

Modern Immigration Laws

1965 Act “The INA”

The Immigration and Nationality Act Amendments of 1965 (cite to 79 Statutes-at-Large 911, October 3, 1965)

- ◆ Abolished the national origins quota system (from Immigration Act of 1924 and the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952) eliminating national origin, race, and ancestry as bases for immigration to the United States.
- ◆ Established allocation of immigrant visas of a first-come, first-served basis, under a seven-category preference system for relatives of U.S. citizens and permanent resident aliens and for persons with special occupational skills needed in the U.S.
- ◆ Established a category of immigrants not subject to numerical restrictions: immediate relatives (parents, spouses, children) of U.S. citizens.
- ◆ Limited Eastern Hemisphere immigration to 170,000 and placed a ceiling for the first on Western Hemisphere immigration (120,000). However, neither the preference categories nor per-country limit were applied to the Western Hemisphere

The 1965 Act took one of the elements of the previous system, the admission of nuclear family members, and made it the centerpiece of a new system whose goal was the reunification of extended family members. Previous law confined admissions to the nuclear family (spouses and minor children of U.S. citizens); the new system of ‘family reunification’ made other relatives (such as siblings and adult sons and daughters) eligible as well.

The change to family reunification shifted the source immigration flow away from the developed, western countries toward the closer and more overpopulated developing countries.

1986 Act “IRCA”

The Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (cite to 100 Statutes-at-Large 3359, November 6, 1986)

- ◆ Created sanctions prohibiting employers from knowingly hiring, recruiting, or referring for a fee illegal alien workers.
- ◆ Authorized the legalization of non-excludable illegal aliens who had resided in the U.S. since January 1, 1982.
- ◆ Created a new classification of seasonal agricultural worker.

As legal immigration from developing countries rose, so did the opportunities and motivation for illegal immigration. To deal with the growing population of resident illegal aliens, Congress gave an amnesty to those illegal aliens who could show that they had been resident for some time (over three million of them) and created ‘employer sanctions’ making it illegal to knowingly hire illegal aliens.

Modern Immigration Laws

·1990 Act “ImmAct90”

The Immigration Act of November 29, 1990

(cite to 104 Statutes-at-Large 4978, November 29, 1990)

- ◆ Increased total immigration under an overall ‘flexiblecap’ of 675,000, to consist of 480,000 family-sponsored, 140,000 employment-based, and 55,000 ‘diversity lottery’ immigrants.
- ◆ Revised all grounds for exclusion and deportation, significantly rewriting the political and ideological grounds.
- ◆ Revised the nonimmigrant temporary worker categories.

A compilation of rather technical changes to existing laws, the 1990 Act increased the level of legal immigration by roughly 40 percent. One obvious change made by the 1990 Act was the addition of a ‘visa lottery’. Because of the dynamics of family reunification, a few developing countries tend to squeeze most other countries out of the immigration flow. To compensate, the 55,000 admissions in the visa lottery were slated for applicants from the ‘squeezed out’ countries.

1996 Welfare Act “PRAWORA”

The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act

(cite to 110 Statutes-at-Large 2105, August 22, 1996)

- ◆ Established measures to control U.S. borders, protect legal workers through worksite enforcement, and remove criminal and other deportable aliens.
- ◆ Placed added restrictions on benefits for aliens.
- ◆ Increased penalties for document fraud and benefit fraud.

Congress passed this bill to deter illegal immigration by better protecting the borders, and by better detecting and removing illegal aliens from the U.S.

IIRAIRA was originally part of a larger bill (the unpassed Immigration Reform Act of 1995) that would have reformed the legal immigration system as well by eliminating certain visa categories. Congress has so far declined to return to the issue of reforming the legal immigration system.

Other Resources

<http://www.usdoj.gov/ins/>

The Immigration and Naturalization Service offers on this site statistical information on the most recent year's immigrants, press releases and background information.

<http://migration.ucdavis.edu>

Migration Dialogue, a University of California-Davis site where you will find the monthly world wide migration news wrap up, *Migration News*, domestic migration information in *Rural Migration News* and other resources.

<http://www.utexas.edu/lbj/uscir>

U.S. Commission on Immigration Reform provides information on the work of the national bipartisan commission, which was established under the 1990 Immigration Act to study the effects of that law.

<http://www.tscpress.com>

The Social Contract offers in-depth studies on immigration, population, language, assimilation, environment, national unity and balance of individual rights and civic responsibilities.

<http://www.npg.org>

Negative Population Growth is a national membership organization that advocates a smaller U.S. population through responsible family planning and limiting immigration.

<http://www.netcom.com/~jimrobb/>

Affirmative Action for Immigrants is a site that explains how recent immigrants have gained access to America's affirmative action programs.

<http://www.cis.org>

The Center for Immigration Studies publishes immigration studies and a quarterly newsletter, organizes conferences, and maintains an e-mail information distribution list on immigration policy issues.

<http://www.NumbersUSA.com>

NumbersUSA offers evidence that today's record immigration fuels rapid population growth. It also offers a link for messages to Congress.

<http://www.projectusa.com>

ProjectUSA has placed immigration reform billboards across the country. It offers an opportunity for direct action in shaping the public debate about immigration by bypassing traditional media.

Your one-stop shop for immigration information is our website, www.fairus.org. There you will find links to all the websites listed at left, as well as links to whatever local immigration reform groups there are in your state.

Your first resources, after this primer, should be the other FAIR publications listed in the Introduction. You can order them through our website or Amazon.com.

In addition, you might also want to check out these books, all of which are available on Amazon.com:

Re-Charting America's Future, by Roy Beck.

Unwelcome Strangers: American Identity and the Turn Against Immigration, by David Reimers.

The Congressional Politics of Immigration Reform, by James Gimpel & James Edwards.

Shapers of the Great Debate on Immigration, by Mary Elizabeth Brown.

The Case Against Immigration, by Roy Beck.

Alien Nation, by Peter Brimelow.

Contacting FAIR



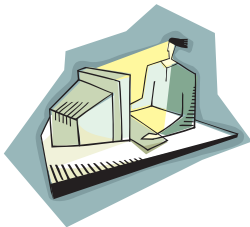
**1666 Connecticut Avenue NW
Suite 400
Washington DC 20009**



1-800-395-0890



1-202-387-3447



www.fairus.org

fair@fairus.org