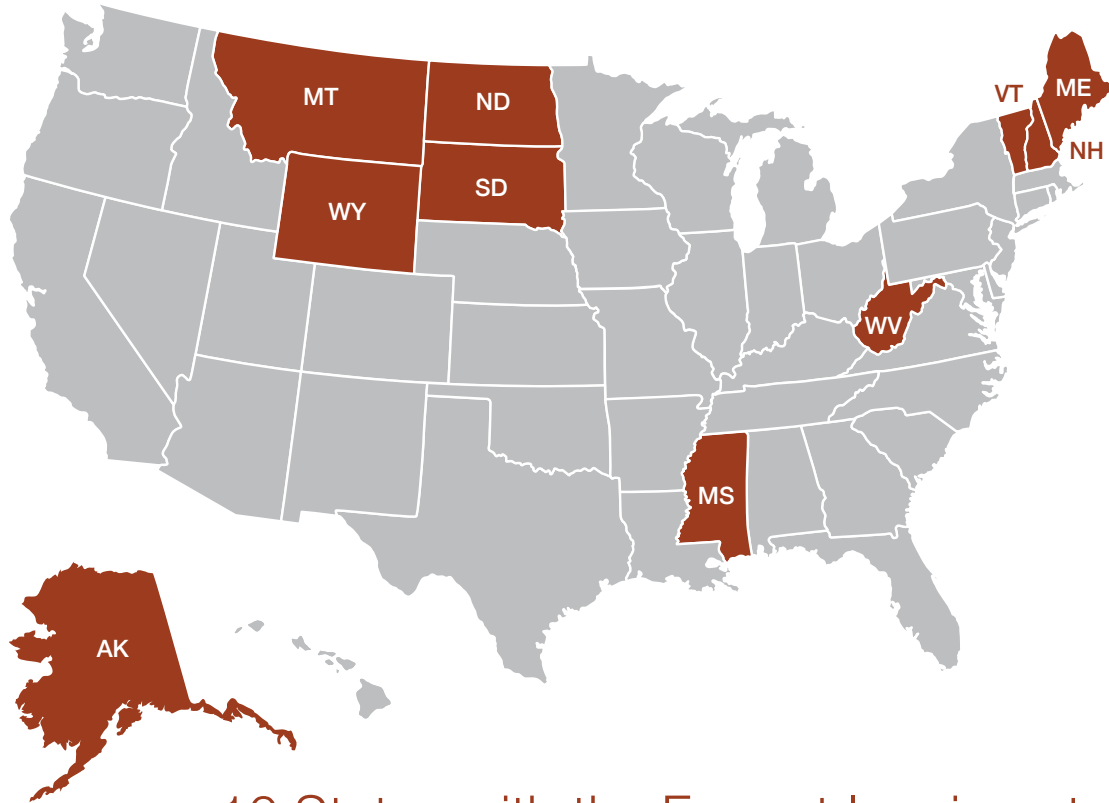


SMALL MIGRANT POPULATIONS, HUGE IMPACTS.

Even States With Few Immigrants
Hit With Costs and Lost Jobs.



Key Findings:



10 States with the Fewest Immigrants

- New Hampshire, Mississippi, Alaska, Maine, North Dakota, West Virginia, South Dakota, Vermont, Montana and Wyoming have the smallest populations of foreign-born residents.
- Approximately 415,000 foreign-born live in these states.
- Approximately 88,000 of those foreign-born residents in the ten states covered by this report – or 21% of the total – are unlawfully present in the United States.
- These illegal aliens cost American taxpayers \$454 million dollars annually.
- Currently, there are 29 “sanctuary jurisdictions” within these ten states.
- Immigrants who have settled in these states compete with Americans for jobs across the economic spectrum.
- Increased numbers of immigrants in these states pose threats to national security and public safety.



Small Migrant Populations, Huge Impacts.

A FAIR report by Matt O'Brien, Spencer Raley and Casey Ryan.

Contents

1	Introduction	10	Small-Town Health Care
3	The Costs and Impacts	11	Conclusion
4	Resources, Infrastructure and Public Schools	12	Endnotes
6	Competition for Jobs	15	A Note on Methodology
9	Targets for Terrorism		

Introduction

Too often, the discussion of immigration – its costs and social impacts – is focused on states with enormous migrant populations, such as New York and California. There is also a tendency to fixate on border states. But our lax immigration policies have a profound impact even on those states with small immigrant populations.

This report looks at the ten states with the lowest foreign-born populations to determine how high rates of immigration to the United States have affected them.

The States in Question

The ten states with the lowest immigrant populations are New Hampshire, Mississippi, Alaska, Maine, North Dakota, West Virginia, South Dakota, Vermont, Montana and Wyoming.¹ All are rural and have relatively small populations. In addition, they all have significant industrial sectors oriented toward agriculture, timber, mining and manufacturing.²

Many Americans believe that immigrants, both legal and illegal, are not attracted to less populated states with rural economies. However, a growing number of immigrants actually appear to *prefer* such states. Many migrants choose life in the states on our list because they offer diverse employment opportunities and a lower cost of living than states like California or New York.³

Additionally, many foreign nationals who are in the country without authorization move to smaller, less populated states because they receive less attention from immigration enforcement agencies than either the border states or the metropolises commonly associated with high levels of illegal immigration.

So it is important to remember that bad im-

migration policies do not just impact heavily urbanized states with large illegal alien populations. Lax immigration enforcement has nationwide effects that are spread as migrants move throughout the United States in search of employment and lower costs of living. In fact, states with smaller overall populations actually experience a proportionally greater effect from migrant influxes because such states typically have fewer jobs available and condensed economies, making it harder to absorb newcomers.

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Large numbers of foreign nationals streaming into states without established communities of assimilated immigrants inevitably bring with them the economic, social and political problems that FAIR has analyzed in many prior studies. For example, Portland, Maine, is currently struggling to pay for a massive influx of low-skilled immigrants from poverty stricken nations. The city's spending binge prompted former Governor Paul LePage to comment that, "The State of Maine has a responsibility to care for our elderly, homeless, and disabled who've been left behind before we can address the needs of newcomers."⁴

The 10 States with the Lowest Immigrant Population				
Rank	State	Foreign Born Population	Total Illegal Alien Population	Net Cost of Illegal Immigration
41	New Hampshire	83,000	11,500	\$65,100,000
42	Mississippi	66,000	28,000	\$117,200,000
43	Alaska	58,000	11,500	\$72,600,000
44	Maine	45,000	6,000	\$31,700,000
45	North Dakota	31,000	5,000>	\$27,400,000
46	West Virginia	30,000	5,000>	\$26,300,000
47	South Dakota	29,000	5,500	\$27,600,000
48	Vermont	28,000	5,000>	\$33,300,000
49	Montana	23,000	5,500	\$27,000,000
50	Wyoming	22,000	5,000>	\$26,100,000
		415,000	88,000	\$454,300,000

Summary

- Approximately 88,000 people, or 21 percent, of the foreign-born population in these states are in the country illegally.⁵
- This group of illegal aliens costs taxpayers approximately \$454 million annually.⁶
- Each illegal alien in these states carries a net tax deficit of between \$4,000 and \$6,500 annually.
- Roughly 35,000 U.S. citizens in these states are the children of illegal aliens.⁷
- Over 50,000 are K-12 students classified as having limited English proficiency (LEP).⁸
- These LEP students cost taxpayers nearly \$96 million.⁹
- Nearly 10,000 are temporary H-2A working largely low-paying agricultural jobs.¹⁰



The Costs and Impacts

Illegal Immigration

Clearly, immigration – and especially illegal immigration – has a significant fiscal impact on taxpayers in the states covered by this study. As noted above, FAIR estimates that illegal migration costs these states \$454 million annually.

To put that figure into context, that \$454 million expenditure is more than 200 times what the state of Montana budgets for its entire Veterans Affairs program,¹¹ and it is 2.5 times the total sum that West Virginia invests in its state university.¹²

Each illegal alien living in any of the ten states on our list consumes \$4,500-\$6,000 worth of services that aren't covered by his/her tax payments. That means many social programs upon which veterans, disabled Americans and U.S. citizen children depend would receive significantly more funding if states were not providing benefits to foreigners who have no right to be in the United States.

Sanctuary Jurisdictions and Refusal to Cooperate With ICE

Currently, there are 29 “sanctuary” jurisdictions in the states covered by this report, including the entire state of Vermont.¹³ Aliens living in “sanctuary cities” like New York City and Los Angeles count on local police refusing to cooperate with immigration authorities.

However, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) can still protect the public, arresting immigration violators on the basis of their immigration offenses alone. But residents of the states examined in this study have a problem: ICE has multiple facilities in major urban centers, but it does not have any enforcement facilities in any of the states on this list.¹⁴ Combine local unwillingness to report known illegal aliens to federal immigration authorities with a lack of ICE presence and states like Vermont run the risk of becoming favored destinations for illegal alien criminals and terrorists. (To their credit, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, West Virginia and Wyoming have no such jurisdictions.)

Resources, Infrastructure and Public Schools

Limited English Proficiency (LEP) students are one of the most expensive groups to educate. In a 2010 study, FAIR calculated that LEP costs nationwide totaled \$51.2 billion (compared with \$59.8 billion in 2016).

The educational, housing, transportation and public safety resources available in rural, sparsely populated communities are limited when compared to places like New York City and Chicago. As a result, a sudden influx of immigrants has a profound impact on individual citizens living in small-town America.

Public Schools

Limited English Proficiency (LEP) students are a perfect example. They are one of the most expensive groups to educate. In a 2010 study, FAIR calculated that LEP costs nationwide totaled \$51.2 billion (compared with \$59.8 billion in 2016).¹⁵ And even though this group of states has a smaller overall proportion of LEP students – roughly 50,000 – they still spend \$96 million per year educating them.

To put those numbers in context: The Boston public school system has just over 54,000 students.¹⁶ Yet, it spends only \$60.2 million for all of its central administrative costs.¹⁷ That means it costs \$36 million dollars *more* to educate LEP students in the ten states covered by this report than

Boston – a highly-regarded school system in one of America’s most densely populated urban technological hubs – spends on things like heat, light, water, school supplies, staff education and workers compensation claims.

An influx of LEP students will inevitably have a negative impact on a school system with few students and limited resources. Whenever there is a shortage of English as a Second Language (ESL) staff and/or a short supply of bilingual teachers, time and attention must be diverted away from American students in order to address the needs of immigrant children who do not yet have the English language skills necessary to keep pace with their native-born peers.

A prime example is Lewiston, Maine. Over the past 15 years, more than 7,500 migrants – most of whom are refugees from dozens of different countries – have resettled in the town, which has a population of less than 40,000.¹⁸ As is often the case, residents and city officials had no say in the resettlement process and little warning that these migrants were going to be placed in their community. According to former Mayor Laurier T. Raymond Jr., the city became “maxed-out financially, physically, and emotionally.”¹⁹

The public school system in Lewiston crumbled as a result. In 2004, roughly 95 percent of all students were considered “proficient” in the English language. But by 2017, nearly 30 percent of the students were designated as LEP – three times more than the national average. And teachers have been forced to find a way to instruct a student body that speaks 34 different lan-

guages. In order to adequately educate the growing number of migrants moving to the state, Maine will need to increase its number of LEP-qualified teachers by as much as 110 percent.²⁰

The unseen tragedy behind this mad dash to accommodate illegal aliens, refugees and legal immigrants is that despite all the money spent, there is little to show for it. LEP students consistently demonstrate dismal progress in all subject areas, and the fallout is affecting other students.²¹ And the Lewiston school system was already performing poorly *before* it was hit with an influx of immigrant students who require special accommodations. It has repeatedly been placed on Maine's list of poorly performing schools.²²



Lewiston High School is ranked 458 out of 525 high schools in Maine and consistently underperforms on standardized tests.²³ A sudden, significant increase in students from developing countries who are not proficient in English can only further hamper the level of education delivered to local students – as the number of LEP students in public schools increases, other resources tend to decrease, driving across-the-board declines in student achievement.²⁴

Things are not much better in the other states listed in this report. In both North Dakota and South Dakota, schools have

In both North Dakota and South Dakota, schools have grown so rapidly - in part due to an influx of immigrants - that districts have been forced... to eliminate certain services. As a result, some school systems chose to cut funding for special education programs.

grown so rapidly – in part due to an influx of immigrants – that districts have been forced to decide whether to eliminate certain services. As a result, some school systems chose to cut funding for special education programs.²⁵ The money saved through these cuts is then funneled into Limited English Proficiency, ESL and other programs.

But school systems in the Dakotas still cannot hire LEP-certified teachers fast enough. In 2015, there were about 8,500 LEP students across North and South Dakota but only about 100 teachers who were properly certified to teach LEP, ESL or bilingual classes. That is more than 85 LEP students to every qualified teacher.²⁶

School systems in places like Boston, New York and Los Angeles also struggle to integrate immigrant children. Nevertheless, these large urban school systems typically have greater financial resources, more facilities and larger staffs. Therefore, they are able to respond more effectively to migrant influxes. Smaller cities like Lewiston, Fargo and Sioux Falls, however, lack the resources typically available in urban metropolises. And they struggle to balance the interests of U.S. citizens and immigrant children.

Competition for Jobs

Adult immigrants – who may have limited proficiency in English and few marketable job skills – wind up in direct competition with the residents of economically depressed areas in places like Mississippi and West Virginia.

Nowhere has this been more visible than in the falling wages experienced by agricultural workers throughout the United States. Over the past several decades, the farming sector has grown increasingly dependent on a steady supply of both illegal aliens and temporary foreign agricultural workers on H-2A visas. As a result, most American farm workers, ranch hands and seasonal pickers have seen their wages drop by roughly 20 percent. And the mass influx of immigrants has had similar effects on jobs in manufacturing, construction, waste removal, etc.²⁷

This is a significant issue for the states we have surveyed. All of their economies still have significant agricultural, manufacturing and extraction (mining, oil/gas, timber, etc.) sectors.

And while it is certainly true that rural states suffer from an over-abundance of

foreign-born agricultural workers, many rural states with small populations are also importing foreign labor to fill new jobs in other emerging fields.

All ten states on our list are presently investing significant resources in modernizing their economies. Currently, the largest industry in New Hampshire is insurance and related activities. Banking is the dominant industry in South Dakota. And the biggest industry in Maine, Montana and Vermont is health care.²⁸

All of these industries recruit heavily for well-compensated positions that require at least some familiarity with technology. And many of the leading companies in these industries are recruiting foreign H-1B workers instead of Americans to fill these jobs. That means, American workers in the states covered by this study wind up competing with immigrants for lucrative positions in emerging industries. It also means that companies are spending money filing H-1B applications that could easily be invested in building a pool of qualified local workers.



Even a Small Number of Immigrant Workers Shrinks American Wages

Employers in a variety of industries turn to foreign hires as an effort to undercut the labor market and pay wages lower than those demanded by domestic American workers. Both lawful migrants and illegal aliens will typically accept wages that are far less than what is required to comfortably support a family in the United States. This is due to the fact that wages considered low in the United States are generally significantly higher than what foreign workers would earn in their home countries. And, if foreign workers are sending remittance payments home to friends and family, American dollars are typically worth more on the local economy.²⁹

The net effect is that immigrants wind up in direct competition with American workers for available employment, and they also exert downward pressure on the compensation rates in any field that they enter in significant numbers.

The net effect is that immigrants wind up in direct competition with American workers for available employment, and they also exert downward pressure on the compensation rates in any field that they enter in significant numbers. Just because a state has a relatively “small” number of migrants does not mean that its labor market will not be affected. In fact, the effects are frequently magnified because rural states without major urban centers typically have fewer jobs available overall.

Take Mississippi, for example. In August 2019, U.S. Immigration and Customs



Enforcement (ICE) raided seven poultry processing plants, run primarily by Koch Foods, across the state. In total, they arrested 680 illegal aliens and a number of lawfully-present immigrants suspected of working even though their visas did not give them permission to do so.³⁰ While that may not seem like a large number of jobs taken from Americans, it actually constitutes 3 percent of all poultry jobs in the state.³¹ Poultry farming and processing is Mississippi’s largest industry.

Of course, the owners of these facilities, like many other corporations that prefer foreign labor, claim that they only hire foreign-born workers because there are not enough American workers to fill open positions. However, citizens in Mississippi tell a different story.

In a recent article featured in *The Washington Post*, Octavius Noblin, an African-American man from Forest, Mississippi, explained how difficult it can be to break into the job market. “It’s hard to move up around Forest,” he stated. Noblin then revealed that he applied to Koch Foods on four different occasions, but was turned down every time.³²

Noblin’s story is no outlier, either. According to the *Daily Caller*, Koch Foods hosted a job fair to fill the positions that were originally occupied by the apprehended illegal aliens

and suspected visa violators. They received 200 applications from U.S. citizens before noon on the first day of the fair.³³ These Americans were originally left in the dust by those who are willing to ignore U.S. immigration law and exploit foreign workers in order to increase their profit margins.

Neither competition nor wage depression is limited to low-wage jobs. In fact, according to the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics, up to 25 percent of the 415,000 immigrants in the states covered by this report work in a science, technology, engineering or mathematics (STEM) related field.³⁴

Due to foreign competition, only one-third of all native-born Americans with a STEM degree actually hold a job in their field. And roughly half of those who do will move on to a different career before they turn 50.

This is a particularly significant issue because STEM jobs represent a major sector of ongoing economic development in the United States. Much like their peers in the poultry processing business, employers in STEM fields increasingly favor foreign-born workers over American citizens. Mississippi and West Virginia have two of the highest unemployment rates in the nation.³⁵ Despite this, corporations still import roughly 9,000 skilled guest workers into these states on an annual basis and regularly prioritize the hiring of non-citizens over Americans.³⁶

And, according to the Center for Immigration Studies, due to foreign competition, only one-third of all native-born Americans with a STEM degree actually hold a job in their field.³⁷ And roughly half of those who do will move on to a different career before they turn 50.³⁸ The prima-



ry reason for this is because the influx of foreign labor in these fields has stagnated wages compared to jobs at the same level in other fields.

This trend is discouraging young American citizens in the states we examined from even considering STEM careers in the first place. For example, in West Virginia, only 21 percent of current college students are pursuing a STEM-related degree – far below the national average of 33 percent.³⁹

Things are not much better in the other states covered in this report. Despite what the open-borders cohort claims, there are plenty of ambitious, entrepreneurial Americans willing to work at any job that pays a fair market wage. But many employers simply refuse to offer reasonable wages when they have a steady stream of immigrants and illegal aliens who are willing to work for less than similarly-situated American citizens. Until that supply of cheap, foreign labor dries up, the situation for American workers will not improve.

Targets for Terrorism

It is no secret that there is a clear connection between immigration and terrorism. Both the 1993 and 2001 World Trade Center attacks were committed by migrants lawfully present in the U.S. on a variety of visas. And the 2013 Boston Marathon Bombing was perpetrated by two refugees from Dagestan, Russia.

While most people think of major urban centers as the preferred targets of terrorists, this is not always so. According to the University of Maryland's Global Terrorism Database, every state on our list has experienced at least one terror attack within the last 50 years.

Terror attacks on rural infrastructure have the potential to do more long-term damage than attacks in heavily populated areas.

At least one of these attacks, in the most unlikely of places, was committed by an immigrant-related terror group. A 1978 bombing of the Alaska Oil Pipeline was a terrorist act attributed to exiled anti-Castro Cubans.⁴⁰ And that attack clearly demonstrates that facilities for processing natural resources and other large industrial sites are attractive targets for terrorists.

In addition, should they become the victim of terrorist activity, many rural areas lack the public safety resources to mount an immediate response and recovery effort. Places like Boston, New York City and Los Angeles have literally thousands of police officers, firefighters, EMTs and other public safety officers working within their mu-

nicipal boundaries. And they can call on neighboring cities for further assistance. However, mines, oil drilling facilities and other potential industrial targets are often located in remote areas and are surrounded by small towns that are protected by volunteer fire departments and undersized law enforcement agencies responsible for covering large territories. This means that terror attacks on rural infrastructure have the potential to do more long-term damage than attacks in heavily populated areas.

And there is reason to be concerned. As noted earlier in this study, Lewiston, Maine, has been inundated with refugees from Somalia. Meanwhile, both Portland, Maine, and Augusta, Maine, have been flooded with Iraqi refugees. Both Somalia and Iraq were on the Department of Homeland Security's list of "special interest countries" that have been designated by the U.S. intelligence community as being likely to export terrorism to the United States immigration system.⁴¹

FAIR has repeatedly pointed out flaws in the system for vetting intending immigrants, particularly those seeking to enter the United States as refugees or asylum seekers.⁴² When immigrants from countries where terrorist organizations are active are admitted to the U.S. and settle in places like New York City or Los Angeles, they still present a threat. However, that threat is somewhat mitigated by the large presence of federal law enforcement agencies in those cities and by the fact that urban metropolises typically have large, well-trained police forces attuned to signs of terrorist activity.

However, the situation is quite different for the states covered in this study. Nearly all of them have only a small federal law

enforcement presence. And most have relatively small state and local policing agencies. That means that immigrants who entered the United States with the intention

to engage in terrorist activities will find it far easier to operate undetected in the states discussed here.

Small-Town Health Care

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) have published an extensive body of research showing that most low-income immigrants use hospital emergency rooms for their primary care needs.⁴³ In one study, NIH concluded that, “increased demand can negatively affect the U.S. emergency services system.”⁴⁴

Just as mass migration is increasing populations in small towns like Lewiston, Maine, rural hospitals all over the United States are closing. Between 2010 and 2016, 4 percent of all rural hospitals in the country shut their doors permanently.⁴⁵ At the same time, hospital closures also prompt physicians, nurses and other health care providers to move to larger urban areas with greater employment opportunities.⁴⁶

That means an increasingly smaller number of hospital emergency rooms must now provide medical services to a growing

group of foreign patients. And many of those patients require costly treatments that are more efficiently provided by the types of specialty practices that leave town when local hospitals close their doors.

Meanwhile, everyone who must use the shrinking pool of medical service providers – Americans and immigrants alike – experiences longer wait times for treatment and competition for scarce medical resources.

Compounding the problem is the fact that the cost of a medical education has driven down the number of students applying to medical school and, by 2030, the United States will be facing a shortfall of 42,000–120,000 physicians.⁴⁷ Cities like Lewiston, Maine, with a growing number of low-income, low-skilled immigrants will be hardest hit by both hospital and health care provider shortages.



Conclusion

Immigration now adds more than one million people – that is 10 times the population of Manchester, New Hampshire’s largest city – to our population each year. Overall, the United States is growing by more than 2.6 million people annually.⁴⁸ At this rate, our population will grow to more than 413 million people by 2050. That is nearly 100 million additional people that our country will have to accommodate.

And, unlike previous generations of foreigners, today’s immigrants are 50 percent more likely to use welfare than native-born Americans.⁴⁹ That means many new arrivals are dependent upon state governments for their basic needs. That has proven a challenge even for urbanized, wealthy states like Florida and Massachusetts. Governments in those states struggle to provide high quality education, health care and retirement security for U.S. citizens.

With the government beginning to settle more immigrants in America’s small towns and rural communities, how long will it be before Vermont or North Dakota experience the increased crime, overburdened health care systems, swamped public schools and overwhelming government debt that currently plague places like New York and California?

The answer is that it may be sooner than we expect. And those most negatively affected will be the U.S. citizens of states like West Virginia which *The Wall Street Journal* has described as, “left behind” by the nationwide economic recovery.

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A Note on Methodology

In order to produce this report, we examined wide-ranging collections of data such as the Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS), reports published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), and information compiled by the Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration (DOLETA).

Using these sources as a foundation, we attempted to extract relevant data points regarding the ten states with the lowest foreign-born populations. Based on this information, we were able to produce a general profile of the impact that unchecked mass migration has on the listed states.

One of the challenges we faced when preparing this report was difficulty in obtaining transparent data. Immigration issues are controversial and many states simply refuse to release data on "controversial" issues like immigrant crime rates and the costs associated with large immigrant populations.

FAIR has discussed this dearth of data in past studies such as: [SCAAP Data Suggest Illegal Aliens Commit Crime at a Much Higher Rate Than Citizens & Lawful Immigrants](#), [The Fiscal Burden of Illegal Immigration on United States Taxpayers 2017](#), and [The Elephant in the Classroom: Mass Migration's Impact on Public Education](#).