(Illegal) Immigration:
Global and National Context
and Prospects for Reform

Presented by
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Topics

☐ Global and national context

☐ Illegal Immigration
  - Economic impacts
  - Fiscal Costs and contributions
  - National security

☐ Policy debates and prospects for reform
Immigration: A World-Wide Phenomenon

- Cause and consequence of global economic integration

- UN estimates 190 to 200 million immigrants ... ≈ 3.3% of the world's population

- Global remittances estimated at $150 billion per year

Foreign-Born Population

Source: U.S. Census Bureau
Categories of Foreign Born (2004)

- Naturalized Citizens: 11.3 million (32%)
- Legal Permanent Residents: 10.4 million (29%)
- Unauthorized Immigrants: 10.3 million (29%)
- Temporary Legal Residents: 1.2 million (3%)
- Refugee Arrivals: 2.5 million (7%)

U.S. Laws Limit Economic Migration

- Architecture of family reunification
- Economic migration laws seek to:
  - Minimize competition with U.S. workers
  - Provide for scarce labor
Demographic Realities

- Native-born population growing slowly and ageing
- 20% of U.S. births occur to foreign-born mothers
- Directly and indirectly, immigration accounts for \( \approx 60\% \) of U.S. population growth
- Between 1990-2004, immigrants accounted for **over 50% of growth** in the civilian labor force
Demographic Realities

Example:

Between 1996 and 2000 (Economic boom)

- U.S. economy generated 14.3 million new jobs
- U.S. population increased by 12.3 million people including immigration

Strong ‘pull’ factor
Political Challenge

‘Immigration’
increasingly equated with
‘Illegal Immigration’
Causes of Illegal Immigration...

1. Global economic integration

2. Inadequate provision for legal economic immigration

3. Failure to sanction employers for hiring unauthorized immigrants due to:
   i. No reliable means for verifying employment eligibility
   ii. Limited funding of interior enforcement;
   iii. Limited political will due to U.S. labor needs
Most Unauthorized Immigrants From Latin America
(Share of estimated 10.3 unauthorized immigrants)

Mexico 5.9 million (56%)
Other Latin America 2.5 million (24%)
Asia 1 million (10%)
Europe & Canada 0.6 million (6%)
Africa & Other 0.4 million (4%)

Illegal Immigration Matters...
- To immigrants themselves
- To the United States
Immigration Status Matters to Employment

![Bar chart showing the percentage of Native-born and Unauthorized Workers in various industries.](chart)

Native-born Workers | Unauthorized Workers
--- | ---
Service Occupations | 15% | 33%
Construction & Extractive | 6% | 17%
Production, Repair & Installation | 10% | 16%
Sales & Administration | 13% | 27%
Management, Business & Professional | 10% | 35%
Transportation & Moving Industries | 6% | 8%
Farming | 1% | 3%

Immigration Status Matters to Income


Immigration Status Matters to Educational Attainment of Children
(Share of each group’s 18-24 year old population, 2004)

Immigration Status Matters to Net Fiscal Impacts

- Illegal immigrants tend to be low-skilled

- Low-skilled immigrants:
  - Earn relatively low wages
  - Contribute relatively little in taxes

- Net fiscal impacts depend *both* on:
  - Size and mix of immigrant population
  - Generosity of state public services

- *Illegal status compounds impacts*
Immigration Status Matters to National Security

- Failure to control borders:
  - Undermines sovereignty & rule of law
  - Creates national security risks
  - Undermines formulation of coherent policy
  - Makes the border a dangerous place

“It is difficult to open the front door without closing the back door.”
Enforcement Has Focused on the Border

Spending by Type of Enforcement: 1985 - 2002

Enforcement Challenge

- Ambivalence about enforcement
  - Focus at border while interior enforcement is minimal
  - No reliable system for verifying immigration

- Ambivalence about controlling immigration – control modulated through
  - Limits to visible categories
  - Adjustments to numbers of temporary visas
  - Adjustments to enforcement intensity
Politics of Reform

- System understood to be broken

- Political stalemate:
  - “Enforcement before reform” vs. “Reform in order to enforce”

- What to do with 11 million unauthorized immigrants?
  - “Earned regularization” vs. “Amnesty”
Temporary Worker Program

- One mechanism for economic immigration
- Debates over existing unauthorized population
- Limited provision for *permanent* economic immigration
‘Importing’ Temporary Labor is Complicated

- Workers vs. citizens
- Facilitates:
  - Limiting rights
  - Social divisions
  - Inherent power imbalance
# Politics of Immigration Debates

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<td>Free-Market Expansionists</td>
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<td>Jeff Flake (R-AZ)</td>
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Major Themes and Conclusions

- Today’s immigration reflects a global economy
- Economic and fiscal impacts are complex
- Current laws reflect complex political cross-currents and interests
- Reform will be difficult and political voice is uneven