

## Using ProCon.org for Critical Thinking about Illegal Immigration

### Is illegal immigration an economic burden to America?

PRO (yes)	CON (no)
<p><b>1. The Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR)</b>, in its Immigration Issue website section entitled "The Fiscal Burden of Illegal Immigration on United States Taxpayers," last revised in Feb. 2011, stated:</p> <p>"Illegal immigration costs U.S. taxpayers about \$113 billion a year at the federal, state and local level... The annual outlay that illegal aliens cost U.S. taxpayers is an average amount per native-headed household of \$1,117... Education for the children of illegal aliens constitutes the single largest cost to taxpayers, at an annual price tag of nearly \$52 billion..."</p> <p>At the federal level, about one-third of outlays are matched by tax collections from illegal aliens. At the state and local level, an average of less than 5 percent of the public costs associated with illegal immigration is recouped through taxes collected from illegal aliens. Most illegal aliens do not pay income taxes. Among those who do, much of the revenues collected are refunded to the illegal aliens when they file tax returns...</p> <p>With many state budgets in deficit, policymakers have an obligation to look for ways to reduce the fiscal burden of illegal migration. California, facing a budget deficit of \$14.4 billion in 2010-2011, is hit with an estimated \$21.8 billion in annual expenditures on illegal aliens. New York's \$6.8 billion deficit is smaller than its \$9.5 billion in yearly illegal alien costs."</p>	<p><b>2. The US Chamber of Commerce</b>, stated the following in its article "Immigration Myths and Facts" published on its website <a href="http://www.uschamber.com">www.uschamber.com</a>, on May 1, 2011:</p> <p>"...[I]f the approximately 8 million unauthorized immigrants currently working in the United States were removed from the country, there would not be 8 million job openings for unemployed Americans. Why? ...because removing 8 million undocumented workers from the economy also means removing 8 million consumers – and the jobs they support through their spending. If the undocumented population were to vanish, the U.S. economy would contract and the total number of jobs would decrease..."</p> <p>Undocumented immigrants pay sales taxes, just like every other consumer in the United States. Undocumented immigrants also pay property taxes – even if they rent housing.</p> <p>More than half of undocumented immigrants provide their employers with counterfeit identity documents, so federal and state income taxes, Social Security taxes, and Medicare taxes are automatically deducted from their paychecks. However, undocumented immigrants working 'on the books' with false documents are not eligible for any of the federal or state benefits that their tax dollars help to fund."</p>
<p><b>3. Jim Gilchrist, MBA, CPA</b>, Founder and President of The Minuteman Project, in an Aug. 26, 2005 speech titled "The Crushing Economic Burden of Illegal Immigration" and delivered at an immigration conference in Beverly Hills, CA, said:</p> <p>"I've tried to figure out the costs since I have this tax background. What is the cost to each of us as taxpayers to support 30 million illegal aliens, many of whom are working in the underground economy and not contributing to the tax system? And yet they're using the system that bona fide taxpayers provide and pay for... I had to make my own estimate, since the government will not give me these numbers, nor does it care to calculate them... I've come up with my own numbers. And I will stand by these numbers.</p> <p>The annual gross cost to U.S. taxpayers to provide schooling, hospitalization, and whatever plethoric benefits are out there for the 30 million illegal aliens is approximately \$400 billion per year funded by bona fide U.S. taxpayers. That's \$400 billion per year and going up."</p>	<p><b>4. Raul Hinojosa, PhD</b>, Associate Professor of Chicana and Chicano Studies at the University of California at Los Angeles, in a July 18, 2005 <i>BusinessWeek</i> interview titled "A Massive Economic Development Boom," said:</p> <p>"First and foremost, [illegal immigration is] a source of value added. The total goods and services that they consume through their paycheck, plus all that they produce for their employers, is close to about \$800 billion. They're also producing at relatively lower costs because the undocumented population typically gets about 20% less in wages than if they were legalized. That leads to lower prices for us and higher profits to employers. In addition, they're obviously a huge consumer base.</p> <p>We've seen that 90% of the wages that the undocumented population gets are spent inside the U.S... [T]otal consumptive capacity remaining in the U.S. is \$400 billion to \$450 billion. If you took away the undocumented population, it would be the worst economic disaster in the history of the U.S."</p>

Question and responses from ProCon.org: <http://immigration.procon.org/viewanswers.asp?questionID=000788>

**I. INTRODUCTION** (15 minutes) – Who is ProCon.org? What is critical thinking? Vote on today’s topic.

**II. THE ARGUMENTS** (5-10 minutes) – Carefully read the four arguments below in numerical order (1,2,3,4).

**III. STUDENT GROUP DISCUSSION** (20-30 minutes) – Break yourselves up into small groups and discuss:

- In general, what do you think of each argument made?
- What do you think of the arguments made considering evaluation criteria (A – E) in Section IV below?
  - o Were the statements clear? Current? Strong and convincing? Scientific or emotional? How much do those things matter?
  - o Were the sources good quality? relevant to the subject? Diverse enough to reflect range of opinions?
  - o Was the presentation of information biased? Did the editing, relative length, relative strength of the sources, dates of the statements, or anything else suggest the presentation was not completely neutral?
- Which side do you think won and why?
- What questions (if any) do you still have about this issue?

**IV. ENTIRE GROUP DISCUSSION** (15-20 minutes) – Back to normal seating. Small group work is over. Now, as one entire group, let’s talk about arguments 1 - 4 using evaluation criteria A – E below.

**V. SOLO SCORING SESSION** (5 minutes) – You’ve read the arguments, discussed them in small groups, and heard views from your peers. Now take five minutes to reflect quietly on everything you’ve considered and give each argument a score of 1-5 using the criteria listed below. A score of 5 means outstanding, and 1 means terrible. Add up your scores as indicated.

	Argument 1 (pro)	Argument 2 (con)	Argument 3 (pro)	Argument 4 (con)
<b>A Clarity of Statement</b> Hard to follow? Well communicated? Clear as can be?				
<b>B Quality of Source</b> Poor source? Fairly qualified? Top expert?				
<b>C Age of Statement</b> Old news? Somewhat timely? Very recent?				
<b>D Editing of Statement</b> Statement too long? Too short? Was use of ... concerning? Did statements appear out of context?				
<b>E Strength of Argument</b> Weak? Sloppy? Moving? Convincing?				

**TOTALS (25 is the max):** \_\_\_\_\_

*TOTAL PRO (1+3):* \_\_\_\_\_ *TOTAL CON (2+4):* \_\_\_\_\_

Now let’s vote again to see how many people are pro, con, or not clearly pro or con on the question: Is illegal immigration an economic burden to America? Which side won? Which side had the biggest increase in supporters?

**VI. WRAP UP** (5-10 minutes) – Time, Money, and Bias in Media Production; Why Critical Thinking Is Important; Keep in Touch with ProCon.org on Facebook, Twitter, Email; Free Stuff Up Front, Come and Say Hello