



Immigration Reform is Key to Economic Recovery

The 2008-2009 economic recession has deeply affected the stability and well-being of families and businesses across the United States. In the search for solutions, a growing body of evidence indicates that comprehensive immigration reform would *promote* economic recovery. Creating an earned pathway to legal status and eventual citizenship for undocumented immigrants would strengthen the U.S. economy and help put us back on track toward stability and growth.

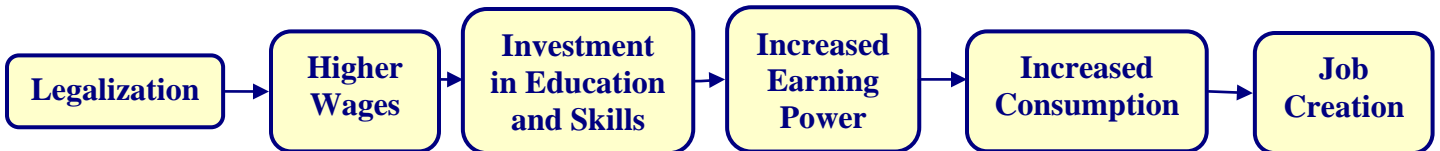
Immigration reform is part of the solution. Undocumented immigrants are currently barred from fully integrating into the economy. These immigrants would [pay more state and federal taxes, earn higher wages, and create more jobs](#) if they were legalized. The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimates that 2006 legislation on legalization, if passed, would have generated \$66 billion in new tax revenues over 10 years.

Did You Know?

The U.S. Council of Economic Advisers estimates that the country's net gain from immigration is \$37 billion per year.

Immigrant workers in both high- and low-skilled jobs are essential to a healthy economy. Immigrants are important contributors to the U.S. economy as taxpayers, workers, consumers, and employers. Latino buying power totaled \$951 billion in 2008 and is expected to increase to \$1.4 trillion by 2013. Hispanic- and Asian-owned firms – many owned by people who came to the United States as immigrants – provide jobs to millions of employees in the United States.

Legalization is critical to fully integrating immigrants into local communities. Many immigrants who gained legal status in the 1980s through the [Immigration Reform and Control Act \(IRCA\)](#) earned higher wages, pursued educational opportunities, opted for home ownership, and lifted themselves out of poverty. Legalization enables immigrants to invest in their careers and their families, thereby supporting the U.S. economy and strengthening U.S. communities.



Legalization levels the playing field for all U.S. workers and employers. Major labor unions have identified that immigration enforcement [impedes their efforts to protect workers' rights](#). Immigrant workers, fearing retribution, are unable to speak out about wage theft or unsafe working conditions. Legalization, combined with strict enforcement of labor and employment laws, would promote fair competition and remove economic incentives for worker exploitation.

Deporting immigrants would not fix unemployment rates. Immigrant workers [cannot simply be "traded out" for native-born workers](#). Even immigrant and native-born workers with the same level of education tend not to search for work in the same job market due to differences in location, occupation, and work experience. Removing 8.3 million undocumented immigrant workers from the fragile U.S. economy would only aggravate today's problems. As in Postville, IA, following the May 2008 raid, deportations cause businesses to shut down and local tax revenues to decrease, leading to further job loss and economic hardship for entire communities.