

Immigrants and Voter Fraud

“In addition to winning the Electoral College in a landslide, I won the popular vote if you deduct the millions of people who voted illegally”

Tweet by President-Elect Trump on November 27, 2016

Trump’s statement was based on assertions by groups such as the Virginia Voters Alliance. VVA’s 2016 report, ["Alien Invasion in Virginia,"](#) found that in eight Virginia counties with high immigrant populations, 1,046 noncitizens had been removed from the voter rolls for not being citizens, totaling 0.0007 of the population of those 8 counties. A total of 31 of those removed had previously voted in an election. VVA and other groups argue that because people can register to vote by checking a box on their driver’s license application, millions of noncitizens must currently be registered to vote, but have just not yet been caught. (Voter registration information received by state motor vehicle offices is turned over to the local board of elections for verification and processing.) VVA believes that the accuracy of our elections is at stake if noncitizens vote.

In response, the Brennan Center for Justice released a report, ["Noncitizen Voting: The Missing Millions,"](#) arguing that “noncitizen voting in the 2016 election was exceedingly rare” since “both the number of people referred for prosecution and the number of people merely suspected of improper voting are very small.” An election official in Georgia explained that sometimes noncitizens who are completing a driver’s license application don’t realize that they’re checking a box that is registering them to vote. Those who have made this mistake “will come and self-report and explain their accident. Then we give them a confirmation in writing that they have been removed and take them off the rolls.”

The Brennan Center report states that sometimes citizens are wrongfully removed from voter rolls. “One way for people to get out of jury duty is they can say they’re a noncitizen,” explained one Texas election official. Others might forget to mark the “citizen” box when filling out a driver’s license form, which can lead to being removed from the voter rolls.

Voting by noncitizens is a felony, and even one vote by a noncitizen can lead to deportation. An election officer in Arizona stated, “Voter apathy is an issue for citizens in this country. To think that someone who is here trying to stay under the radar would put their name on an official list and get out to vote in elections and expose themselves, with so much at risk, doesn’t make sense.”

Questions:

- 1) What is your reaction to this information?
- 2) Do you have any personal experience with this issue that you want to share?
- 3) What information surprises you the most?
- 4) What does the Virginia Voters Alliance think are the main reasons that 1,046 people were removed from the voter rolls in Virginia? What does the Brennan Center for Justice think?
- 5) Which reasons do you think are more likely?
- 6) What do you wish you could tell President Trump in response to his tweet?

Immigrants and Crime

“It is the Democrats fault for being weak and ineffective with Boarder [sic] Security and Crime. Tell them to start thinking about the people devastated by Crime coming from illegal immigration. Change the laws!”

Tweet by President Trump on June 18, 2018

A few days later after this tweet, President Trump held a press conference with grieving family members of those killed by undocumented immigrants. “These are the American citizens permanently separated from their loved ones,” he said. “These are the families the media ignores. They don’t talk about them. Very unfair.” He continued, “Where is the outcry over the savage gang MS-13 and its bloodthirsty creed: kill, rape and control?”

Three months before the tweet, an article in the journal *Criminology*, [“Does Undocumented Immigration Increase Violent Crime?”](#) used an analysis of crime data from the past 25 years to argue that “undocumented immigration does not increase violence.” In fact, the researchers conclude that over that time, “increases in the undocumented immigrant population within states are associated with significant decreases in the prevalence of violence.”

An article published by the Cato Institute, [“Criminal Immigrants in Texas,”](#) analyzed criminal conviction rates in Texas according to the immigration status of the criminal: native-born, illegal immigrant, or legal immigrant. It found that in 2015 there were 1,797 criminal convictions of native-born people for every 100,000 native-born people; 899 criminal convictions of illegal immigrants for every 100,000 illegal immigrants; and 611 criminal convictions of legal immigrants for every 100,000 legal immigrants.

Furthermore, according to a [report](#) from Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), although the gang MS-13 originated in El Salvador, in the U.S., most MS-13 members are U.S. citizens. When ICE arrested MS-13 members nationwide in May 2017, 85% were U.S. citizens, and a similar raid in 2016 found 78 percent of gang members were U.S. citizens. According to [ProPublica](#), “the vast majority of MS-13 victims are young immigrants, many of them undocumented.” For example, the six teenage victims of MS-13 profiled in a 2017 [NY Post article](#) were all either immigrants or children of immigrants.

Questions:

- 1) What is your reaction to this information?
- 2) Do you have any personal experience with this issue that you want to share?
- 3) What information surprises you the most?
- 4) What do you think were President Trump’s reasons for holding a press conference with families of victims?
- 5) Plot a rough chart with the data from the Cato Institute. What does this data show?
- 6) Why does it matter that most MS-13 members are citizens and most of its victims are immigrants?
- 7) What do you wish you could tell President Trump in response to his tweet?

Immigrants and the Economy

“Protecting our workers means reforming our system of legal immigration. The current, outdated system depresses wages for our poorest workers, and puts great pressure on taxpayers... It is a basic principle that those seeking to enter a country ought to be able to support themselves financially. Yet, in America, we do not enforce this rule, straining the very public resources that our poorest citizens rely upon. According to the National Academy of Sciences, our current immigration system costs America’s taxpayers many billions of dollars a year.”

President Trump, in a speech to Congress on February 28, 2017

The [report](#) Trump cites from the NAS discusses two different ways that immigration affects the economy. One way is by affecting wages and employment rates. However, the report actually states that immigration has a “very small” effect on wages and unemployment rates, and any lower wages or employment mostly affect other immigrants.

The other way immigration can affect the economy is through paying taxes and receiving government services. The report states that immigration increases the cost of public education in the short-term, since immigrants’ children tend to be more costly to educate. However, the report continues that “as adults, the children of immigrants (the second generation) are among the strongest economic and fiscal contributors in the U.S. population, contributing more in taxes than either their parents or the rest of the native-born population.” According to the report, immigration costs governments 57 billion annually for the first generation of immigrants, but second generations contribute 31 billion a year, and third-plus generations add 224 billion annually. The report concludes that “immigration has an overall positive impact on long-run economic growth in the U.S.”

Furthermore, undocumented immigrants pay taxes, including Medicare and Social Security deductions. Many undocumented immigrants believe paying taxes can help them seek citizenship. According to the [Social Security administration](#), 3.4 million undocumented immigrants pay Social Security payroll taxes each year, with a total of \$13 billion in 2010 alone. And because of their illegal status, undocumented workers are not eligible to receive Social Security benefits when they retire. In 2015, the [IRS received \\$23.6 billion in income taxes](#) from people without Social Security numbers, most of whom are undocumented immigrants.

Nevertheless, a [2017 poll of the general public](#) found that 41% of Americans think immigrants make the tax situation “worse,” while only 23% said “better” and 33% said there was no effect.

Questions:

- 1) What is your reaction to this information?
- 2) Do you have any personal experience with this issue that you want to share?
- 3) What information surprises you the most?
- 4) Why do you think President Trump summed up the NAS report the way he did?
- 5) How do you think second- and third-generation immigrants benefit the U.S. economy?
- 6) Why might the general public believe immigrants receive more taxes than they pay?
- 7) What do you wish you could tell President Trump in response to his speech?

Immigrants and Border Crossings

“The security of the United States is imperiled by a drastic surge of illegal activity on the southern border.”

President Trump, in a presidential memorandum dated April 4, 2018

According to the [U.S. Customs and Border Patrol](#), however, the rate of people illegally crossing the border is far lower now than in past years.

In the year 2000, the Border Patrol stopped an [average of 136,000 people each month](#) at the southern border. This year, however, the border patrol has reported stopping only [30,000-50,000 people each month](#).

Immigration in the U.S. overall has been increasing since the 1970s. According to the [U.S. Census Bureau](#), today people born outside the U.S. make up about 13 percent of the U.S. population. This represents a large increase from 1970, when only about 5 percent of the U.S. population was foreign-born. But the immigrant population was even larger in the late 19th century than it is now. Back then, almost 15 percent of the U.S. population had immigrated from other countries. At that time, there were very few restrictions on immigration; people could simply enter, work in the U.S., and become citizens after two years of residence in the country.

By contrast, today a system of quotas by country, dating back to 1924, heavily restricts U.S. immigration. As a result, the waiting list for visas is decades-long, even for people who are being sponsored by a family member. For example, people immigrating from Mexico must wait over 20 years for a family sponsorship visa, according to the [State Department's visa advisory](#). Thus, while total immigration nowadays is similar to what it was in the late 19th century, legal immigration remains much slower and more difficult now than it used to be.

Questions:

- 1) What is your reaction to this information?
- 2) Do you have any personal experience with this issue that you want to share?
- 3) What information surprises you the most?
- 4) Why do you think there were fewer restrictions on immigration before 1924?
- 5) If any of your family immigrated voluntarily to the U.S., how did immigration law at that time affect them?
- 6) How do you think the waiting list for legal immigration affects illegal immigration?
- 7) What do you wish you could tell President Trump in response to his memo?

