

COMMUNITY

JOURNAL

YOUR IMMIGRATION SOLUTION



ATTY. ROBERT REEVES & JEREMIAH JOHNSON

Sharing the truth and shattering stereotypes about immigrants

to commit crimes. Furthermore, the report found that teenage immigrants are much less likely than native-born teenagers to engage in risk behaviors such as delinquency, violence and substance abuse that often lead to incarceration.

Similarly, neighborhoods with larger populations of immigrants are associated with lower violence – not increased crime according to a March study by Harvard sociologist Robert Sampson. The study's findings are consistent with national historic trends indicating America's periods of high immigration coincided with America's periods of low levels of crime. As demonstrated over and over again, immigrants are less likely than the average United States native-born citizen to commit crimes.

Another stereotype is that immigrants hurt America's economy by accepting to be paid under the table and drain our health care and educational resources without paying taxes. Like the stereotype about immigrants and crime, this stereotype is also false. The truth is that immigrants contribute to the overall prosperity of our economy. Indeed, repeated studies have found that undocumented immigrants, and immigrants in general, are net contributors to the tax base and economies of many states and localities. For example, according to a report by the Immigration Policy Center, immigrants use relatively few federal or state public benefit programs; do not strain America's health care system; are a net fiscal benefit to the US economy; and pay more taxes and contribute to the social security system than they consume in public benefits. Even more recently, the White House issued a report with three key findings: 1) immigrants tend to complement natural born citizens, raising their

productivity and income; 2) immigration has a positive influence on America's long-run fiscal effect on our nation and 3) skilled immigrants contribute to innovation and have a significant positive fiscal impact. As the Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisors found, "immigrants not only help fuel the nation's economic growth, but also have an overall positive effect on the income of native-born workers."

There are real dangers and severe consequences for society to blindly accept the myths that immigrants are more prone to criminality and are a drain on our economy. Although it has been delayed, comprehensive immigration reform is still a real possibility and it is important that the public and politicians have accurate and reliable information. The immigration debate needs to rise above historical hysterics and must be reasoned

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