

Economic Contributions of Immigrant & Migrant Labor

- ❖ Immigrants collectively earn \$240 billion a year, pay \$90 billion a year in taxes, and receive \$5 billion in welfare. (PBS, “*The New Americans*, www.pbs.org)
- ❖ Although many immigrants lack a high school education, they are just as likely as the rest of the U.S. population to hold a college degree: 20 percent. That rate rose during the 1980s: Among those admitted in 1987-1990, 29 percent held a college degree. Immigrants are also twice as likely as natives to hold Ph.D.s. (PBS, “*The New Americans*,” www.pbs.org)
- ❖ For American employers, Mexican immigration plays a critical role in efforts to maintain a sufficiently large pool of workers in part because of the close match between the needs of employers and the job readiness of Mexican immigrant workers, especially in ‘essential worker’ categories, which are considered both unskilled and semi-skilled workers. The U.S. Department of Labor reports that of the top 30 occupations with the largest projected job growth in the 2000–2010 period, 16 are job categories that require only ‘short-term, on-the-job training.’” (American Immigration Law Foundation, 2002, www.aifl.org/ipc/ipf0902.asp)
- ❖ “The viability of some firms and industries facing international and domestic competition is dependent on immigrant labor. Research has been unable to establish a causal relationship between immigration and job displacement of native born.” (U.S. Department of Labor, “*The Effects of Immigration on the U.S. Economy and Labor Market*, May 1989)
- ❖ “America's immigration laws are colliding with economic reality, and reality is winning. Migration from Mexico is driven by a fundamental mismatch between a rising demand for low-skilled labor in the U.S. and a shrinking domestic supply of workers willing to fill those jobs. The Labor Department estimates that the total number of jobs in our economy that require only short-term training will increase from 53.2 million in 2000 to 60.9 million by 2010, a net increase of 7.7 million. Meanwhile, the supply of American workers willing to do such work continues to fall because of an aging workforce and rising education levels. By 2010, the median age of American workers will reach 40.6 years, while the share of adult native-born men without a high school diploma continues to plunge: from more than half in 1960 to less than 10% today. Older, educated Americans understandably have better things to do with their work time than to wash windows, wait tables and hang drywall.” (Daniel T. Griswold, Cato Institute, 10/22/02, www.cato.org)