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Exploratory Essay

ENGL 11000

**Do Immigrants threaten or benefit the United States?**

This paper explore the conflicts that have risen from Trump’s proposed bill to limit immigration and deport illegal immigrants from the country. Despite the United States being a country formed on immigrants, recent years have seen the Country divided on the subject.

Supporters of the proposed bill argue that immigrants have taken their jobs away and has wreaked havoc on the country’s economy. They believe it has weakened national security, and has fueled many conflicts and crimes within the country. Those who are against the bill counter it saying immigrants play a big part in the country’s economy by bringing in labor and ideas. They state that the bill is going to tear families apart, and will shake the country’s core belief foundations by not helping those who need help.

I have utilized opposing viewpoints from economists, statistical evidences of criminal activities by immigrants, as well as news articles that report on immigrants’ perceptions to explore the question if immigrants are beneficial to the country or if they pose a threat.

**The Controversial Conservatives**

One of the highly controversial topics in the proposed Bill is the deportation of illegal immigrants. Many conservative politicians support the legalization and they believe that Trump’s support for the immigration bill is a good omen for cracking down on illegal immigration further. They believe illegal immigrants take away jobs from American citizens and lawfully abiding residents, and are also a cause for many criminal activities.

They also believe sanctuary cities such as Los Angels and New York City are breaking the law by providing refuge to the illegal immigrants. They state that sanctuary cities are providing a safe haven for illegal immigrant criminals. Heather MacDonald who is an editor at City Journal and a fellow at the conservative think-tank, Manhattan Institute, states in her article, *Immigration Laws Should Be Enforced to Reduce Crimes Committed by Illegal Immigrants,* that the police officers in these cities are limited from arresting known criminals that are also illegal immigrants due to lack of evidence. Her idea is that if cops know these criminals are also illegal immigrants, but they cannot arrest them due to lack of evidence, they can arrest them on the basis of illegal immigration.

Economists against illegal immigration also reason that the country’s expenses can also be reduced by deporting illegal residents in prisons. Using the example of Arizona from the graph of *Illegal Immigrants in Prison*, which had a population of 6,392,017 in 2015, out of which estimated 390,000 are illegal immigrants. The state prisons also houses illegal immigrants which is 11.70% of the prison population They argue that by deporting these criminals, they can reduce the 11.70% expenses these prisons have.

**The Legal Immigrants**

Amid the crack down on the illegal immigrants by ICE and DACA’s retaliation to it, lies a group of people who immigrated to the country legally. Tal Kopan, in her article, “Legal immigrants wonder: Amid DACA attention, what about us?” raises the issue that legal immigrants who came through work-visas and such, are currently facing the biggest scrutiny when it comes to getting Green cards and citizenships.

According to Kopan, “immigrants who came to the US legally and the attorneys who work with them say they are facing a new world with this administration, where virtually every form of legal immigration to the US is under siege.” Her article raises the following questions: Who is the target of the New Bill? Is it illegal immigrants, or all immigrants? Is the Trump Administration seeking to reject all immigrants, without considering their legal status?

The article puts into light immigrants who came as young kids, and waited for years to get their Green Cards, only to be rejected, because they have crossed the age. She reports on the group “legal Dreamers” , which fights for immigrants in these types of situations. They are fighting for a bill in which these immigrants can also get a way to citizenship, rather than be torn apart from their families.

Kopan agrees that the Trump administration is tightening on the immigration system itself and is going beyond the crackdown on illegal immigration. She made this statement as a result of Department of Homeland Security’s intentions to narrow who can qualify for high-skill work permits, and revoking work authorizations for the spouses of those who do. She believes there will be a crack down on asylum visas as well as migration for family members of those who already have Green cards and citizenships.

In her article, Kopan summarizes the viewpoints of these immigrants and immigration lawyers who are fighting for them, stating that in the past, immigration laws took time to be processed and implemented, but with the new administration, the laws are changing everyday and it has become harder for the immigrants to fight for their cause.

**Immigrants and economy**

Economists who support immigration and who are against the proposed bills brings forth arguments that enable a stronger stance for illegal immigrants. In his testimony in the hearing on the Role of Immigration in the US House of Representatives on September 30, 2010, former NYC Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg supported the notion that Immigrants Strengthen the US economy rather than weakening it.

He stated that the debate should shift away from emotions and towards the economic factor. He touched on seven key areas on how the immigrants help the economy. He believed “Immigrants have been essential to our economic growth in every single industry.” He roots this belief by pointing out immigrants pay more in taxes than what they use in benefits, and they create new companies that produce more jobs. He also pointed out that the US is the only country that is turning away entrepreneurs and making it difficult for current immigrants to stay.

His testimony provides an idea of how the pro-immigration economists believe. They believe the United States should adapt a model that most countries follow, relaxing its immigration laws and allowing more immigrants into the country. They also believe Trump’s immigration bill is only going to cause more problems for the country.

Bloomberg’s testimony, despite being made almost a decade ago, also argues “Immigrants come to America to work…”, which stands true even today. Many economists agree along Bloomberg’s lines, stating that immigrants are willing to work low-skill jobs that Americans themselves do not favor. Jobs such as fruit pickers, groundskeepers and custodians require people, and immigrants usually fill these positions.

Bloomberg summarized his views on immigration stating that the US needs to secure its borders, and the legalization of illegal immigrants will only help it further by identifying who is in the country.

**Conclusion**

The United State of America was founded on the notion of immigration. The history of the country was built by the contributions of immigrants. In the present day, law makers have at the Capitol Hill have to factor in different perspectives when they propose bills and laws regarding immigration. The voices of many people matter in this debate, and when a decision is made, all of them have to be addressed. The current immigration system is at neutral state, providing neither relief nor support for any particular group. As an American and an immigrant, I believe the United States is capable of making smart decisions for the nation as a whole.

**Reflection**

I chose this topic to understand how much immigrants affect this country. I wanted to explore how much viewpoints differ on this particular topic. As an immigrant myself, I share the common understanding that immigrants came to the US for the American Dream. Just like the founding fathers, some of these immigrants come to the country to either escape poverty and persecution. Others so that they can provide better for their families. And some come to learn the American way, so that they can go back to their own countries one day, to better the lives of their fellow citizens.

Despite immigration being issue in the past, ever since Trump’s election into the office, it became a daily talk. Newspapers and news channels talked about it almost everyday, websites were created almost everyday, either supporting the DREAMERs or being against them and protests and walks formed almost in every major city. This controversial topic needed an in-depth investigation, and I decided to look at the some the main viewpoints.

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