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America will ALWAYS be an immigrant nation - is that so bad?

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March 29, 2016

According to the Center for Immigration Studies, over 61 million immigrants and their American-born underage children live in the United States.

Over the past four decades, the number of legal and illegal immigrants and their children living in the U.S. has jumped by 47.5 million.

In the 70s, no U.S. state had an immigrant population over 15 percent, but today sixteen states have registered over 15 percent of immigrants, with six states reporting a percentage of over 25. The leap has raised several questions regarding assimilation, crime rates and job opportunities.

Though America has long been established as a melting pot society, the amount of prejudice and discrimination remains a shocking constant.

The fear of losing out on jobs and rising crime rates has pushed Americans to fear for their livelihood, yet we claim to embrace all walks of life, including all non-violent religions and cultural norms.

As David Harsanyi, a writer for the New Hampshire Union Leader, wrote: "These days, rather than exerting societal pressure on immigrants to assimilate and embrace Western cultural norms, we're the ones being pressured to accept that all ideologies are equally worthwhile and moral. Anything less is a form of intolerance or racism."

These restrictions Americans have been placing on themselves have created several controversies involving religious rights and calls for equality amid cries for limiting immigrant rights and privileges.

Though the majority of America's immigrants hail from Mexico, a Pew Research survey indicated each generation assimilates better than their parent, with 92 percent of American-born Hispanics able to speak proficient English, which helps them with their

education and guides them to college degrees.

Whether the second, third or fourth-generation of immigrants are legal or not does not change the fact that they assimilate well and help spur the economy.

As former Cato Institute economist Daniel Griswold wrote in "Immigration Doesn't Hurt Native-Born Workers": "By increasing the size of the labor force, immigrants tend to boost the returns to capital, stimulating more investment in the economy and thus raising the productivity and wages of all workers, including the native-born."

Of the illegal immigrant population, only 5.1 percent make up the U.S. labor force, which renders the "They stole our jobs" argument moot.

Meanwhile, a study published in Psychological Science indicates the American Dream is more attainable in countries that offer equal access to higher-quality education and healthcare, such as Europe and Australia.

America was built with the sweat and blood of immigrants, yet today the Dream is nearly unachievable for those hailing from lower-income households - mainly composed of immigrants.

One thing Americans should take into consideration is the fact that immigrants will continue to enter the U.S. through both legal and illegal channels.

Remember, by encouraging them to educate themselves and assimilate within our culture can result in a stronger future for our country.