



## Letter: Immigrants bring positives to our communities

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As city elections approach, I offer some immigration facts based on decades of research conducted by nonpartisan organizations.

The most vicious myth about immigrants is that they, as a group, are criminal. Trump has repeatedly made this claim, most recently in El Paso, as have opponents of the Welcoming Cities resolution in the Springfield City Council chambers.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, which mainly represents small-business owners, found that “immigrants are actually less likely to commit crimes or be behind bars than native-born citizens.”

In 2017, the Cato Institute, a conservative think tank, came to the same conclusion: “Illegal immigrants are 44 percent less likely to be incarcerated than natives. Legal immigrants are 69 percent less likely to be incarcerated than natives.”

Those who assume deportation or a wall are solutions to crime are pointing their fingers at the wrong people.

Focusing on crime keeps us from recognizing all the positive things immigrants do for our communities. According to the U.S. Chamber, immigrants are twice as likely to start businesses as native-born citizens. They pay more in taxes than they receive in government services and benefits.

The Pew Research Center found that, compared with all Americans, U.S. born “children of immigrants are more likely to go to college, less likely to live in poverty, and equally likely to be homeowners.”

While facts and figures can seem dry, we all know the truth of the underlying story, because it is the story of our own immigrant ancestors.