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## Let's address some myths on immigration

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March 21, 2017

Those who promote immigration reforms would do well to take into account some apparent myths regarding immigration:

Myth # 1— Most immigrants are here illegally:

Most of the foreign-born people living in the United States have followed the rules and have valid authorization to be here.

Myth # 2 — They drain the system:

Undocumented immigrants do not qualify for welfare, food stamps, Medicaid, and most other public benefits. Even legal immigrants cannot receive these benefits until they have been in the United States for more than five years.

A Congressional Budget Office (CBO) report on the Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act of 2007 concluded that a path to legalization for immigrants would increase federal revenues by billions.

Myth # 3 — They don't pay taxes ... :

According to the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy (ITEP), undocumented immigrants collectively paid an estimated \$10.6 billion to state and local taxes in 2010.

The CBO reports IRS figures showing that 50 to 75 percent of the about 11 million undocumented U.S. immigrants file and pay income taxes each year.

Myth # 4 — ... but they still get benefits:

The truth is that undocumented immigrants contribute more in payroll taxes than they will ever consume in public benefits.

The U.S. Social Security Administration (SSA) estimated that in 2013, undocumented immigrants and their employers paid \$13 billion in payroll taxes alone for benefits immigrants

will never receive. According to the SSA, unauthorized immigrants — who are not eligible to receive Social Security benefits — have paid \$100 billion into the fund over the past decade.

Myth # 5 — They take American jobs:

According to the conservative Cato Institute, immigrants — regardless of their status — fill the growing gap between expanding low-skilled jobs and the shrinking pool of native-born Americans who are willing to take such low-wage jobs. Immigrant workers are more likely to be employed by the labor-intensive service and seasonal agricultural industries, while native-born workers are more likely to hold jobs in management, professional, sales and office occupations.

Myth # 6 — Undocumented immigrants bring crime:

Nationally, from 1990 to 2010, the violent crime rate declined almost 45 percent and the property crime rate fell 42 percent, even as the number of undocumented immigrants grew. According to the conservative Americas Majority Foundation, crime rates were lowest in states with the highest immigration growth rates.

According to the National Institute of Corrections, foreign-born people in America — whether they are naturalized citizens, permanent residents or undocumented — are incarcerated at a much lower rate than native-born Americans.

Myth # 7 — The United States is being overrun by immigrants like never before:

Many people accuse immigrants of having "anchor babies"— children who, being citizens, allow the whole family to stay. In 2013, the federal government deported about 72,400 foreign-born parents whose children had been born here. These children must wait until they are 21 before they can petition to allow their parents to join them in the United States (so much for family values).

Despite these myths, Obama deported about 2.5 million undocumented immigrants, a policy all signs point toward being expanded under Trump.