



## Opinion: Immigrants and Their Children Fuel America's Entrepreneurial Economy

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I was born in El Paso, Texas, just a stone's throw from the Mexican border, to immigrant parents. When my parents came to this country in the 1960s, they worked hard to build lives for themselves. My dad was a tailor; my mom did assembly work at home. Their working-class determination led me to attend UC Berkeley on an Air Force ROTC scholarship, then nine years serving my country as an active duty U.S. Air Force navigator traveling the world.

Today, I am the CEO of an award-winning educational publishing company that showcases the positive contributions of creative Latino entrepreneurs, inventors and business leaders. There's many of us. We've reached amazing heights — and contribute so much to the United States — because this country welcomed our parents and grandparents. When we welcome immigrants, our entire society benefits.

And yet the Trump administration is trying to ban legal immigration in all its forms. Earlier this year, the conservative-leaning [Cato Institute](#) reported that the White House planned to cut the number of legal immigrants by 44 percent annually, keeping 22 million people from coming here over the next five decades.

The effect of this action, according to Cato, would be to hurt our economy, reducing the rate of overall economic growth by about 12.5 percent. It would deprive our local, state and federal tax coffers of badly needed income. The average immigrant pays about \$92,000 more in taxes than they reap in benefits. That's a lot of money to lose.

But let's not just look at what we might lose. Let's focus on what immigrants have to offer. Immigrants start businesses at twice the rate of native-born Americans, and one in 10 workers are now employed by immigrant-founded companies, [according to research from New American Economy](#). California alone is home to almost 824,000 immigrant entrepreneurs! The state's immigrant-owned firms employ 1.5 million people and generate annual business income of \$21.8 billion.

And those numbers include only foreign-born business owners. Factor in the countless entrepreneurs who, like me, are the native-born children of new Americans, and we see what

immigration really is: an economic powerhouse that's fueling innovation and driving our state and our nation forward.

Since starting my company, [Gracefully Global](#), I've served countless immigrants, and children of immigrants, who are ambitious, talented, highly educated, and determined to build better lives for themselves and their families.

That's no surprise to anyone who works here in Silicon Valley: almost 40 percent of California's STEM workers are immigrants. But immigrants are also doing vital work, and starting much-needed businesses, in a variety of industries across our state—as my parents worked diligently in their blue-collar jobs.

If we want to compete globally, grow and evolve our economy, these are precisely the people we need to welcome and support.

I'm determined to keep showcasing the positive contributions that Latinos and other immigrants make so that my own biracial children can grow up surrounded with inspirational role models. But we also need our lawmakers to do their part, and to craft sane, humane immigration policies. After all, today's children are tomorrow's job creators and innovators.

In order to secure our country's future prosperity, we must welcome newcomers, not turn them away. They are vital assets to our country, regardless of where they were born.