

## No reason to be afraid of immigrants

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I wonder how much fear plays a part in our discussions of immigration — fear of people we don't know and fear for our economic future.

Recently Kim Crockett from the Center for the American Experiment spoke in St. Cloud. According to the [St. Cloud Times report](#), when attendees told her concerns related to refugees, she said, "I think the worst thing you can do is to have elected officials and ministers and other leaders in the community shaming the people of St. Cloud who are expressing reservations about it."

We should definitely talk about political issues in a civil way. Yet what does she mean by shaming? Does it mean presenting facts which may cause a person to feel uncomfortable?

Another recent local event was a talk by John Palmer, in which he argues for "a pause in the federal refugee resettlement program," citing concerns about money spent to help refugees settle, [according to the St. Cloud Times](#).

Yet he doesn't show the whole picture. In the long term Minnesota benefits financially from immigration.

"[The Economic Impact of Immigrants in Minnesota](#)" by Professor Katherine Fennelly and Anne Huart of the Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs at University of Minnesota reported the following in response to those who only look at on the initial costs of immigrants: "Analyses that focus exclusively on short-term costs greatly underestimate the fiscal benefits and the fact that over the course of their lifetimes, immigrants provide a net benefit to state and national economies."

The authors conclude that immigrants "constitute an important resource to the nation and to the state, as a result of their entrepreneurial activity, consumer spending, tax payments, participation in the labor force." The report uses an estimate from the U.S. Council of Economic Advisers showing America's "net gain from immigration is \$37 billion per year."

Even with studies that show the positive economic impact of immigrants, some still have strong opinions against immigration. Perhaps it stems from fear.

Yet there is no reason to be afraid of immigrants.

According to a [recent NPR report](#), "Four academic studies show that illegal immigration does not increase the prevalence of violent crime, or drug and alcohol problems."

First, in the current issue of the academic journal *Criminology*, criminologist Michael Light found that even though undocumented immigration has increased over 30 years, violent crimes did not.

Second, in a previous *Criminology* study, drug and alcohol arrests and deaths did not rise either.

Third, the CATO Institute found lower rates of “criminal conviction and arrest rates in Texas” concerning “murder, sexual assault, and larceny” for undocumented immigrants than for people born in America.

The NPR report quotes Houston Police Chief Art Acevedo: "Having worked around this community my entire professional career, which is about 32 years, I know that the vast majority of them that I've encountered are hard-working. They're here to earn an honest living."

Fourth, *Migration Letters* published that young undocumented immigrants had lower crime rates than young legal immigrants and young people born in America.

Finally, I'd like to quote a 2017 [New York Times article](#) that sums it up nicely: “Immigrants are less likely to commit crimes than people born in the United States.”

Hard-working and law-abiding — these are the people I'd invite to my state.