



The (un)truth about immigrants

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Immigrants don't just make America diverse, they make America great!

All six Americans awarded the Nobel Prize in 2016 were immigrants or their children.

One of many lies propagated by Donald Trump is that immigrants are rapists and criminals who should not be allowed into our country. Proponents of this policy cite the possibility of more crime committed by immigrants, the over-usage of financial resources by immigrants, the over-taking of the job force by immigrants, and the lack of financial contribution to the economy.

Let's set the record straight.

Firstly, contrary to what Trump claims, immigrants are less likely to be incarcerated than their native-born peers.

A 2017 study by the Cato Institute found that crimes committed in 2014 were far fewer among immigrants — including the unauthorized — than the U.S.-born population. (For references of all statistics mentioned herein, see politifact.com, adl.com, and americanprogress.org)

From 2000 to 2015, the immigrant population grew from 11 percent to 13 percent, but FBI data demonstrate that rates of violent crime and property crime dropped by 16 percent and 21 percent, respectively, during the same interval.

In fact, cities that openly provide sanctuary to undocumented immigrants have lower crime rates than comparable cities that don't.

Second, some argue that immigrants rely more on federal assistance and drain the resources of our country. Wrong, again.

Research has repeatedly shown immigrant households obtain a similar or lower percentage of their income from federal assistance programs (Social Security, food stamps) than native-born households.

Immigrants work hard to ensure a better future for their children; children of immigrants are more likely to attend college and less likely to live in poverty.

Not only don't immigrants use up more financial resources, they actually contribute to the growth and productivity of the economy.

That's my third point. In 2016, immigrants contributed approximately \$2 trillion to the U.S. GDP through innovation, entrepreneurship, and just plain hard work.

Furthermore, while it's true that immigrants are taking American jobs, it's also true that they're making jobs.

According to the Stanford Immigration Policy Lab, about 40 percent of the Forbes 500 companies, including Google, Apple and Intel, have been started by immigrants or their kids. These companies employ more than 10 million workers worldwide.

Thus, it is clear that immigrants pose no threat to our safety or our financial productivity. In fact, rather than scaring immigrants into the corners of society, we should welcome them to openly and freely innovate and contribute.

Having immigrated to the U.S. at a young age, I understand the pain and fear that DACA recipients feel while their future in this country is being challenged and used as leverage for political negotiations. I also appreciate the opportunity this country gave me and my family for a better education and employment, but the contributions my father made (as a mechanic), that I make (as a physician), or that my wife makes (raising the next generation of scholars, inventors, and astronauts) should not be overlooked as well.

Immigrants should not be insulted or mocked, because it feeds the narrative of exclusion and xenophobia, a hatred and fear of others.

We must take bigotry and hate-mongering out of the immigration equation. Let's rely on the facts, not lies. Let's treat each other with respect. After all, that will make America great.