



## Will immigration reform benefit the US economy?

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Heck yes! No way!

There is no middle ground on this emotionally divisive issue which will once again dominate the airwaves. President Obama has announced that this issue is next in line to health care reform. The battle lines have started to form. Soon our TV screens will be filled with images of angry folks screaming at each other, each one passionately arguing for or against immigration reform.

So will immigration reform benefit the U.S. economy?

Yes, according to the Trade Policy Analysis No. 4 report dated August 13, 2009 published by the Cato Institute's Center for Trade Policy Studies. The report entitled *Restriction or Legalization? Measuring the Economic Benefits of Immigration Reform*, was authored by Peter B. Dizon and Maureen T. Rimmer. View the Executive Summary of the report and the full 24-page report which is posted on the Center's website at <http://www.free-trade.org/pubs/pas/tpa-040es.html>.

The authors conclude that legalization of the more than 8 million illegal alien workers in the U.S. would benefit American workers and households.

Why should we care about what the Center for Trade Policy Studies has to say about the immigration reform debate? And what is the Cato Institute all about?

On its website - <http://www.cato.org/about.php>, the Cato Institute explains that it is a non-profit public policy research foundation headquartered in Washington, D.C. Wikipedia states that the CATO Institute is a non-partisan pro-free market, libertarian think tank".

The CATO Institute explains that the mission of their Center for Trade Policy Studies is "to increase public understanding of the benefits of free trade and the costs of protectionism", and that it "seeks to advance its mission by participating aggressively in the trade policy debate".

I do not pretend to understand all the highly technical and complex formulas stated in the report. What caught my attention is the bottomline which simply states that after analyzing all the factors involving restriction or legalization, the report concludes that the latter would be the better alternative.

I am sure that half or more of the country would vehemently disagree with this report. In fact, in his report entitled "AMNESTY AND JOBLESSNESS: Unemployed Americans Shouldn't Have to Compete for Jobs with Illegal Aliens", posted on the website of the Federation for American Immigration Reform (or FAIR) at [http://www.fairus.org/site/News2/670011478?page=NewsArticle&id=20919&security=1601&news\\_iv\\_ctrl=1761](http://www.fairus.org/site/News2/670011478?page=NewsArticle&id=20919&security=1601&news_iv_ctrl=1761), author Christopher M. Jaarda, Director of Government Relations, concludes that "Consideration of amnesty, particularly in these harsh economic times, constitutes a failure by Congress to live up to its basic responsibilities to the American people."

Who is FAIR and what do they stand for? On its website, the organization states that it "is a national, nonprofit, public-interest, membership organization of concerned citizens who share a common belief that our nation's immigration policies must be reformed to serve the national interest. FAIR seeks to improve border security, to stop illegal immigration, and to promote immigration levels consistent with the national interest—more traditional rates of about 300,000 a year."

There are more reports out there which discuss the pros and cons of immigration reform. These are just two of them. Each one is entitled to his/her own opinion. Some of us have already made up our minds and no report will change how we feel about this issue.

But if you have nothing better to do this evening, do read both reports, and let the debates begin.

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