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Immigration Chronicles

Blogging the issue **with the Chronicle staff**

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August 19, 2009

Measuring the benefits of immigration reform

The [Cato Institute](#) recently published a [report](#) that examines a number of scenarios on how the economy would benefit (or not benefit) from immigration reform. The hypotheticals ranged from tougher enforcement to a guest worker program.

Here's a summary of the findings:

This study finds that increased enforcement and reduced low-skilled immigration have a significant negative impact on the income of U.S. households. Modest savings in public expenditures would be more than offset by losses in economic output and job opportunities for more-skilled American workers. A policy that reduces the number of low-skilled immigrant workers by 28.6 percent compared to projected levels would reduce U.S. household welfare by about 0.5 percent, or \$80 billion.

In contrast, legalization of low-skilled immigrant workers would yield significant income gains for American workers and households. Legalization would eliminate smugglers' fees and other costs faced by illegal immigrants. It would also allow immigrants to have higher productivity and create more openings for Americans in higher skilled occupations. The positive impact for U.S. households of legalization under an optimal visa tax would be 1.27 percent of GDP or \$180 billion.

Posted by Mizanur Rahman at August 19, 2009 10:36 AM