

Economics Week

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## IMMIGRATION POLICY CENTER; New Report Highlights Economic Benefits of Comprehensive Immigration Reform

As the U.S. slowly pulls free from a deep recession, a groundbreaking new study concludes that comprehensive immigration reform would provide just the type of boost our economy needs. Today, the Center for American Progress (CAP) and Immigration Policy Center (IPC) released a joint report, *Raising the Floor for American Workers: The Economic Benefits of Comprehensive Immigration Reform*, (posted at [www.immigrationpolicy.org](http://www.immigrationpolicy.org)) which shows that legalizing the roughly 12 million unauthorized immigrants in the U.S. through comprehensive immigration reform, as well as making future flows more flexible, would grow the economy by \$1.5 trillion over 10 years. The stark number cuts into the credibility of claims by immigration restrictionists that immigration reform during an economic recession is implausible.

According to research by Dr. Raul Hinojosa-Ojeda, founding director of the North American Integration and Development Center at the University of California, Los Angeles, creating a legalization process for unauthorized workers would, in the long term (10 years), yield \$1.5 trillion to the U.S. Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and in the short term (3 years) generate \$4.5 to \$5.4 billion in additional tax revenue and consumer spending sufficient to support 750,000 to 900,000 jobs.

Dr. Hinojosa ran several different economic scenarios and found that enacting a comprehensive immigration reform plan which creates a legalization process for unauthorized workers and sets a flexible visa program not only raises the wage floor for all American workers, but is an economic necessity. Conversely, the deportation prescription that is offered by immigration restrictionists would poison the already anemic U.S. economy by draining \$2.5 trillion in GDP over 10 years, even before factoring in the costs of deporting 12 million people and permanently sealing the border.

"These are stark and significant numbers that lawmakers should commit to memory," said Angela M. Kelley, Vice President for Immigration Policy and Advocacy at CAP. "We have got an issue where we know we can improve the economy. It would be to their peril for lawmakers to be short-sighted and not pass comprehensive immigration reform legislation that will reverberate across the economy and help all Americans."

"This report underscores an important opportunity for positive input into an economy that needs it," said Benjamin Johnson, Executive Director of the American Immigration Council. "The report further highlights the need for immigration reform that is focused on what's good for the American economy and what's good for American workers."

As Dan Griswold, Director of Trade Policy Studies at the libertarian **Cato Institute**, noted during today's press conference, "Enforcement-only is a policy that has not only failed, but has imposed significant costs to Americans as taxpayers. If Congress and the President want to create better jobs and stimulate the economy, then comprehensive immigration reform should be very high on their agenda."