

## Immigration

### Legalization would boost U.S. economy, study says

Gary Martin, Hearst Washington Bureau  
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Legalizing the status of the roughly 12 million undocumented immigrants living in America would create jobs, increase wages and boost the sagging U.S. economy, according to a study released Thursday.

The study by UCLA associate professor Raul Hinojosa-Ojeda found that citizenship and flexible limits on legal immigration would serve future labor demands and boost wages for native-born workers.

"Immigration has a positive effect on the economy," Hinojosa-Ojeda told reporters, saying legalizing undocumented immigrants already in the United States could add \$1.5 trillion to the gross domestic product over the next 10 years.

President Obama has urged Congress to pass immigration reform legislation this year that provides a path to citizenship for the undocumented. Republicans have opposed citizenship as an amnesty for those who broke the law and entered the country illegally.

Rep. Lamar Smith, R-Texas, disagreed with the study's conclusions, saying, "Illegal immigrants take jobs from American workers. With 15 million Americans out of work, it's hard to believe that anyone would give amnesty to 12 million illegal immigrants."

Daniel Griswold, an economist with the Cato Institute, a libertarian-leaning think tank, agreed with many of the study's findings. He said previous enforcement-only efforts to curb illegal immigration have been costly failures.

The study was released by the Center for American Progress and the Immigration Policy Center, groups that back legalization proposals.

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<http://sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2010/01/08/MNTQ1BF6LR.DTL>

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