

THE DYING AMERICAN DREAM

and the Trump Administration

PART II: IMMIGRANT WORKERS

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Executive Summary

Immigrant workers – employees who were born outside of the United States – are an important element of the American labor force, staffing businesses of all sizes in every sector. They are especially critical for small businesses, and firms in sectors such as construction, transportation and utilities, professional and business services, agriculture, and leisure and hospitality. Immigrants make up sizable shares of the civilian labor force in the farming, building and grounds cleaning and maintenance, construction and extraction, food preparation and serving, production, and transportation and material movement occupations.

America's economy and main streets depend on immigrant workers to function and grow, primarily for three reasons. First, immigrant workers fill labor shortages, which disproportionately impact small businesses. This is why sectors such as construction, farming, logistics, and technology and information technology rely on immigrant workers so heavily. Second, immigrant workers pay taxes, accelerate economic growth, increase productivity for all workers, and spur new commercial investment due to their additions to the labor force. Lastly, immigrants help subsidize the American health care system because they often pay more into federal health care programs, and private health insurance, than they receive in benefits and spending.

Despite these benefits, President Trump and his appointees are fighting to expel immigrants from our nation, and to prevent more from contributing to our society, through their campaign of mass deportations and immigration enforcement. At the Trump administration's direction, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) agents have embarked on alarming operations in American cities and towns, carrying out high-profile raids and indiscriminate arrests, which are increasingly warrantless and rife with abuses. Immigration agents have even killed U.S.-born citizens in broad daylight. This immigration crackdown is cutting America's labor force by: (1) preventing and scaring immigrant workers from doing their jobs, leaving employers struggling to fill lost man-hours; (2) slashing worker productivity due to the physical and mental toll of abuse at the hands of immigration agents, or fear thereof; and (3) degrading local economies and the American macroeconomic landscape as a whole.

President Trump's cruel, racist approach is not the only way the federal government could address immigration issues. Instead, Congress should pursue comprehensive immigration legislation, with pathways to authorized work and status for immigrants who want to contribute to America's society and economy, and robust vetting for those individuals. Regulatory compliance resources, flexibility, and enforcement fairness for small employers would also help them weather the storm of immigration enforcement activity. Major reforms are also necessary at ICE and CBP, given the apparent entrenchment of poor practices and culture surrounding their immigration enforcement operations.

Main Street America needs immigrants to survive and thrive, and yet, the Trump administration is bleeding this labor force – sometimes literally – dry with their immigration policies and enforcement. If President Trump continues down this path, he will also kill our nation's cultural and economic wealth, robbing all Americans, U.S.-born and immigrant, of the American Dream.

Introduction: Who Are America's Immigrant Workers?

In the year since President Trump's return to the White House, America has seen drastic, chaotic shifts in immigration policy and enforcement. Immigration agents from United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) are sweeping across American communities and neighborhoods, harassing, detaining, and now killing everyday people. Despite the clearly illegal nature of these acts, Trump administration officials have justified these actions under the stated goals of public safety and immigration reduction.¹ Last December, House Committee on Small Business (Committee) Democrats published a report highlighting the worsening conditions the Trump administration's immigration crackdown was imposing on immigrant small business owners.² This report continues Committee Democrats' examination of immigration impacts on Main Street America. It explores how the crackdown is affecting the nation's small employers and the small business labor force, and what that means for the wider economy.

An immigrant is a person living in the U.S. who was born overseas. Immigrants are a wide group consisting of naturalized U.S. citizens, lawful permanent residents (also known as green card holders), temporary visa holders, refugees, asylees, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients, and undocumented individuals.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 50.2 million people are immigrants – which is 14.8% of the general populace,³ meaning one in every seven people in the U.S. was born in another country. Of these immigrants, about a quarter are undocumented and almost 5% are refugees⁴ with civil process rights.⁵



¹ See, e.g., *Secure the Border*, THE WHITE HOUSE, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/priorities/border-immigration> (last visited Feb. 20, 2026).

² H. COMM. ON SMALL BUS., 119TH CONG., *THE DYING AMERICAN DREAM, PART I: IMMIGRANT ENTREPRENEURS* (Dec. 17, 2025).

³ *Selected Population Profile in the United States*, U.S. CENSUS BUREAU: AM. CMTY. SURV. 1-YEAR ESTIMATES (2025), <https://data.census.gov/table?g=010XX00US&d=ACS+1-Year+Estimates+Selected+Population+Profiles>.

⁴ E.g., Karen Aho et al., *The Number of Immigrants in the US Increases Yearly – And That's a Good Thing*, AM. IMMIGR. COUNCIL (Feb. 28, 2025), <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/blog/number-of-immigrants-in-us-increases-yearly-and-thats-a-good-thing>; Julia Gelatt et al., *Changing Origins, Rising Numbers: Unauthorized Immigrants in the United States*, MIGRATION POLICY INST. (Oct. 2025), <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/unauthorized-immigrants-us-2025-fact-sheet>.

In the last administration, the immigrant population in America also surged: the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimated in 2024 that the U.S. had been experiencing far higher net immigration since 2021, with 8.7 million more people projected to immigrate between that year and 2026 than baseline expectations set in 2020.⁶

Most (53.9%) immigrants are of prime working age (i.e., between 25 and 54 years old), while a minority (36.5%) of U.S.-born people are in the same age range. Figure 1 is a stacked bar chart breaking down the U.S.-born and immigrant populations by age group. Figure 1 is accompanied by Figure 2, a table with exact percentages.

Figure 1: U.S.-Born People and Immigrants by Age Group⁷

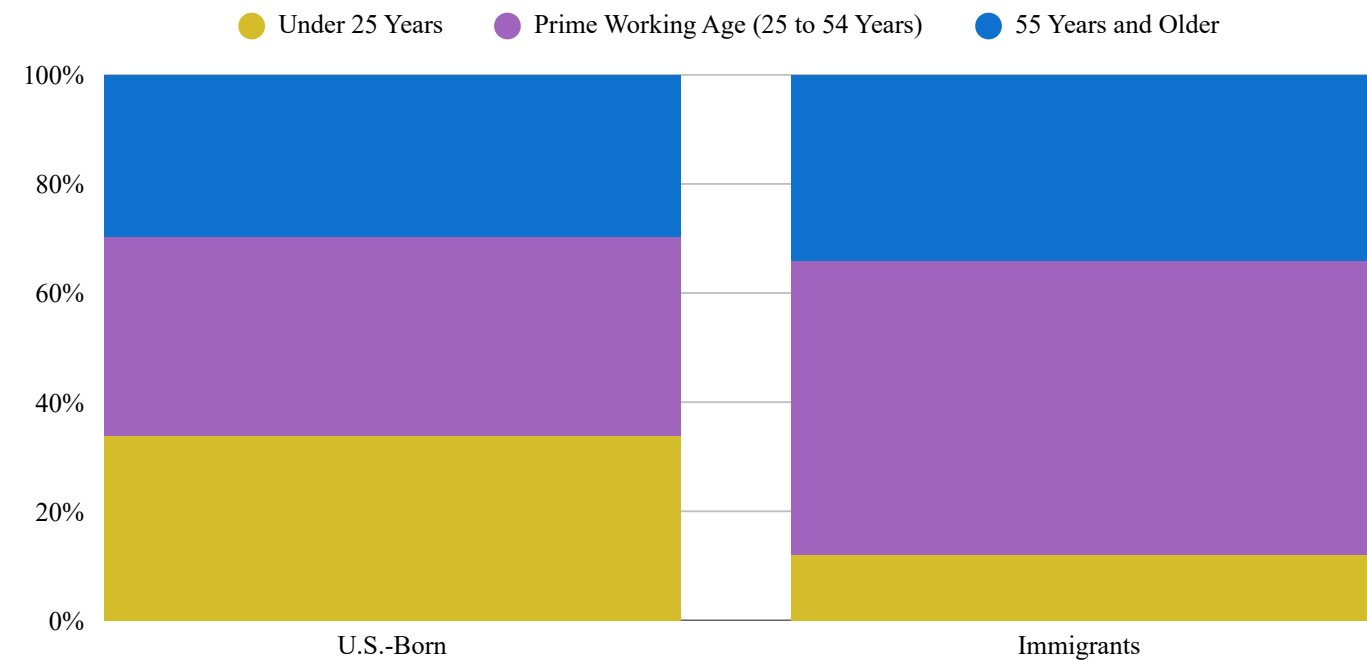


Figure 2: U.S.-Born People and Immigrants by Age Group⁸

	Under 25 Years	Prime Working Age (25 to 54 Years)	55 Years and Older	Total
U.S.-Born	33.9%	36.5%	29.5%	99.9%
Immigrants	12.1%	53.9%	33.9%	99.9%

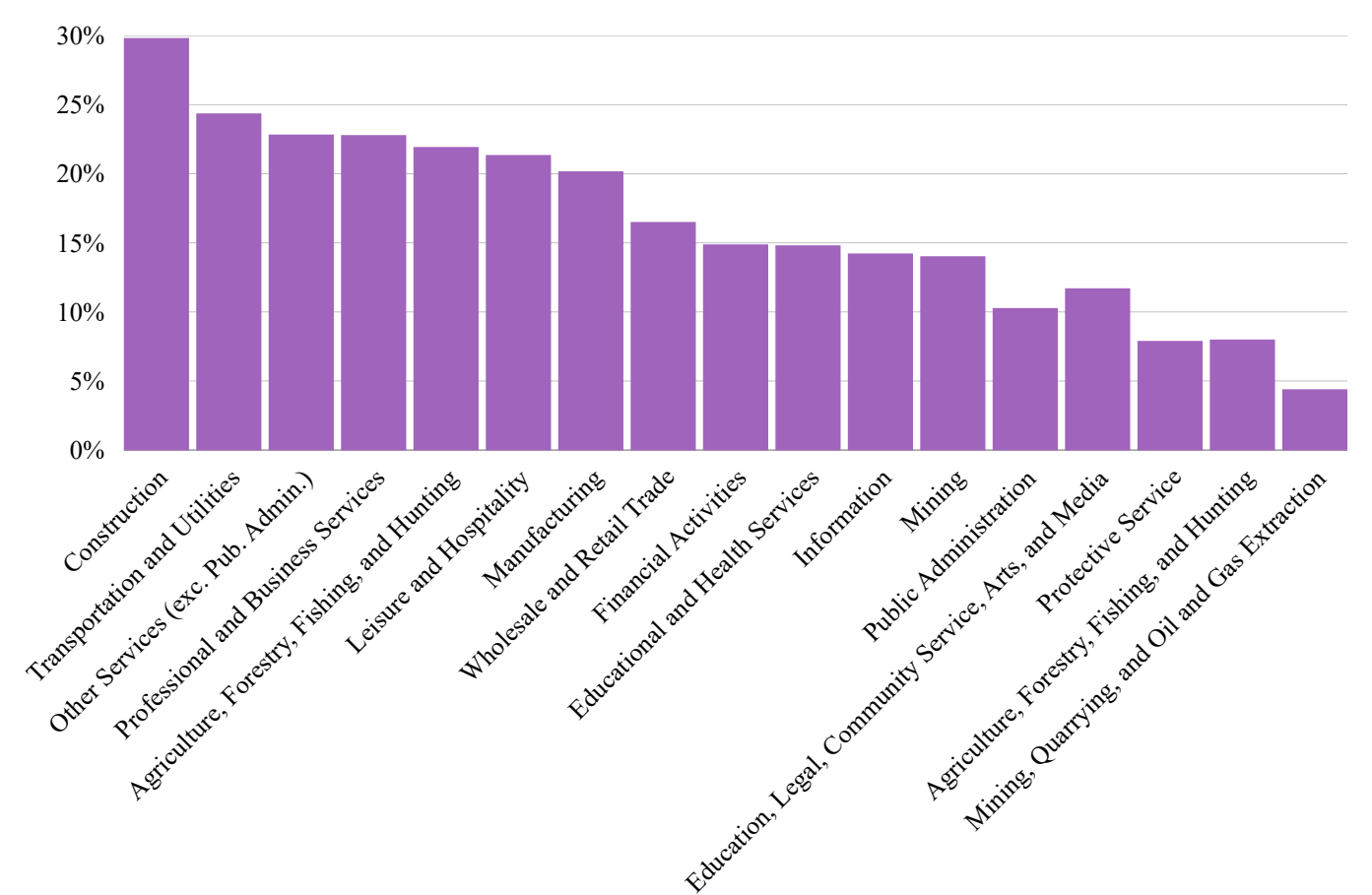
Note: Totals do not add up to 100% due to rounding.

⁵ CONG. RSCH. SERV., R47399, U.S. REFUGEE ADMISSIONS PROGRAM (Jan. 20, 2023).
⁶ CONG. BUDGET OFF., 60165, EFFECTS OF THE IMMIGRATION SURGE ON THE FEDERAL BUDGET AND THE ECONOMY (July 23, 2024).
⁷ *Id.*
⁸ *Id.*

This difference in age composition contributes to differences in U.S. civilian labor force participation: 67.6% of working age (i.e., over 16 years old) immigrants participate in the civilian labor force, and 64.5% are employed.⁹ By comparison, 62.6% of working age U.S.-born people participate in the civilian labor force and 59.7% are employed.¹⁰ In other words, immigrants are more likely to look for, and have, employment than others, in part because they tend more to be of prime working age.

Immigrants staff businesses in most fields, but the sectors with the largest shares of immigrant workers are construction; transportation and utilities; professional and business services; agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting; leisure and hospitality; and manufacturing. Figure 3 is a bar chart displaying the proportion of immigrants in the civilian labor force broken down by sector. Figure 3 is accompanied by Figure 4, a table with exact percentages.

Figure 3: Percentage of Immigrants in the Civilian Labor Force by Sector¹¹



⁹ U.S. CENSUS BUREAU, *supra* note 3.

¹⁰ *Id.*

¹¹ Table 9. *Industry of Employed Civilian Workers 16 Years and Over by Generation: 2005 to 2024*, U.S. CENSUS BUREAU: FOREIGN-BORN: 2024 CURRENT POPULATION SURV. DETAILED TABLES (2025), https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/demo/tables/foreign-born/2024/cps2024/2024_asec_generation_table9.xlsx.

Figure 4: Percentage of Immigrants in the Civilian Labor Force by Sector¹²

Sector	Percentage of Immigrants in the Civilian Labor Force
Construction	29.83%
Transportation and Utilities	24.37%
Other Services (except Public Admin.)	22.84%
Professional and Business Services	22.80%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting	21.94%
Leisure and Hospitality	21.36%
Manufacturing	20.18%
Wholesale and Retail Trade	16.51%
Financial Activities	14.89%
Educational and Health Services	14.82%
Information	14.23%
Mining	14.03%
Public Administration	10.28%

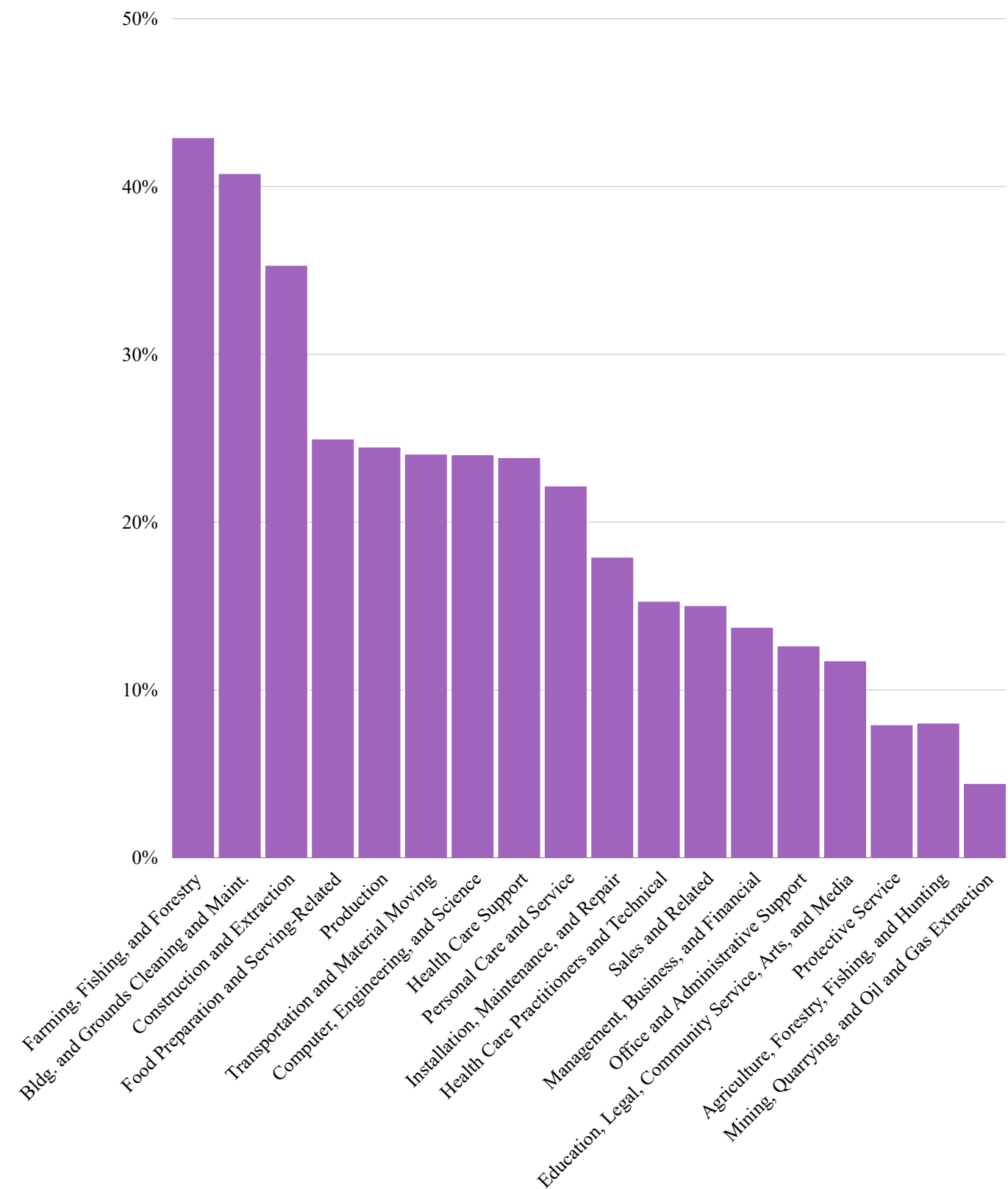
Among the occupations within the various sectors,¹³ the share of immigrant workers is highest in the farming, fishing, and forestry; building and grounds cleaning and maintenance; construction and extraction; food preparation and serving-related; production; and transportation and material moving occupations. Figure 5 is a bar chart displaying the proportion of immigrants in the civilian labor force broken down by major occupation. Figure 5 is accompanied by Figure 6, a table with exact percentages.



¹² *Id.*

¹³ Per the U.S. Census Bureau, the term “occupation” refers to the kind of work a person does at their specific job, while “sector” (a group of “industries”) means the field in which their employer does business. For example, a restaurant’s cook would be in the Leisure and Hospitality sector and hold a Food Preparation and Serving-Related occupation, but their general manager would hold a Management, Business, and Financial occupation while being in the same sector.

Figure 5: Percentage of Immigrants in the Civilian Labor Force by Occupation¹⁴



¹⁴ Table 8. Occupation of Employed Civilian Workers 16 Years and Over by Generation: 2005 to 2024, U.S. CENSUS BUREAU: FOREIGN-BORN: 2024 CURRENT POPULATION SURV. DETAILED TABLES (2025), https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/demo/tables/foreign-born/2024/cps2024/2024_asec_generation_table8.xlsx.

Figure 6: Percentage of Immigrants in the Civilian Labor Force by Occupation¹⁵

Occupation	Percentage of Immigrants in the Civilian Labor Force
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	42.89%
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	40.75%
Construction and Extraction	35.28%
Food Preparation and Serving-Related	24.93%
Production	24.45%
Transportation and Material Moving	24.03%
Computer, Engineering, and Science	23.99%
Health Care Support	23.82%
Personal Care and Service	22.13%
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	17.89%
Health Care Practitioners and Technical	15.26%
Sales and Related	15.00%
Management, Business, and Financial	13.71%
Office and Administrative Support	12.60%
Education, Legal, Community Service, Arts, and Media	11.71%
Protective Service	7.90%

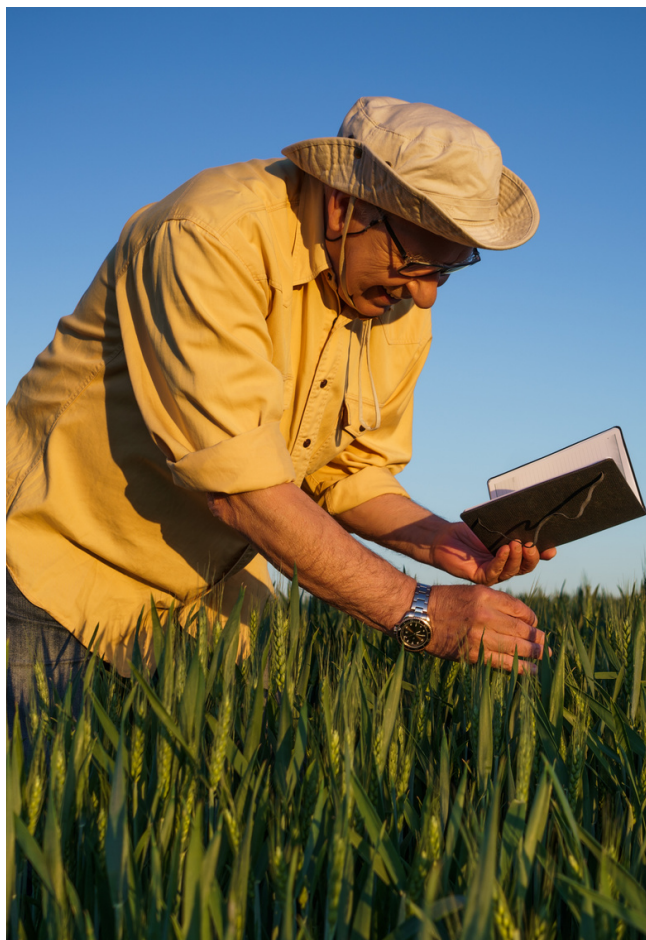
¹⁵ *Id.*

It is believed that immigrant workers tend to cluster in blue-collar occupations, such as farming, custodial, construction, and food preparation, because the proportion of immigrants without a high school diploma or equivalent educational level is greater than that of individuals born in the U.S. Similarly, greater shares of individuals born in the U.S. hold bachelor's degrees compared to their immigrant peers.¹⁶ However, greater shares of immigrants hold graduate degrees than U.S.-born people,¹⁷ which may also explain why sizable portions of technical occupation labor forces, like computer, engineering, and science; and health care support, are made up of immigrants.

Immigrant workers are an essential part of labor forces in critical industries and the small firms that serve as the American economy's backbone. Immigrants of all backgrounds have always come to America in search of a slice of the American Dream: better work, better lives, and better futures for themselves and their loved ones. It is a common story shared by many hardworking people and families, from those that arrived over 250 years ago, to those that arrived just last week.

Immigrant Workers' Contributions to America's Economy

Immigrants make up over 19% of the American civilian labor force, and nearly one in five full-time employees is an immigrant.¹⁸ Furthermore, immigration powers the nation's ability to grow the labor force. In fact, according to the Migration Policy Institute, between 2000 and 2022, immigrants accounted for nearly three-quarters of all growth in the prime working age labor force.¹⁹ More broadly, the CBO estimates that immigration is increasingly driving U.S. population growth, and that it will entirely account for population growth beginning in 2040.²⁰ The drivers of these demographic changes include the aging of the U.S. populace and falling birth rates among U.S.-born people.²¹ Altogether, immigrant workers have been integral contributors to the labor force and Main Street America, and their importance to the economy will only grow over time.



¹⁶ U.S. CENSUS BUREAU, *supra* note 3.

¹⁷ *Id.*

¹⁸ Table 7. *Labor Force and Employment Status of the Civilian Population 16 Years and Over by Sex and Generation: 2005 to 2024*, U.S. CENSUS BUREAU: FOREIGN-BORN: 2024 CURRENT POPULATION SURV. DETAILED TABLES (2025), https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/demo/tables/foreign-born/2024/cps2024/2024_asec_generation_table7.xlsx.

¹⁹ Julia Gelatt, *Explainer: Immigrants and the U.S. Economy*, MIGRATION POL'Y INST. (Oct. 2024), <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/content/explainer-immigrants-and-us-economy>.

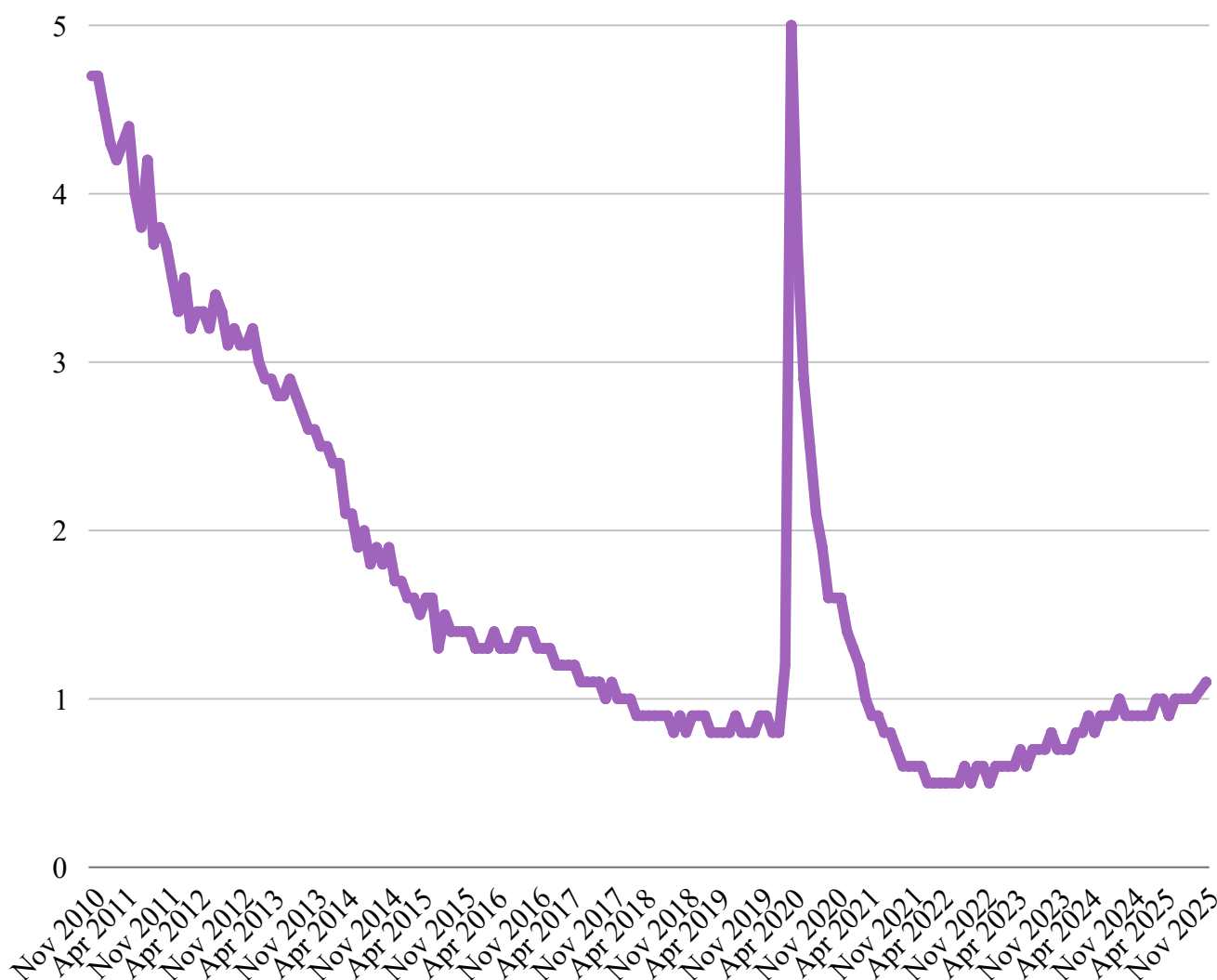
²⁰ CONG. BUDGET OFF., 59697, THE DEMOGRAPHIC OUTLOOK: 2024 TO 2054 (Jan. 2024).

²¹ *Id.*; Gelatt, *supra* note 19.

Filling Main Street America's Labor Shortage

In the wake of the COVID pandemic, unfilled job vacancies skyrocketed, a development that has disproportionately affected small businesses. In fact, between May 2021 and February 2025, job openings outnumbered unemployed individuals, save for the month of September 2024, when they were equal.²² Figure 7 is a line chart depicting the ratio of unemployed individuals to job openings, seasonally adjusted, from November 2010 to November 2025. The chart shows the ratio falling from 4.7 in November 2010 to 0.8 in February 2020, briefly spiking to 5.0 at the height of the COVID pandemic in April 2020, sharply falling through April 2021, where it dips below 1.0, cratering at 0.5 at around May 2022, and steadily returning to around 1.0 in October 2024, where it has remained somewhat stable since.²³

Figure 7: Ratio of Unemployed Individuals to Job Openings, Seasonally Adjusted, November 2010 to November 2025²⁴



²² Number of unemployed persons per job opening, seasonally adjusted, U.S. BUREAU OF LAB. STAT. (Jan. 7, 2026), <https://www.bls.gov/charts/job-openings-and-labor-turnover/unemp-per-job-opening.htm>.

²³ *Id.*

²⁴ *Id.*

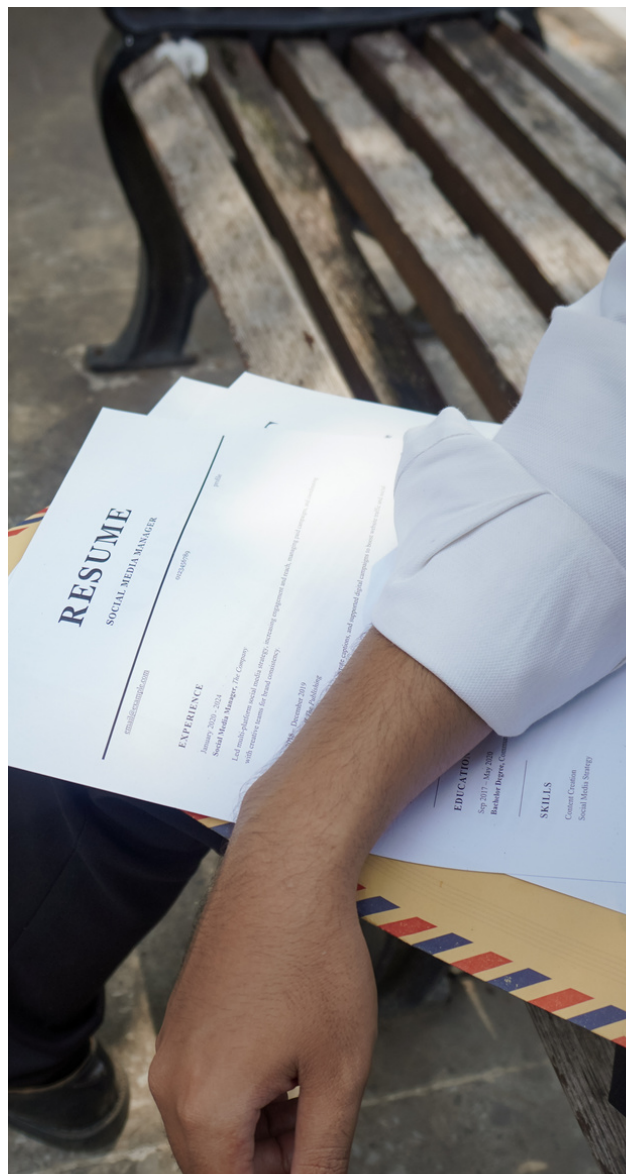
Though the aggregate numbers of unemployed people and job openings are now roughly even, small employers are still having difficulties finding and retaining staff. Small business owners have testified to the Committee that in this labor environment, recruiting and retaining employees is very difficult, because unemployed Americans of all skill levels are scarce and larger firms have more resources than smaller ones to find workers and offer them lucrative compensation.²⁵ Per the National Federation of Independent Business, one in three small business owners have job openings that they could not fill in the past month, with 91% of hiring entrepreneurs reporting few or no qualified applicants.²⁶

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce writes that the labor shortage is being driven by increasing retirements, the growing share of seniors (i.e., people at and over 65 years old) compared to other age groups in the U.S. populace, a lack of access to childcare preventing parents with young children from working, and a rise in flexible work modalities.²⁷

In other words, the ability of U.S.-born people as a whole to fill jobs, staff businesses, and maintain economic growth is diminishing due to these demographic trends. The impacts of the labor shortage have been felt across industries of all types.

1. Construction

With respect to construction, 92% of contractors are having difficulty filling vacant jobs, according to the Associated General Contractors of America and National Center for Construction Education and Research. Construction projects are delivered on time only when the teams needed to build them are present and at full strength.²⁸ Timely completion of these projects contributes to infrastructure benefits and economic development.



²⁵ See, e.g., *A Year in Review: The State of Small Business in America: Hearing before the H. Comm. on Small Bus.*, 118th Cong. (Dec. 12, 2023) (statement of Tammira Lucas, Chief Exec. Officer, The Cube Cowork); *Rural Entrepreneurship: Examining the Challenges and State of Rural Small Businesses: Hearing before the H. Comm. on Small Bus.*, 118th Cong. (July 26, 2023) (statement of Josh Phillips, Owner, Spawn Fly Fish).

²⁶ WILLIAM C. DUNKELBERG & HOLLY WADE, NAT'L FED'N OF INDEP. BUS., SMALL BUSINESS ECONOMIC TRENDS (Jan. 2026), <https://www.nfib.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/NFIB-SBET-Report-Dec.-2025.pdf>.

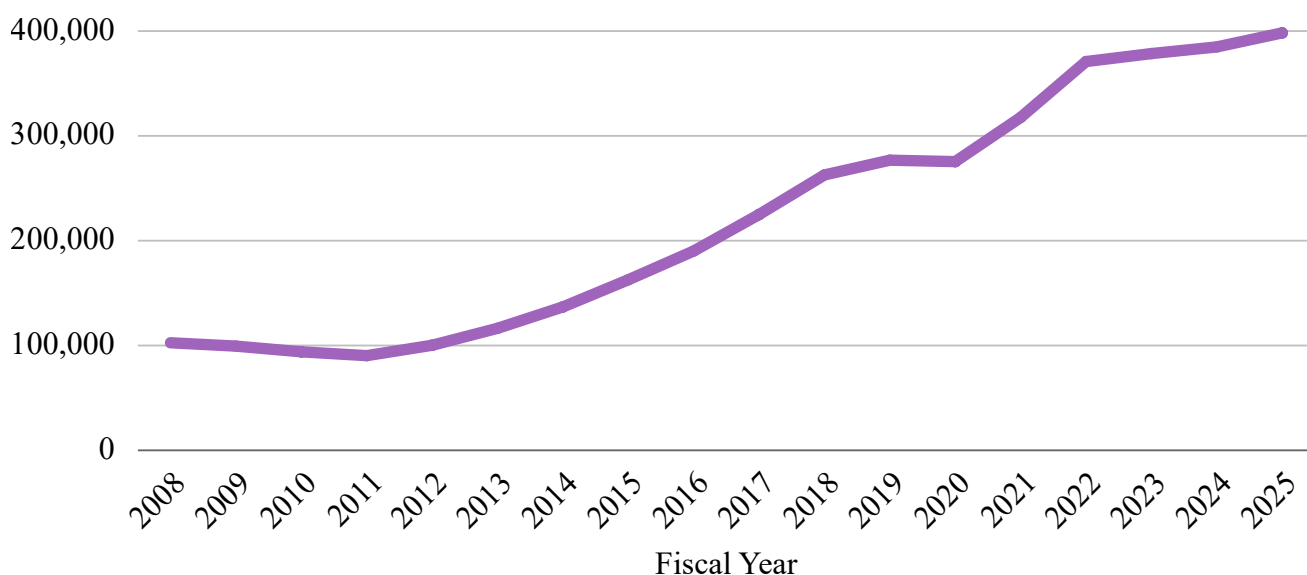
²⁷ Stephanie Ferguson Melhorn, *Understanding America's Labor Shortage*, U.S. CHAMBER OF COM. (July 22, 2025), <https://www.uschamber.com/workforce/understanding-americas-labor-shortage>.

²⁸ *2025 Workforce Survey Analysis*, ASSOCIATED GEN. CONTRACTORS OF AM. (Aug. 2025), [https://www.agc.org/sites/default/files/users/user21902/2025%20Workforce%20Survey%20Analysis%20\(3\).pdf](https://www.agc.org/sites/default/files/users/user21902/2025%20Workforce%20Survey%20Analysis%20(3).pdf).

2. Agriculture

In agriculture, H-2A Temporary Agricultural Program (H-2A Program) job certifications for farmers and some livestock producers, acknowledged by the Agriculture Department USDA as “one of the clearest indicators of the scarcity of farm labor,” have skyrocketed in recent years. These certifications are for jobs that agricultural businesses could not fill with existing U.S. workers, though they are not reflective of actual visa issuances.²⁹ Workers are increasingly more difficult for farmers to find for empty jobs at their businesses, as shown by H-2A Program data. Figure 8 is a line chart depicting the number of H-2A Program job certifications from Fiscal Years (FYs) 2008 to 2025. It shows certifications falling slightly from FYs 2008 to 2011, then rising steadily until FY 2018, when they level off somewhat until FY 2020, and spiking until FY 2022, when they relatively level through FY 2025.³⁰

Figure 8: Number of H-2A Temporary Agricultural Program-Certified Positions, Fiscal Years 2008 to 2025³¹



The Trump administration’s own Labor Department also acknowledged the agricultural labor shortage in a recent rulemaking.³² Farms, ranchers, and livestock producers need sufficient workforces to harvest and process products for use or sale, maintaining the nation’s food supply and prices.³³

²⁹ *Farm Labor*, U.S. DEP’T OF AGRIC.: ECON. RSCH. SERV. (Nov. 18, 2025), <https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/farm-economy/farm-labor>.

³⁰ To generate this chart, Committee staff compiled H-2A Program certification data from the Labor Department’s public disclosure files for FYs 2008 to 2025. OFF. OF FOREIGN LAB. CERTIFICATION, *Performance Data*, U.S. DEP’T OF LAB., <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/foreign-labor/performance> (last visited Feb. 10, 2026); OFF. OF FOREIGN LAB. CERTIFICATION, *H-2A Temporary Agricultural Program – Selected Statistics, Fiscal Year (FY) 2025*, U.S. DEP’T OF LAB. (Sep. 30, 2025), https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/ETA/oflc/pdfs/H-2A_Selected_Statistics_FY2025_Q4.pdf.

³¹ *Id.*

³² Adverse Effect Wage Rate Methodology for the Temporary Employment of H-2A Nonimmigrants in Non-Range Occupations in the United States, 90 Fed. Reg. 47914 (Oct. 2, 2025); Lauren Kaori Gurley, *Trump administration says immigration enforcement threatens higher food prices*, WASH. POST (Oct. 11, 2025), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2025/10/11/immigration-crackdown-food-prices>.

³³ E.g., Samuel Benson, *‘The whole thing is screwed up’: Farmers in deep-red Pennsylvania struggle to find workers*, POLITICO (Sep. 15, 2025), <https://www.politico.com/news/2025/09/15/farm-labor-shortage-pennsylvania-trump-immigration-00560820>.

3. Logistics

The logistics industry has similarly dealt with labor shortages. A 2025 Tech.co survey finds that almost seven in ten freight businesses are impacted by driver shortages, hurting their ability to meet demand for their services.³⁴ Furthermore, 63% of freight firms state their ability to recruit and retain drivers has stagnated or worsened in the last year.³⁵ Despite these issues, freight demand has increased for the same percentage of companies – meaning that these workers are needed more than ever.³⁶

4. High-Skilled Occupations

Labor shortages have also impacted higher-skilled, white-collar industries, such as technology and information technology (IT). According to a 2025 ManpowerGroup survey, 73% of U.S. technology and IT services employers report they are struggling to find skilled talent to fill their workforces.³⁷ These firms need workers to help power innovation, technological progress, and software products and services to other organizations.

Immigrants play an integral part in filling these labor shortages. They fill jobs that U.S.-born workers are unwilling, unable, or overqualified to fill.³⁸ At small businesses, immigrant workers ensure that essential tasks are carried out, goods and services are produced consistently, and their employer can grow to its greatest potential. While some conservative policymakers claim that immigrants take jobs that U.S.-born people could instead fill,³⁹ empirical studies have found that, in reality, low-skilled immigrant workers compliment U.S.-born ones, by supporting other, more lucrative jobs that require the cultural and lingual fluency, and academic credentials, that U.S.-born workers tend to have at greater rates than immigrants.⁴⁰ Moreover, high-skilled immigrants tend to fill technical jobs requiring niche skills and degrees that most U.S.-born workers lack.⁴¹

The labor shortage in some industries is crippling to the extent that some businesses turn to undocumented immigrants to fill empty positions. According to the American Immigration Council, one in eight workers is undocumented in the construction and agriculture industries, and one in 14 workers is undocumented in the hospitality industry.⁴²

³⁴ TECH.CO, MOVING GOODS WITH FEWER HANDS (Jun. 30, 2025), <https://tech.co/logistics/logistics-report-2025>.

³⁵ *Id.*

³⁶ *Id.*

³⁷ MANPOWERGROUP, Q1 2026 EXPERIS TECH TALENT OUTLOOK: U.S. FINDINGS (Jan. 2026).

³⁸ See, e.g., Benson, *supra* note 33.

³⁹ Brennan Hoban, *Do immigrants “steal” jobs from American workers?*, BROOKINGS INST. (Aug. 24, 2017), <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/do-immigrants-steal-jobs-from-american-workers>.

⁴⁰ E.g., Gelatt, *supra* note 19; Dany Bahar et al., *The immigrant workforce supports millions of US jobs*, BROOKINGS INST. (Oct. 17, 2022), <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/the-immigrant-workforce-supports-millions-of-u-s-jobs>; Adam Davidson & Audie Cornish, *Immigrants Tend To Complement, Not Replace American Jobs*, NPR (May 8, 2013), <https://www.npr.org/2013/05/08/182337929/immigrants-tend-to-complement-not-replace-american-jobs>; *Value Added: Immigrants Create Jobs and Businesses, Boost Wages of Native-Born Workers*, AM. IMMIGR. COUNCIL (Jan. 1, 2012), <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/fact-sheet/value-added-immigrants-create-jobs-and-businesses-boost-wages-native-born-workers>.

⁴¹ Gelatt, *supra* note 19.

⁴² AM. IMMIGR. COUNCIL, MASS DEPORTATION: DEVASTATING COSTS TO AMERICA, ITS BUDGET AND ECONOMY (Oct. 2024), https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/mass_deportation_report_2024.pdf.

This labor demand is why, as demonstrated above by Figures 5 and 6, immigrants make up nearly 43% of workers in farming, fishing, and forestry occupations, over 41% in building and grounds cleaning and maintenance occupations, and over 35% in construction and extraction occupations.⁴³ Similarly, as stated by Figures 3 and 4, over one in five workers in the construction, transportation and utilities, professional and business services, and agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting sectors are immigrants.⁴⁴ As the nation's economy grows and evolves, the role that immigrants play in our workforce will only grow. In fact, the CBO has found that immigrants accounted for roughly half of labor force growth between 2002 and 2018.⁴⁵ This contribution will likely increase as immigrants increasingly drive—and eventually exclusively provide—U.S. population growth, as previously mentioned.⁴⁶ Without immigrant workers, even the undocumented ones, to fill critical roles, businesses of all sizes would be unable to carry out essential operations and would cease to function properly.

Economic Growth, Tax Revenue, and Capital Investment

Immigrants – even the undocumented ones – pay taxes and accelerate economic growth. In fact, according to a 2024 CBO report, the recent immigration surge will result in net increases in federal tax revenues and economic activity.⁴⁷

In February 2026, the conservative Cato Institute published a whitepaper with similar conclusions. They find that between 1994 and 2023, a period of nearly 30 years, immigrants created a net increase in government revenues at all levels, with a cumulative fiscal surplus of \$14.5 trillion, including \$3.9 trillion in debt interest savings.⁴⁸ This surplus has helped reduce the nation's deficit-to-gross domestic product (GDP) ratio and averted debt crises that would have otherwise surfaced sooner.⁴⁹ Looking ahead, the CBO's report predicted a federal revenue increase by nearly \$1.2 trillion over the next ten years, and a corresponding federal deficit reduction of \$897 billion, due to the recent immigration surge.⁵⁰

These net upsides hold for undocumented immigrants as well. A 2023 American Immigration Council analysis determined that immigrants paid \$419.8 billion in federal taxes, of which undocumented immigrants paid \$55.8 billion. Immigrants also pay into Social Security and Medicare through payroll taxes – even if they may be ineligible for those benefits due to lack of documented status.⁵¹ Figure 9 is a stacked bar chart depicting 2023 tax payments made by immigrants to the federal, state, and local levels of government, Social Security, and Medicare, as well as the segment of payments made by undocumented immigrants. The Figure is accompanied by Figure 10, a table with exact numbers.

⁴³ U.S. CENSUS BUREAU, *supra* note 14.

⁴⁴ U.S. CENSUS BUREAU, *supra* note 11.

⁴⁵ CONG. BUDGET OFF., 58939, *THE FOREIGN-BORN POPULATION, THE U.S. ECONOMY, AND THE FEDERAL BUDGET* (Apr. 5, 2023).

⁴⁶ CONG. BUDGET OFF., *supra* note 20.

⁴⁷ CONG. BUDGET OFF., *supra* note 6.

⁴⁸ These figures are in real 2024 U.S. dollars.

⁴⁹ David J. Bier et al., *Immigrants' Recent Effects on Government Budgets: 1994-2023*, CATO INST. (Feb. 3, 2026), <https://www.cato.org/white-paper/immigrants-recent-effects-government-budgets-1994-2023>.

⁵⁰ CONG. BUDGET OFF., *supra* note 6.

⁵¹ Aho et al., *supra* note 4.

Figure 9: Total Tax Contributions Made by Immigrants in 2023⁵²

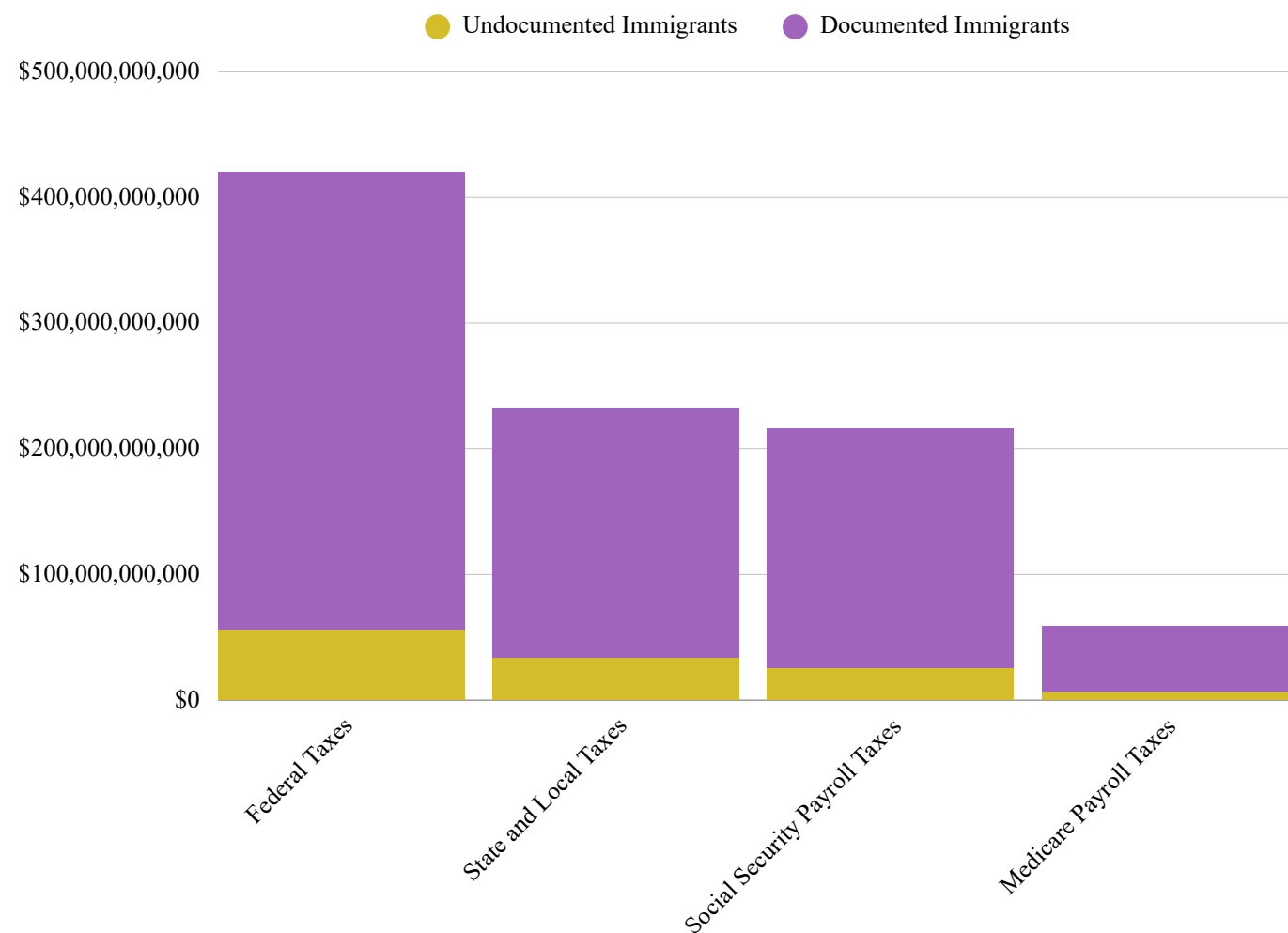


Figure 10: Total Tax Contributions Made by Immigrants in 2023⁵³

	Undocumented Immigrants	Documented Immigrants	Total
Federal Taxes	\$55,800,000,000	\$364,000,000,000	\$419,800,000,000
State and Local Taxes	\$33,900,000,000	\$198,200,000,000	\$232,100,000,000
Social Security Payroll Taxes	\$26,200,000,000	\$189,600,000,000	\$215,800,000,000
Medicare Payroll Taxes	\$6,600,000,000	\$52,100,000,000	\$58,700,000,000

⁵² *Id.*

⁵³ *Id.*

Outside of taxes, immigrants contribute to other positive economic forces, such as labor force growth, increased productivity for all workers due to innovation, job creation, and greater investment due to expanded human capital and business formation.⁵⁴ The CBO's 2024 report expressly states that due to immigrant workers, "a larger labor force can make use of more capital, and a more productive labor force can render each unit of capital more productive."⁵⁵ Because of these impacts, the report projected an \$8.9 trillion increase in GDP between 2024 and 2034, attributed directly to the immigration surge.⁵⁶ Over the first few years of this period, up to half of the GDP growth was expected to come from new investments, including additional housing for newcomers and their families, and equipment for these new workers.⁵⁷ Meanwhile, the new households' spending on goods and services would initially account for about half of the added GDP growth, rising to 70 percent by 2034.⁵⁸ Overall, immigrants have made the American economy stronger and more resilient through taxes and other beneficial macroeconomic impacts.

Subsidizing American Health Care

Aside from paying into Medicare, immigrants also subsidize the American health care system. Health care companies spend less for immigrants—both citizens and noncitizens—than U.S.-born people, with average expenditures for immigrants being two-thirds the size of those for the U.S.-born.⁵⁹ Moreover, the average immigrant's annual health care insurance premium exceeds their insurer's spending on them.⁶⁰ Similarly, immigrants as a whole pay more in health care insurance premiums and Medicare taxes than those insurers and federal health care programs spend on them.⁶¹

Immigrants' health care payment surplus stems in part from two major drivers. First, undocumented immigrants are largely ineligible to receive benefits from those federal programs even though they pay into them.⁶² Second, immigrants are generally cheaper to insure than U.S.-born people because on average, immigrants have healthier lifestyles, better health, and fewer preexisting conditions than the U.S.-born, necessitating less health care service use.⁶³

⁵⁴ CONG. BUDGET OFF., *supra* note 6.

⁵⁵ *Id.*

⁵⁶ *Id.*

⁵⁷ *Id.*

⁵⁸ *Id.*

⁵⁹ Alisha Rao et al., *Key Facts on Health Care Use and Costs Among Immigrants*, KFF (Sep. 23, 2024), <https://www.kff.org/racial-equity-and-health-policy/key-facts-on-health-care-use-and-costs-among-immigrants>.

⁶⁰ ERNESTO CASTAÑEDA & CARINA CIONE, IMMIGRATION REALITIES: CHALLENGING COMMON MISPERCEPTIONS 138 (2024).

⁶¹ Mark J. Ommerborn et al., *Assessment of Immigrants' Premium and Tax Payments for Health Care and the Costs of Their Care*, 5 JAMA NETW OPEN e2241166 (2022), <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2798221>.

⁶² E.g., Melissa Cruz, *Can Undocumented Immigrants Get SNAP or Medicaid? The Truth About Federal Benefits*, AM. IMMIGR. COUNCIL (Nov. 14, 2025), <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/blog/undocumented-immigrants-snap-medicaid-benefits>.

⁶³ Ommerborn et al., *supra* note 61; Neeraj Kaushal & Felix M. Muchomba, *Cost of Public Health Insurance for US-Born and Immigrant Adults*, 6 JAMA NETW OPEN e2334008 (2023), <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2809604>.

The Committee has heard numerous testimonies that health care costs are burdensome for entrepreneurs and their workers, which impedes their abilities to function at full productivity and efficiency.⁶⁴ Any health care assistance, whether through meaningful federal investment and incentives, or through the advantages immigration and immigrant workers yield the nation, would go a long way to ensuring that small business owners and staff have the tools they need to succeed in Main Street America.

President Trump's Immigration Crackdown Is Draining Main Street's Labor Force

Upon his return to the White House in 2025, President Trump and his appointees have led an unprecedented campaign to abduct, detain, and expel immigrants from our nation. Last May, the White House set a goal of 3,000 arrests by ICE daily – an unrealistically high expectation over triple the average number of arrests per day between January 20, 2025 and May 19, 2025.⁶⁵ This goal, justified in part by extremely racist and bigoted rhetoric targeted against immigrants of color,⁶⁶ has prompted ICE to expand its immigration detention activities and tactics. CBP operations have similarly grown in scope and profile.⁶⁷

Immigration enforcement arrests have skyrocketed, as more people – especially those without criminal records – are being arrested at home, work, school, and running errands.⁶⁸ People have also been arrested at routine immigration proceedings intended for undocumented immigrants to receive due process.⁶⁹ These arrests and raids are increasingly warrantless and untargeted.⁷⁰ In fact, in January 2026, ICE published a secret internal memorandum⁷¹ incorrectly⁷² asserting broad, expanded powers to detain people without warrants.⁷³

⁶⁴ E.g., *Hope on the Horizon: Prioritizing Small Business Growth in the 119th Congress: Hearing before the H. Comm. on Small Bus.*, 119th Cong. (Feb. 5, 2025); *A Year in Review: The State of Small Business in America: Hearing before the H. Comm. on Small Bus.*, 118th Cong. (Dec. 12, 2023); *Pathways to Success: Supporting Entrepreneurs and Employees With Disabilities: Hearing before the Subcomm. on Innovation, Entrepreneurship, & Workforce Dev. of the H. Comm. on Small Bus.*, 118th Cong. (Jan. 30, 2024).

⁶⁵ Rebecca Santana, *ICE, the agency central to Trump's mass deportation plans, undergoes a shakeup*, ASSOCIATED PRESS (May 30, 2025), <https://apnews.com/article/immigration-enforcement-border-trump-ice-6fecdf2313788bd889b51adfb003ca7a>.

⁶⁶ AM. C.L. UNION, TRUMP ON IMMIGRATION (Jun. 6, 2024), <https://www.aclu.org/publications/trump-on-immigration>.

⁶⁷ See, e.g., Sophia Tareen et al., *Border Patrol commander says immigration raids lead to dozens of arrests in North Carolina*, PBS NEWS (Nov. 16, 2025), <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/nation/border-patrol-commander-says-immigration-raids-lead-to-dozens-of-arrests-in-north-carolina>.

⁶⁸ IMMIGR. RSCH. INITIATIVE, WHO IS ICE ARRESTING? (Jul. 23, 2025).

⁶⁹ Todd Heisler et al., *Anatomy of an ICE Arrest*, N.Y. TIMES (Aug. 5, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/08/03/nyregion/immigrant-arrests-courthouse.html>; Emma Winger, *At Graduation Time, ICE Targets Young Dreamers*, AM. IMMIGR. COUNCIL (Jun. 12, 2025), <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/blog/graduation-ice-targets-young-dreamers>.

⁷⁰ E.g., José Olivares, *US immigration officers ordered to arrest more people even without warrants*, THE GUARDIAN (Jun. 4, 2025), <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/jun/04/immigration-officials-increased-detentions-collateral-arrests>.

⁷¹ U.S. IMMIGR. & CUSTOMS ENF'T, CIVIL IMMIGRATION ARREST AUTHORITY: ADMINISTRATIVE ARREST WARRANTS AND WARRANTLESS ARRESTS (Jan. 28, 2026).

⁷² E.g., *How ICE Went Rogue*, AM. IMMIGR. COUNCIL (Feb. 11, 2026), <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/fact-sheet/ice-cbp-legal-analysis>.

⁷³ U.S. IMMIGR. & CUSTOMS ENF'T, *supra* note 71; Hamed Aleaziz & Charlie Savage, *ICE Expands Power of Agents to Arrest People Without Warrants*, N.Y. TIMES (Jan. 30, 2026), <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/01/30/us/politics/ice-expands-power-agents-warrants.html>.

Similarly, in May 2025, according to a whistleblower complaint, ICE allegedly published another secret memorandum⁷⁴ illegally authorizing agents to raid immigrants' homes without warrants.⁷⁵

Immigration agents are arresting individuals regardless of status, entangling green card holders and applicants,⁷⁶ visa holders,⁷⁷ refugees and asylum seekers,⁷⁸ DACA status recipients,⁷⁹ and even U.S. citizens.⁸⁰ On top of that, the Trump administration's *One Big Beautiful Bill Act*⁸¹ imposes a new, onerous fee of at least \$5,000 per immigration arrest, among other burdensome fees thrust onto immigrant entrepreneurs and workers.⁸² Numerous reports have emerged of detainees being subjected to physical abuse, denial of constitutional rights, and squalid conditions, both upon arrest and in detention facilities.⁸³



⁷⁴ Andrew P. Bakaj et al., *Re: Secretive DHS memo authorizes ICE to illegally enter homes without a judicial warrant in violation of the Fourth Amendment*, WHISTLEBLOWER AID (Jan. 7, 2026), <https://s3.documentcloud.org/documents/26499371/dhs-ice-memo-1-21-26.pdf>.

⁷⁵ Dell Cameron & Matt Giles, *US Judge Rules ICE Raids Require Judicial Warrants, Contradicting Secret ICE Memo*, WIRED (Jan. 23, 2026), <https://www.wired.com/story/us-judge-rules-ice-raids-require-judicial-warrants-contradicting-secret-ice-memo>.

⁷⁶ E.g., Joel Rose, *Green-card holders, travelers caught in Trump's immigration crackdown*, NPR (Apr. 1, 2025), <https://www.npr.org/2025/04/01/nx-s1-5339698/green-card-holders-detained-border-crackdown>; Billal Rahman, *Woman Detained During Birthday Trip Despite Pending Green Card Application*, NEWSWEEK (Jun. 2, 2025), <https://www.newsweek.com/maryia-vviadzenskaya-detained-birthday-green-card-2079700>.

⁷⁷ E.g., April Rubin, *Tracking the foreign nationals detained by ICE as tourists or U.S. residents*, AXIOS (Apr. 1, 2025), <https://www.axios.com/2025/03/20/tourists-us-residents-detained-arrested-deported-ice-immigration-trump>.

⁷⁸ E.g., Ximena Bustillo & Juliana Kim, *Christian refugees caught in the crosshairs of U.S. immigration policy*, NPR (Jul. 31, 2025), <https://www.npr.org/2025/07/31/g-s1-80181/trump-christian-refugees-asylum-immigration>; Tania Thorne, *Advocates say an Afghan refugee was detained at San Diego immigration court*, KPBS (Jun. 16, 2025), <https://www.kpbs.org/news/border-immigration/2025/06/16/advocates-say-an-afghan-refugee-was-detained-at-san-diego-immigration-court>.

⁷⁹ E.g., Grethel Aguila, *DACA recipient detained at Alligator Alcatraz, attorney says. 'We don't know why'*, MIAMI HERALD (Jul. 10, 2025), <https://www.miamiherald.com/news/local/immigration/article310337645.html>.

⁸⁰ E.g., Nicole Foy, *We Found That More Than 170 U.S. Citizens Have Been Held by Immigration Agents. They've Been Kicked, Dragged and Detained for Days.*, PROPUBLICA (Oct. 16, 2025), <https://www.propublica.org/article/immigration-dhs-american-citizens-arrested-detained-against-will>.

⁸¹ One Big Beautiful Bill Act, Pub. L. No. 119-21, § 100017 (2025).

⁸² *Id.*

⁸³ E.g., Cristian Benavides, *U.S. citizen told "you have no rights" during immigration arrest speaks out: "It hurts me"*, CBS NEWS (Jul. 28, 2025), <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/kenny-layne-arrest-you-have-no-rights-interview>; Gwynne Hogan & Haidee Chu, *'Like Dogs in Here' — Videos Expose ICE Lockup Inside 26 Federal Plaza*, THE CITY (Jul. 22, 2025), <https://www.thecity.nyc/2025/07/22/video-26-federal-plaza-immigration-ice-dhs-cells>; Gisela Salomon & Kate Payne, *Detained immigrants at 'Alligator Alcatraz' say there are worms in food and wastewater on the floor*, ASSOCIATED PRESS (Jul. 11, 2025), <https://apnews.com/article/alligator-alcatraz-immigration-detainees-florida-cc2fb9e34e760a50e97f13fe59cbf075>.

Most notably, immigration agents shot and killed two U.S. citizens in the Twin Cities area, mocking and shouting profanities at their victims.⁸⁴ Many of these agents have begun wearing masks and concealing their identities – undermining any accountability for abuses.⁸⁵

The alarming spike in untargeted and warrantless immigration enforcement activity, and documented abuses of immigrants and U.S.-born people alike, at President Trump's direction, has placed immense strain on our economy, its backbone – small businesses – and the workers who staff those small businesses. Committee Democrats' December 2025 report points out the consequences of President Trump's immigration crackdown for immigrant small business owners and entrepreneurs.⁸⁶ This crackdown is also draining America's labor force, which disproportionately hurts Main Street firms.

Workplace Absences Caused by Immigration Arrests and Fear

The most apparent impact of the Trump administration's effort is that immigrant workers are missing work regardless of status, due either to encounters with immigration agents and the resulting detention or abuse, or fear of these encounters.⁸⁷ This fear has been exacerbated by the increased willingness of agents to disregard immigrants' legal statuses and documentation, and uncertainty surrounding the statuses of certain refugee groups as the White House attempts to rescind Temporary Protected Status designations for various countries.⁸⁸ Some documented immigrants are also leaving their jobs and the U.S. entirely, leaving vacancies at their workplaces in the wake of their departures.⁸⁹



⁸⁴ Hannah Ziegler et al., *What We Know About the Fatal ICE Shooting in Minneapolis*, N.Y. TIMES (Jan. 7, 2026), <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/01/07/us/ice-shooting-minneapolis-renee-good.html>; *Video Analysis of ICE Shooting Sheds Light on Contested Moments*, N.Y. TIMES (Jan. 15, 2026), <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/01/15/video/ice-shooting-renee-good-minneapolis-videos.html>; Bora Erden et al., Jack Brook et al., *Man is shot and killed during Minneapolis immigration crackdown, National Guard activated*, ASSOCIATED PRESS (Jan. 24, 2026), <https://apnews.com/article/immigration-enforcement-minnesota-4d1499fc5962ab880f3816259e04bdf>.

⁸⁵ Leila Fadel et al., *Masked immigration agents are spurring fear and confusion across the U.S.*, NPR (Jul. 10, 2025), <https://www.npr.org/2025/07/09/nx-s1-5440311/ice-raids-masked-agents>.

⁸⁶ H. COMM. ON SMALL BUS., *supra* note 2.

⁸⁷ Rebecca Davis O'Brien & Miriam Jordan, *A Chill Sets In for Undocumented Workers, and Those Who Hire Them*, N.Y. TIMES (Mar. 9, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/09/business/economy/immigrant-workers-deportation-fears.html>.

⁸⁸ *Id.*; e.g., José Olivares, *US citizen detained by immigration officials who dismissed his Real ID as fake*, THE GUARDIAN (May 24, 2025), <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/may/24/us-citizen-detained-ice-real-id>; Press Release, Am. C.L. Union of S. Cal., *Federal Court of Appeals Hears Challenge to Cancellation of TPS for One Million Haitians and Venezuelans* (Jan. 14, 2026), <https://www.aclusocal.org/press-releases/federal-court-of-appeals-hears-challenge-to-cancellation-of-tps-for-one-million-haitians-and-venezuelans>.

⁸⁹ Andrew Ackerman & Lauren Kaori Gurley, *U.S. could lose more immigrants than it gains for first time in 50 years*, WASH. POST (Jun. 15, 2025), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2025/06/15/trump-immigration-impact-economy-inflation>.

The outright loss of this segment of the labor force is harming businesses in all sectors: a 2025 Clarify Capital survey finds that a majority of small business owners report immigration enforcement harms their industry, and that one in five employers lose employees due to immigration enforcement a year, with the resulting average financial burden of replacing those workers totaling to nearly \$12,000.⁹⁰ Clarify Capital also concludes that 72% of small business owners have shut down locations, slashed operating hours, and halted business expansion because of labor shortages.⁹¹ Employers in the construction, agriculture, hospitality, and senior care industries – which rely heavily on low-skilled immigrant workers, many of whom are undocumented – are disproportionately affected by immigration enforcement and the resulting workplace absences.⁹² Immigrant-owned small businesses and businesses located in areas with sizable immigrant populations have also reported elevated workplace absences due to immigration detention and fear of encounters with immigration agents.⁹³

Lowered Worker Productivity From Physical and Mental Health Burdens

The Committee's previous report highlights that physical health consequences of abuse by immigration agents would reduce the productivity of small business owners.⁹⁴ This logic holds for employees at businesses of all sizes who also have been physically mistreated by immigration agents. In other words, immigrant workers that experience bodily harm from ICE and CBP, and resulting health conditions, work less efficiently and effectively, reducing the value they add to their workplaces. Mental trauma stemming from encounters with immigration agents, friends and relatives' encounters with them, and fear of those encounters, can also harm the mental health of immigrant workers, which affects their productivity just like physical harm does.⁹⁵



⁹⁰ Bryan Gerson, *US Businesses Bleeding Workers: 1 in 5 Report Losing Employees Due to Immigration Crackdowns*, CLARIFY CAP. (Feb. 21, 2025), <https://clarifycapital.com/cost-of-deportations-small-business>.

⁹¹ *Id.*

⁹² *Id.*; Davis O'Brien & Jordan, *supra* note 87; Taylor Nicole Rogers, *Business owners warn Trump's deportation plan could shut them down*, AUSTL. FIN. REV. (Nov. 18, 2024), <https://www.afr.com/world/north-america/business-owners-warn-trump-s-deportation-plan-could-shut-them-down-20241118-p5krmp>.

⁹³ Alfonzo Galvan, *'They feel targeted': Deportation threat chills business on Minneapolis' Lake Street corridor*, SAHAN J. (Feb. 12, 2025), <https://sahanjournal.com/business-work/minneapolis-lake-street-businesses-immigration-chill>.

⁹⁴ H. COMM. ON SMALL BUS., *supra* note 2.

⁹⁵ AM. IMMIGR. COUNCIL, *supra* note 42.

Resulting Economic Impacts

America's employers, large and small, are losing crucial labor force and suffering a reduction in productivity of remaining workers, which has serious implications for the American economy. From the microeconomic (i.e., little-picture, business-by-business) perspective, a loss of immigrant small business workers is also a loss of immigrant consumers and spenders, undermining sales for other firms and the local economic multiplier effect⁹⁶ that small companies yield for their surrounding communities.⁹⁷ According to a Peterson Institute for International Economics study, lower immigration growth due to the crackdown is also cutting job growth in the industries that rely upon immigrant labor the most.⁹⁸

On a broader, macroeconomic scale, the CBO's February 2026 Budget and Economic Outlook report cites the Trump administration's immigration crackdown as a major development hurting America's economic trajectory, and the direction of the federal budget deficit, over the next ten years.⁹⁹

The most immediate economic consequence of President Trump's immigration enforcement efforts is that they have slashed the immigration surge observed in recent years, and the benefits of that surge. This wipeout will weaken labor force growth and increase prices for services other than housing (given lost labor force), adding to the near-term inflation caused by President Trump's disastrous tariffs. In the long run, the end of the recent immigration surge will slow real GDP growth and dampen aggregate consumer demand for goods and services, as well as demand for new housing construction, which everyday Americans desperately need in the face of the ongoing affordability crisis.¹⁰⁰ In response to this slower labor force expansion and reduced aggregate demand, businesses may ultimately invest less, further hindering the nation's economic strength.¹⁰¹

Budgetarily, the CBO projects that the *One Big Beautiful Bill Act*, which funds much of the immigration crackdown, and other "administrative actions related to immigration" will increase the federal budget deficit by \$4.7 trillion and \$500 billion, respectively, over the next ten years.¹⁰² Furthermore, losses in net immigration will also cut population growth, which will similarly cut federal revenues and increase the federal deficit.¹⁰³ In summation, President Trump's work to expel immigrants and prevent hardworking people from staffing Main Street workplaces poses a serious threat to small businesses nationwide, and to the economy at large.

⁹⁶ See, e.g., *The Local Multiplier Effect: How Independent Locally Owned Businesses Help Your Community Thrive*, AM. INDEP. BUS. ALL., <https://amiba.net/local-multiplier> (last visited Feb. 20, 2026).

⁹⁷ ECON. POLICY INST., TRUMP'S DEPORTATION AGENDA WILL DESTROY MILLIONS OF JOBS (Jul. 10, 2025); Patricia Caro, *Latino businesses collapse under deportation terror: 'What is happening now is worse than what we experienced during Covid'*, EL PAÍS (Mar. 30, 2025), <https://english.elpais.com/usa/2025-03-30/latino-businesses-collapse-under-deportation-terror-what-is-happening-now-is-worse-than-what-we-experienced-during-covid.html>.

⁹⁸ Jed Kolko, *Slowing immigration has halted job growth in some industries*, PETERSON INST. FOR INT'L ECON. (Sep. 9, 2025), <https://www.piie.com/research/piie-charts/2025/slowing-immigration-has-halted-job-growth-some-industries>.

⁹⁹ CONG. BUDGET OFF., 61882, THE BUDGET AND ECONOMIC OUTLOOK: 2026 TO 2036 (Feb. 11, 2026).

¹⁰⁰ *Id.*

¹⁰¹ *Id.*

¹⁰² *Id.*

¹⁰³ *Id.*

We Could Instead Bolster Main Street Employers

Given the impacts of the Trump administration's immigration crackdown, it is more than clear that the federal government must choose a different path, for the preservation of Main Street America and the nation's economic vitality.

Congress should consider meaningful immigration legislation, presenting ample pathways to authorized work, citizenship, and dignity for the hardworking people who want to come to America and earn a better life and future. Such pathways should include robust vetting measures for potential immigrants, with enough funding and manpower to prevent backlogs and avoid trapping workers and employers in legal status limbo. This approach to immigration policy has significant standing among policymakers of various stripes. For example, the CBO predicts that giving legal status to people already in the U.S. would likely boost their productivity, alongside their wages,¹⁰⁴ and the nonpartisan Committee for Economic Development recently issued a report mentioning immigration reform with legal status pathways for undocumented immigrants as a necessary solution to the labor shortage.¹⁰⁵ Even Republican witnesses have also testified before the Committee in favor of comprehensive immigration reform.¹⁰⁶ Strong immigration regulatory compliance resources, flexibility, and enforcement fairness for small employers would also help mitigate the disproportionate nature of the crackdown's impacts.

Conclusion

Small businesses are the backbone of our nation's economy, and immigrant workers are the backbone of those small businesses. The Trump administration's cruel, and arguably malicious, actions in immigration policy have unambiguous moral and ethical implications. The very people who make America great – those who come to this country, contribute to society, and live up to our highest ideal of the pursuit of happiness, even though they were born elsewhere – are more scared than ever to come and join in the American Dream. The Administration's efforts also have economic consequences that threaten America's prosperity. Immigrants are vital pillars of Main Street companies and communities, and in kidnapping and expelling them, President Trump is setting up America's economy for future collapse. Committee Democrats will never yield in the fight to restore our economy and prosperity for America's small businesses.

¹⁰⁴ CONG. BUDGET OFF., *supra* note 45.

¹⁰⁵ COMM. FOR ECON. DEV., THE CONFERENCE BOARD, RESPONDING TO US LABOR SHORTAGES (Jun. 16, 2025), <https://www.conference-board.org/research/solutions-briefs/responding-to-us-labor-shortages>.

¹⁰⁶ *E.g.*, *From Nothing to Something: The Story of the American Dream: Hearing before the H. Comm. on Small Bus.*, 118th Cong. (Feb. 28, 2023).