Legalize Undocumented Immigrants

Juan Bunay

There are 12 million undocumented immigrants in this country who deserve to be legalized.

They Contribute to the Economy

They came to this country to work hard and have better lives, like past immigrants. Undocumented people often do the work that Americans don’t like to do. For example, they do hard labor as construction workers and landscapers. They pick fruits and vegetables. They work as babysitters and housekeepers — taking care of people and even giving love. And believe it or not, many undocumented immigrants pay taxes.

Legalizing all of the undocumented people would mean more money for the U.S. government. The fee to apply for citizenship is $680. Multiply that by 12 million people and think how much that would add up to! Furthermore, once they are legalized, even more of them would pay taxes.

With legal status, these immigrants would boost the economy. They would be able to visit their families, which would mean they would buy travel tickets and gifts to bring to their families. All of this economic activity would create more jobs.

Some people who disagree with me might argue that these undocumented people, once legalized, would take American people’s jobs. That will not happen because almost all of these people already have jobs! People say this is the land of opportunity. Let’s make it true. Congress should pass an immigration reform bill that gives undocumented immigrants a pathway to citizenship.

They Deserve Human Rights

Undocumented immigrants are human beings. It’s time to give them all legal status. They deserve freedom and rights, and it would be good for our country too!

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Illegal Immigrants: Exit poll finds broad support for legal status

Q: Should most illegal immigrants working in the U.S. be:
- Offered chance at legal status
- Deported to country they came from

![Bar chart showing support for legal status](chart.png)

2012 National Exit poll conducted by Edison Research
Take it Further

**Summarize** the data you see in the chart on p. 22. Write several true statements based on the data. What do you find most surprising or interesting?

**According to the author,** Juan Bunay (p. 22), what are 3 economic reasons and 1 non-economic reason why undocumented immigrants should get legal status?

**Research** the immigration bill. Where does it stand in Congress? Does it provide pathways to citizenship?

**What do you think** of the bill? Look up your congresspeople at <whoismyrepresentative.com>. Write to them and let them know what you think about immigration reform.

**Understand the legislative process.** Use the lesson plans in “Building Immigrant Community Power through Legislative Advocacy.” Available for free at <www.nnirr.org>.

**Interpreting political cartoons** is an important skill for adult learners:

1. Describe what you see going on in the cartoon above. Notice the details.
2. What does the water represent? What do the elephant and donkey represent?
3. What message is the cartoonist trying to convey?