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Californians Together: Defining the State's Role in Immigration

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Californians Together: Defining the State's Role in Immigration



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Californians Together: Defining the State's Role in Immigration



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July 1993

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Los Angeles Times editorial: New Myths and Old Realities
About Immigration.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The Senate Office of Research wishes to acknowledge the assistance of the California Research Bureau of the California State Library, and particularly its demographer, Hans Johnson, formerly with the state Department of Finance's Demographic Research and Census Data Center.

Mr. Johnson, who holds master's degrees in demography and biostatistics from the University of California, Berkeley, analyzed newly available 1990 census figures to prepare the demographic overview of California immigration that appears in Part II of this report.

CALIFORNIANS TOGETHER:

DEFINING THE STATE'S ROLE IN IMMIGRATION

Introduction If America is a nation of immigrants, California is a nation-state of recent arrivals. Foreign-born Californians account for nearly 22 percent of the state's population of 31 million, a rate almost three times greater than the country's ratio of newcomers.

This surge of foreign-born Californians, stemming from revisions in federal laws dating to the mid-1960s, rivals the sweeping immigration boom early in this century.

Domestic migration, from other states into California, has tapered off during the persistent recession. Yet foreign immigration to California continues to rise. New legal immigrants numbered 170,000 in 1991-92, a jump of nearly 40 percent from the previous year and the highest number in at least 20 years.

California was the destination of a quarter of the nation's legal immigrants during the 1980s; its refugee population grew threefold. Six-hundred thousand refugees, nearly a third of the nation's total, live in California.

More than half of the 3 million formerly illegal immigrants who received amnesty under the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 live in California. The state with the second-highest number, Texas, had just 440,000 — compared with California's 1.6 million.

Official estimates of the number of undocumented immigrants in California range from 600,000 to more than a million. The Census Bureau has suggested half of the nation's undocumented immigrants are in California. The state Department of Finance, which handles California's demographic data, estimates 100,000 more undocumented persons enter the state each year than leave it.

Others, noting that data on the undocumented are sketchy at best, insist the official figures are low. The 1990 census data that were examined in Part II of this report, for instance, may have undercounted a million Californians, including undocumented persons who did not want to be counted.

The extremely thorny issues that surround illegal immigration — how well the U.S. government is patrolling its borders, how it goes about granting political asylum and what the undocumented are costing American taxpayers — have come to the fore in recent weeks with the discovery of hundreds of Chinese smuggled aboard cramped, understocked vessels on their way to indentured servitude in America.

After eight undocumented Chinese drowned trying to reach the beaches of New York in June, President Clinton declared immigration reforms would become a priority in his administration. Attorney General Janet Reno expanded on the theme: “Events have brought into focus the tremendous economic, human and social impact immigration has on our country.”

California’s state and local officials have no outright say in crafting the federal policies and practices that have allowed so many newcomers within state and urban borders. But California can do more to forge a role for itself in shaping both the decision-making and the outcomes.

Other states, with smaller foreign-born populations, have developed strategies for communicating with Washington on this issue, and for encouraging the economic assimilation of their lawful newcomers. Most immigrants and refugees today are arriving from Asian and Latin American countries. Conflicts arise in mixing diverse cultures. But California can stake out a role in heading off tensions, securing maximum federal funding, linking qualifying newcomers with available assistance, tracking their progress and relaying data and other input to Washington. It also can speak with more force and urgency in encouraging federal solutions to the illegal flow of the undocumented into California from land and sea.

This paper looks at immigration to California, including recent attempts to compare costs and benefits of both documented and undocumented arrivals. It discusses what the state is and is not doing in the realm of public services for newcomers. It notes what is being done elsewhere. Its goal is to help define a role for California in improving the prospects for economic assimilation of the foreign-born who come here under federal auspices, with the aim of securing long-term gains for the state and its populace.

This study is broken into five sections:

- A general overview that presents and summarizes issues and offers findings and recommendations,
- A demographic overview of immigration to California based on an analysis of census data,
- A look at literature examining the costs and benefits of immigration,
- A review of services available to refugees and immigrants in California,
- A summary of what other states are doing to coordinate their immigration and refugee services.

Immigration

PART I: GENERAL OVERVIEW

A Profile of California Immigrants New figures compiled by the California Research Bureau, using 1990 census data, show an increase in the percentages of both college graduates and poorly educated immigrants who arrived in California during the 1980s.

The median income of the 3 million residents living in households headed by immigrants who came to California during the 1980s was \$22,300, compared with \$34,900 for long-time California citizens.

But new immigrants who joined the California labor force were hard-working, the CRB data suggest. Long-time California citizens labored an average of 38.8 hours per week, while foreign-born newcomers worked 39.6 hours.

California's new immigrants were much younger, at an average age of 25, than long-time Californians, at 34.

Some social scientists have suggested there is a public perception that newcomers are attracted to the United States by the safety net of welfare, available for legal residents who fail to find work.

But in 1990, only slightly more immigrants from the 1980s were receiving welfare than were long-time California citizens — 4.8 percent versus 4.1 percent — despite the significant difference in their incomes.

Among the 5.4 million residents in households headed by immigrants who arrived in California before 1980, only 3.8 percent were receiving public assistance in 1990 — a smaller ratio than the native population.

As the federal laws have changed, so have the sources of America's immigrants. In 1989-90, 88 percent of California's new legal immigrants were from Asia or Latin America.

Mexico and the United States have the largest income gap of any two contiguous countries in the world and, not surprisingly, 17 percent of the new legal immigrants came from Mexico.

Today's immigrants may be less likely than those of decades past to speak English. Many are unskilled and illiterate, but others possess advanced skills and education.

California, using federal funds, has provided required English instruction to more than 1 million formerly undocumented immigrants who received amnesty under the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986. Of these, 65 percent had completed six years or less of formal schooling in their home countries. Twenty-eight percent completed three years or less. A third were not literate in their native languages.

Boon or Burden? Are immigrants and refugees a boon or a burden for California? Professional economists and ordinary Americans can concur that, from a historical perspective, American immigrants, even those scorned at the time they arrived, have been a long-term plus for the nation's economic and social well-being.

When top economists were asked to assess the overall effect of 20th century immigration on the nation's economic growth, 19 percent answered "slightly favorable" and 81 percent said "very favorable."¹

The greater the jurisdiction considered, the greater the measurable benefits of immigration.

But the smaller the jurisdiction, the larger the burden.

Long-Term Benefits, Short-Term Strains RAND researcher Georges Vernez in his paper, "Needed: A Federal Role in Helping Communities Cope with Immigration," states:

"Analysts have ... tended to take the long-term view, neglecting the significant geographic concentration of immigrants in specific areas of the nation and the consequent short- and medium-term strains on those affected areas.... A few states and counties bear a disproportionate share of the costs of the socialization, education and social support of immigrants. As immigration has increased over the last decade, these jurisdictions are increasingly unable to meet the demand for public services — not only from immigrants, but from all segments of their population."

Thus, Los Angeles County could estimate its immigrants, both documented and undocumented, contributed \$4.3 billion in state, federal and local taxes in 1991-92 — but were costing the county a net loss of \$808 million in public services.

Failing to Measure Up There is an obvious shortcoming in assessing the worth of any group by its calculated contributions in taxes. Using that standard, it could be argued — in view of the massive federal deficit, continuing state budget shortfalls and persistent cuts in local government — that all Americans are failing to measure up because their taxes don't cover their demands for services.

Over the short haul, perceptions of the value of immigration conflict and long-term benefits are harder to appreciate. Americans historically have admired past waves of immigrants while doubting the benefit of the newest batch of arrivals.

Public Concern Over Immigration The Field Institute's California Polls do not detect a rising concern over immigration, although many Californians do consider it a deeply troubling issue. In 1982, 65 percent of Californians surveyed believed immigration was a "very serious" problem. Five years later, that ratio hovered at 66 percent. A 1992 survey found Californians ranking immigration 22nd in importance among 27 issues, down from a ranking of 19th in 1989.

Still, in 1992, 42 percent said they were "extremely concerned" about the issue. (That was slightly down from 45 percent in 1989.)

George Borjas, an economics professor at the University of California, San Diego, and author of Friends or Strangers, The Impact of Immigrants on the U.S. Economy, notes the skills of new immigrants have declined in the past two or three decades in the wake of federal changes that opened immigration to Asian and Latin American countries.

While this means less return in government taxes, the situation is not without economic advantages, reports Borjas. When unskilled immigrants perform work, such as agricultural labor, at low wages they hold down the retail prices of goods and services — increasing the household wealth of long-time residents.

Immigrant Job Seekers are Most Affected A number of studies conclude immigrants do not compete for jobs with the native-born. Workers and job-seekers most affected by new waves of immigrants tend to be other immigrants.

Social scientists say immigrants, with many notable exceptions, tend to live out their lives at the same economic status at which they entered the American labor market. More dramatic economic successes are reserved for their children and grandchildren. But much evidence points to the great penchant of immigrants to start up their own businesses.

A paper prepared for the Federal Reserve Bank of New York in 1991 found that self-employment rates were at least 7 percentage points higher among immigrants than the native-born. Theories to explain this include immigrants' obvious advantages in knowing and serving the needs of consumers from their own cultures, and the experiences some may have gained in home countries with high self-employment rates.

Less data is available to assess the impact of illegal immigrants. But a survey of the nation's top economists several years ago found that "an astonishing" 74 percent felt illegals have a positive impact.² Conversely, 69 percent of Californians surveyed by the Field Institute in 1987 believed illegal immigration had an unfavorable effect, a ratio down only slightly from 75 percent in 1982.

Governor Wilson in his proposed 1993-94 state budget included a request for \$1.45 billion in federal assistance to help California bear the costs of federal immigration and refugee policies and practices affecting legal and illegal immigrants. (See Appendix A, "A Failed Federal Promise," for a breakdown of those costs.)

FINDINGS

No Tracking of Immigrants or Coordination of Services

Although California leads the nation in absorbing newcomers, it trails other states in tracking what becomes of them, in coordinating public and private services available for them or in giving them a voice in the fierce public debate over the impacts of the foreign-born.

The state has no office responsible for gathering and analyzing data that would give a clearer picture of its immigrants and refugees: who they are, what they require, what they contribute, and how well or how poorly they fare in the state's economy over time.

Nor does the state attempt to coordinate, or make referrals regarding, state and community-based services that might be available to new immigrants other than refugees.

No Spokesperson There is no state spokesperson charged with giving Californians a broad, informed look at immigration issues. Economic literature suggests many commonly held, negative assumptions about immigrants are false. Government is in a position to counter divisive myths, such as an assumption more long-time immigrant residents than native Californians are living on welfare.

A Los Angeles Times editorial, included in Appendix B, recently sought to explode a half-dozen such myths, ranging from "Today's immigrants are harder to Americanize" to "Immigrants take jobs."

In states such as Massachusetts, New York and Texas, government is not silent when immigrants come under fire.

Inquiries Outside the Jurisdiction California state government houses a Refugee and Immigration Programs Bureau, but this federally funded office primarily administers programs for refugees, about a tenth of the state's foreign-born. Its chief, Bruce Kennedy, says the bureau receives many inquiries about immigration that are outside its jurisdiction.

"Clearly, the Refugee and Immigration Programs Bureau does not have a broad role in overall immigration issues and is not currently structured or funded to assume such a role," he said in a statement to the Senate Office of Research.

Federally designated refugees, who may have suffered physical or psychological persecution in their homelands, can be eligible for a variety of social services. New immigrants are not singled out, in this way, for assistance. "There are currently no programs designed for or funded to provide benefits and services specifically targeted at many legal and illegal immigrants by either the federal or state governments," says Kennedy.

The California Policy Seminar, in a soon-to-be-published study based on interviews with Asian and Latin American immigrants and refugees, has found they often live in enclaves with little exposure to English, generally unaware of services that may be available to them. Effective public programs in English lag behind demand, although immigrants perceive English skills as vital to their economic assimilation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Beefing Up the Refugee and Immigration Programs Bureau Following the models of other high-immigration states, California should increase its attention on foreign-born newcomers with the goal of furthering their economic assimilation. The responsibilities of the Refugee and Immigration Programs Bureau should be expanded, using federal money to the extent possible, to sharpen the state's focus on new immigrants. The bureau should be charged with maximizing California's share of federal monies for costs associated with immigrants and refugees. This approach would represent an investment of federal resources with the potential of generating a significant return.

Cost-benefit analyses and diligent data collection by a credible state bureau would bolster California's case for receiving federal assistance in meeting health, welfare, education and criminal justice costs tied to federal policies and practices.

The director of the bureau would be a state spokesperson for newcomers on immigration issues.

The expanded mission of the office would reap long-term economic returns for the state in other ways. Its responsibilities would include:

- Coordinating state and community-based services for newcomers, assessing special needs, publicizing available services and working to ensure that the non-English-speaking have access to government services available to all Californians.
- Encouraging corporate sponsors and individual volunteers, especially the bilingual foreign-born, to help newcomers develop English skills and a knowledge of civics.
- Coordinating responses from immigrant and refugee groups to anti-immigration attacks in the news media and elsewhere.
- Establishing a hot line for newcomers and others to report exploitation of immigrants and violations of immigration laws.

- Assisting the foreign-born in becoming naturalized citizens.
- Spearheading a statewide, multimedia anti-discrimination campaign, using federal funds available for this purpose.
- Publicizing credible assessments of the impacts and contributions of immigrants and refugees in California.

Bilingual Education A state bilingual education law requiring schoolchildren who are not proficient in English to receive appropriate language instruction expired in 1987. Subsequent attempts to enact new versions of the law have been vetoed by Governors Deukmejian and Wilson. Former Superintendent of Public Instruction Bill Honig had interpreted other sections of the Education Code to require language instruction for students who don't understand English. But the issue is clouded in the wake of Honig's resignation earlier this year.

Legislation should be enacted to clarify California's commitment to providing appropriate language instruction for schoolchildren who are not proficient in English, with the ultimate goal of integrating them into English-only classrooms.

END NOTES

1. Simon, Julian, *The Economic Consequences of Immigration*, Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1989, Appendix C.
2. Ibid.

Immigration

PART II: DEMOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW OF IMMIGRATION TO CALIFORNIA

This section provides a current demographic overview of international migration (immigration) to California. Annual flows and some socioeconomic characteristics of the immigrants over time are presented, where there is sufficient data. Immigration is, of course, an enormous topic. The intent here is to provide a brief demographic sketch of immigrants coming to California. In this paper, immigrants are classified into four groups:

- Refugees (persons who have been displaced from their country of nationality and are unable to return due to persecution)
- Legal immigrants (other than refugees)
- Undocumented immigrants
- Amnesty applicants

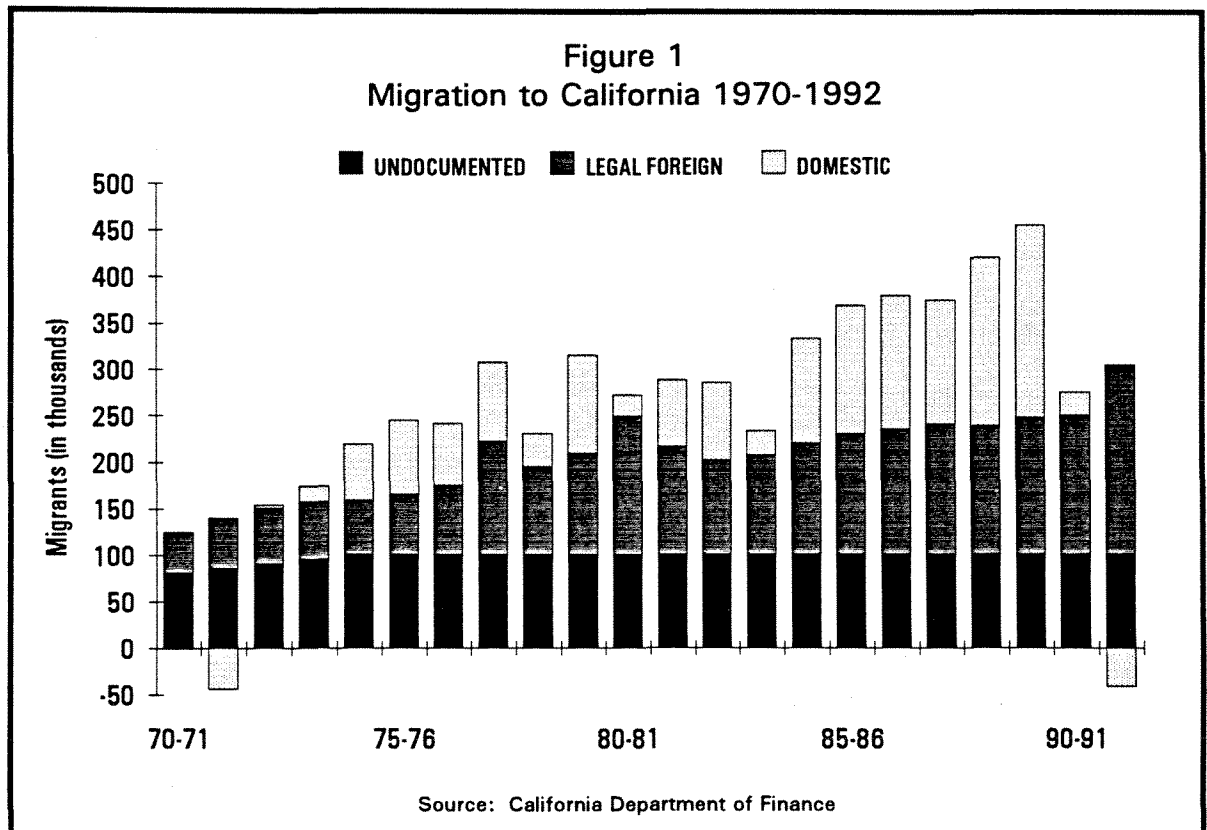
These classifications are based on United States immigration law. The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) provides nationwide data for legal immigrants, including refugees, while the United States Census Bureau collects more general data on all immigrants without specifying legal status. In many cases data are available only for all immigrants combined, and even then only on a national level. Most published reports on immigrants do not include 1990 census data. With the recent release of detailed individual level data from the 1990 census, it would be possible to extend this study by developing detailed socioeconomic profiles of immigrants to California.

General Findings The following conclusions can be made regarding the specific types of immigrants to California:

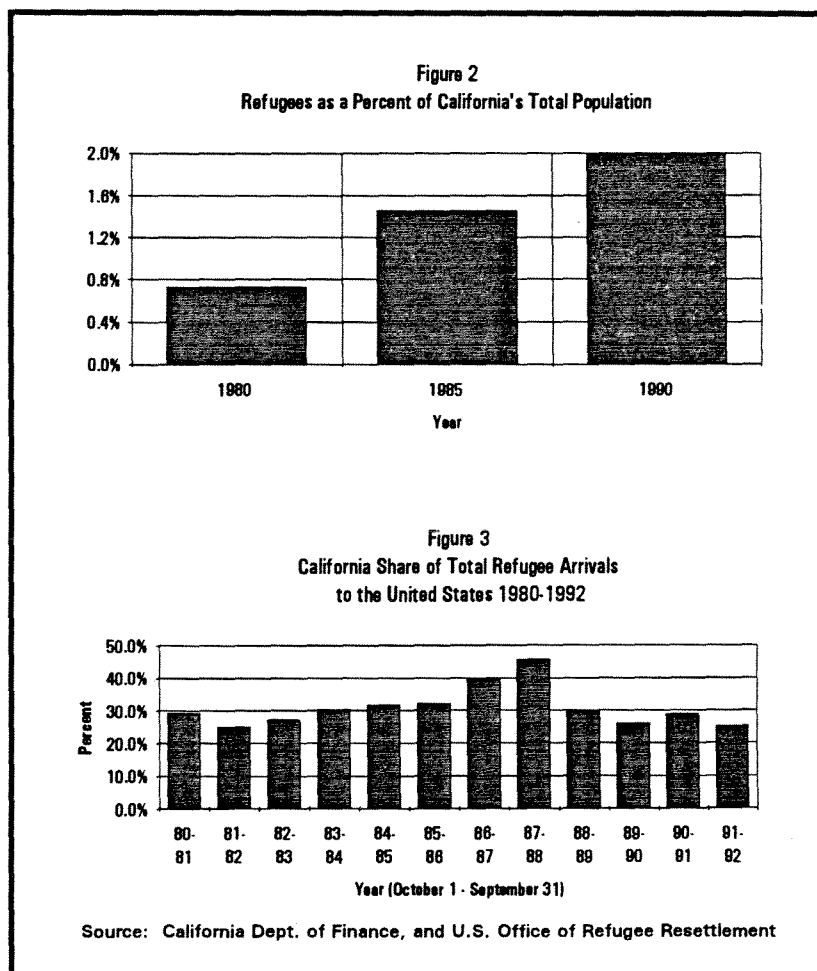
- California has received the lion's share of the nation's refugees, legal immigrants, undocumented immigrants, and amnesty applicants.
- The flow of refugees and legal immigrants to California seems unaffected by the recession. Domestic migration decreased during the recession.
- Refugees are the youngest of the immigrant groups. Legal immigrants and amnesty applicants are younger than the state's resident population, and are concentrated in young working ages.

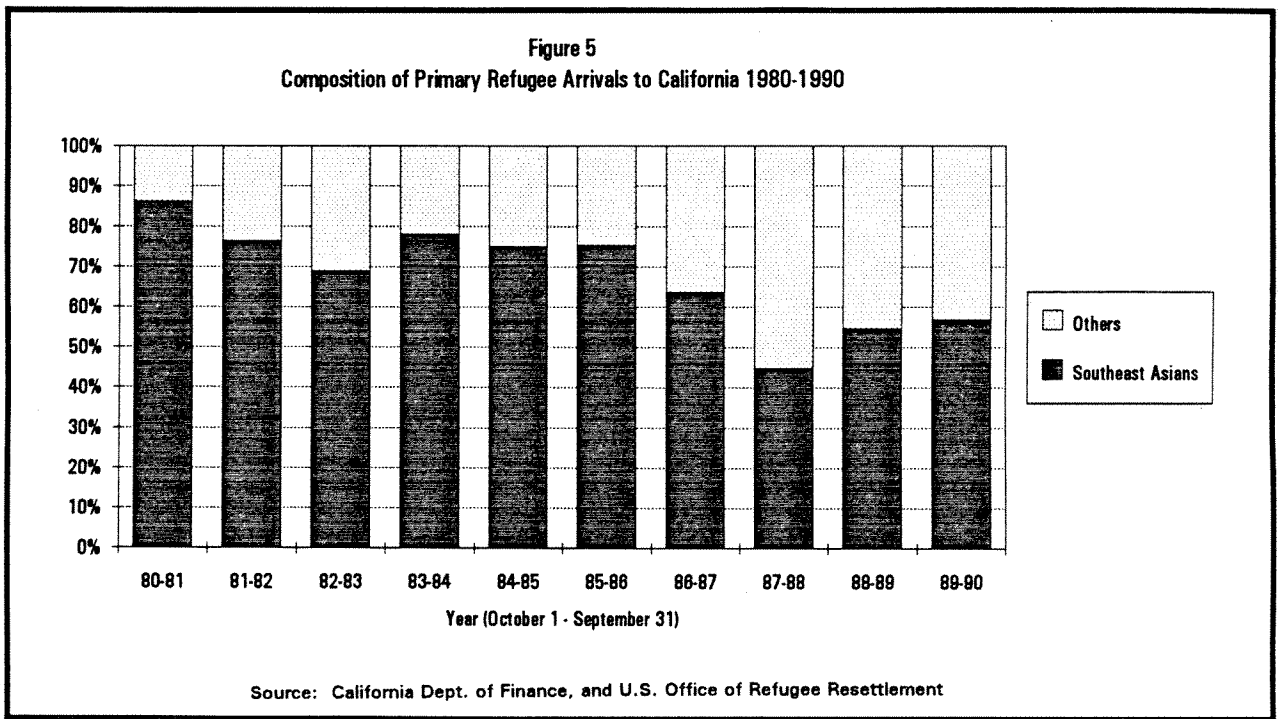
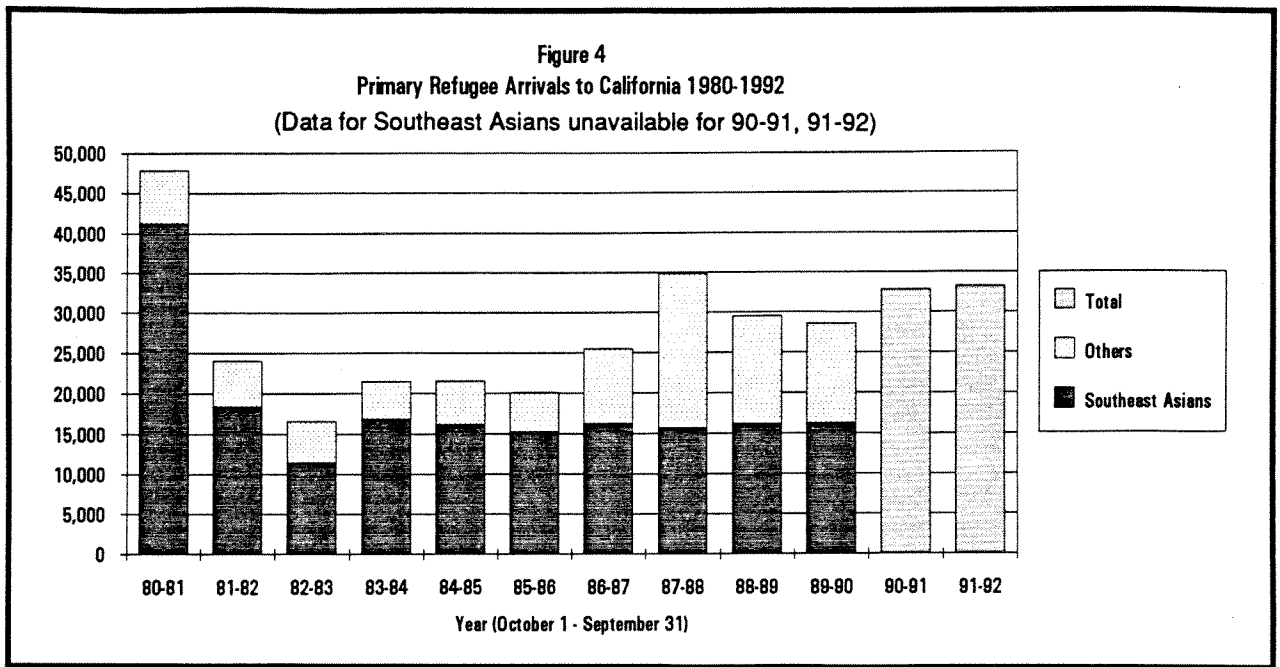
- Refugees and amnesty applicants have low educational attainment levels, and high labor force participation rates.
- Most of California's refugees and legal immigrants are from Asia.
- Most of the amnesty applicants and undocumented immigrants to California are from Latin America.
- Little is known regarding the size, flow, and characteristics of undocumented immigrants. This paper presents preliminary estimates which provide some evidence that the flow of undocumented immigrants has declined since the passage of the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986.

Figure 1 illustrates net flows of migrants by type of migrant from 1970 through 1992 for California. The number of migrants to the state increased dramatically from fiscal year 1970 to fiscal year 1990. The 1989 total net migration figure of over 400,000 represents the highest net migration to California since World War II. Since 1989, the effects of the recession can be seen on domestic migration, which has become negative. Foreign migration has remained at high levels and has actually increased during the recession.

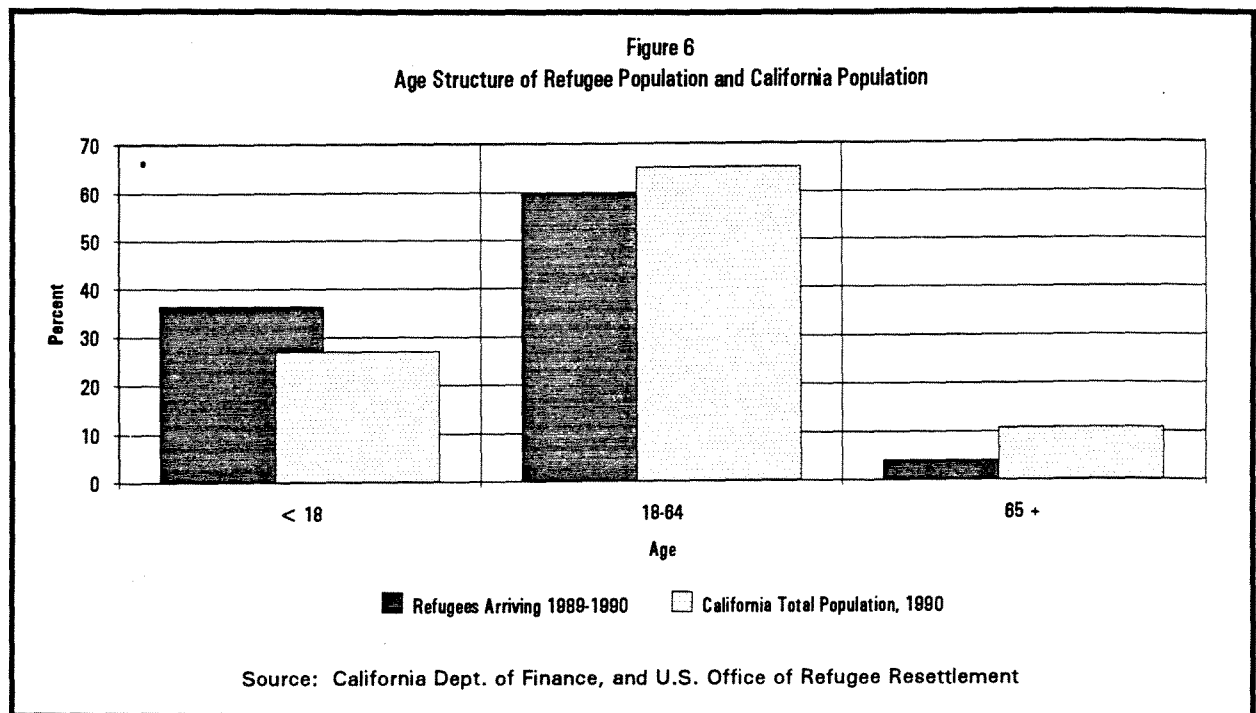


Refugees The California Department of Finance (DOF) estimates that almost 600,000 refugees lived in California in 1990, representing over 30% of the nation's total refugee population.¹ The refugee population of the state increased over three-fold during the 1980s, and by 1990 one in every fifty California residents was a refugee (see Figure 2). California is home to more refugees than any other state, and continues to attract a large share of the total annual flow of refugees into the United States (see Figure 3). Since 1988, the number of refugees entering California has fluctuated around 30,000 per year. While the number of arrivals among Southeast Asian refugees has been fairly stable over the past ten years, the number of non-Southeast Asian refugee arrivals has increased substantially (see Figure 4). Although the state's refugee population was still over 80% Southeast Asian in 1990, the non-Southeast Asian share had increased from 12.7% of the state's refugee population in 1985 to 18.1% in 1990. Figure 5 illustrates the increasing share of non-Southeast Asians among the annual number of refugee arrivals into California. The majority of the non-Southeast Asian refugees to California have been from Eastern Europe, while the majority of Southeast Asian refugees have been from Vietnam.





In 1990, 29% of all refugees in California lived in Los Angeles County. As a proportion of the total population, the San Joaquin Valley contained the greatest concentration of refugees (in San Joaquin County, refugees comprised 7% of the total county population in 1990). Southeast Asian refugees have been more likely to settle in agricultural areas than non-Southeast Asian refugees, who have settled primarily in the San Francisco Bay Area and coastal Southern California. Refugees to California tend to be much younger than the resident population of the state (see Figure 6). The median age of refugees arriving in 1989-1990 was 23, compared to 31 for the total resident population of the state.

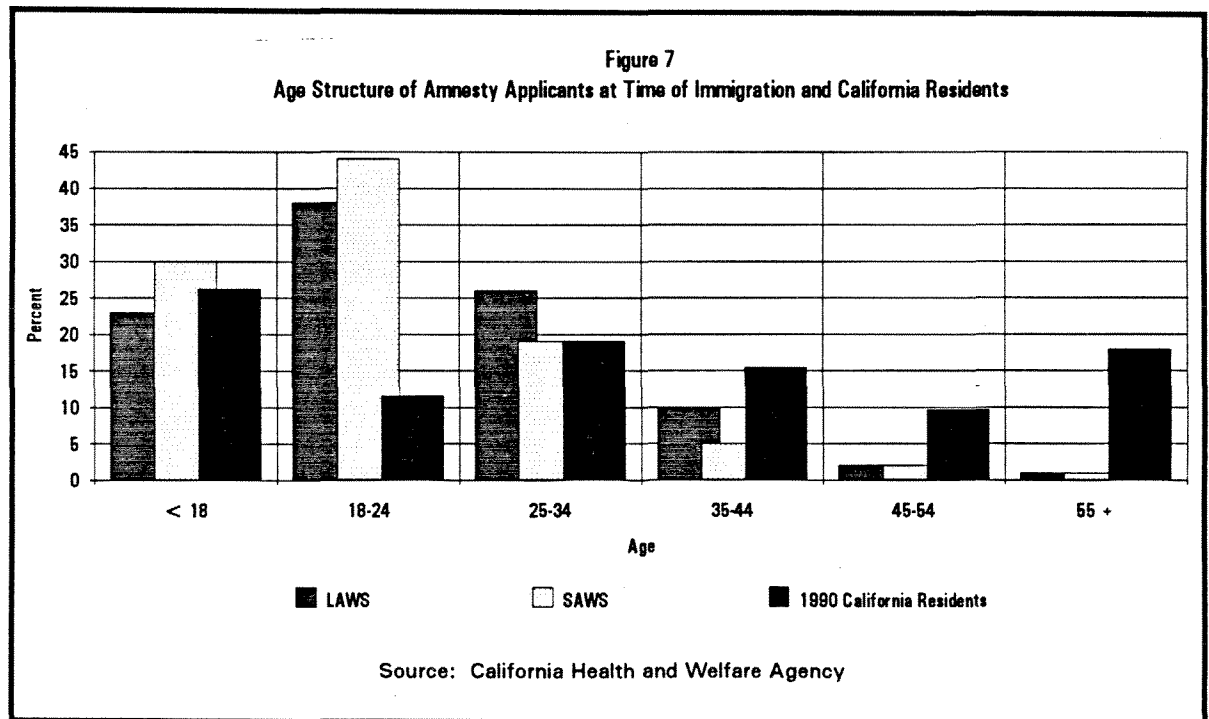


A 1990 survey among Southeast Asian refugees in the United States, conducted by the United States Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), found that labor force participation rates for Southeast Asian refugees were extremely low in the year of entry to the United States, and increased substantially but remained quite low several years after entry. The same survey found that unemployment rates were extremely high in the year of entry, but declined rapidly and reached levels lower than national unemployment rates within a few years of entry. The primary reasons cited by refugees for not seeking employment were education, family needs, limited ability to speak English, and health. Labor force participation rates for Southeast Asians in 1990 were only 5.0% for those who spoke no English, compared to 52.3% for those who spoke English well. Perhaps because they have spent more time in refugee camps, recent refugee arrivals have shown greater educational attainment than refugees arriving in the 80's, with average years of education increasing from 4.3 in 1985 to 7.5 in 1990.

Amnesty Applicants The Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA) allowed for the legalization of persons illegally residing in the United States. A 1989 survey of amnesty applicants in California conducted for the California Health and Welfare Agency (HWA) provides state-specific information on demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of amnesty applicants who had enrolled in courses funded by federal State Legalization Impact Assistance Grants (SLIAG). Of the three million amnesty

applicants in the United States, over 1.6 million (55%) reported California as their state of residence. Texas, the state with the second highest number of applicants, was home to only 441,000 amnesty applicants. Within California, Los Angeles County was home to 64% of the amnesty applicants. Orange County had the second greatest number of applicants in the state, with just over 9% of the total. IRCA provided two separate programs for achieving legalization, one for legally authorized workers (LAWs) residing in the United States since 1982, and another for special agricultural workers (SAWs).

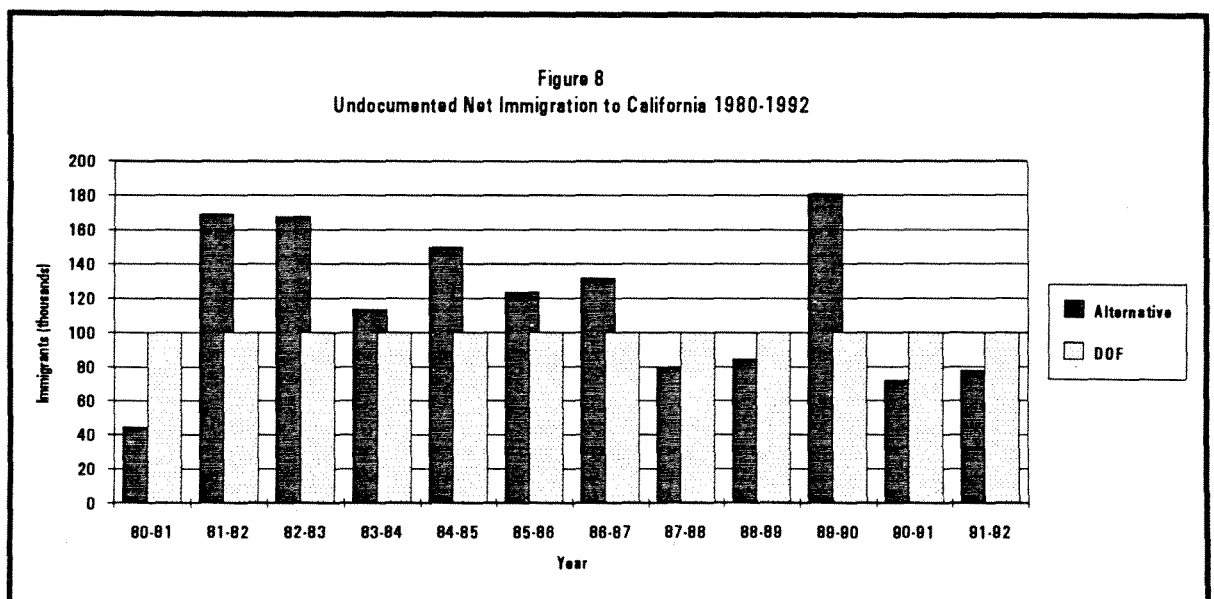
LAWs California's share of the total nationwide amnesty applicants was 55% for the LAW program. In California, over 80% of the LAWs were citizens of Mexico. Almost all of the non-Mexican LAW amnesty applicants were from Central America. As with refugees, educational attainment levels were quite low for the LAW amnesty applicants, with a median of six years of education in the country of origin. As shown in Figure 7, LAW amnesty applicants were quite young, with 54% of the LAWs between the ages of 18 and 34 (compared to 31% for all Californians in 1989). The LAW applicants were split about equally between males and females. Labor force participation rates were extremely high for the LAW amnesty applicants (81%), with 4% of the LAWs looking for work. Over 60% of the LAWs reported manufacturing or service as their usual occupation.



SAWs As with the LAW applicants, over half (54%) of the total nationwide SAW applicants reported California as their state of residence. The SAW applicants in California were even more likely to be from Mexico than the LAW applicants, with over 90% of the SAW applicants reporting Mexican citizenship. Educational attainment levels were quite low for the SAW amnesty applicants, with a median of seven years of education in the country of origin. SAW applicants were even younger than the LAW applicants, with 78% of the SAWs between the ages of 18 and 34 (compared to 31% for all Californians in 1989). Most of the SAW applicants were males (75%). Labor force participation rates were extremely high for the SAW applicants (90%), with 7% of SAWs seeking employment. Although SAW applicants must have worked in agriculture for at least 90 days in order to qualify for amnesty, at the time of the survey almost 50% of the SAWs reported manufacturing or service as their usual occupation, with only 33% reporting agriculture.

Undocumented Immigrants

It is not known how many undocumented immigrants reside in California or the United States. The United States Census Bureau estimated that 1.02 million undocumented immigrants were counted in the 1980 Census and were residents of California. The Census Bureau estimated that half of all undocumented persons counted in the country were residents of California. Correspondingly, the annual flow of undocumented immigrants into California and the United States is also unknown. The California Department of Finance estimates 100,000 more



undocumented enter the state each year than leave the state. Census Bureau and DOF estimates imply an undocumented population in California of approximately 600,000 in 1992. However, a recent estimate for 1992 for Los Angeles County alone was 700,000. If the distribution of 1992 undocumented residents in the state was the same as the distribution of IRCA amnesty applicants, then the Los Angeles County estimate implies a statewide undocumented population of approximately 1.1 million persons.

The results of an alternative method of estimating annual net flows of undocumented immigrants, developed by the California Research Bureau, are shown in Table 1 and Figure 8. In the alternative method, annual net undocumented migration was taken as the residual between total migration less legal (including refugee) net migration and less domestic migration:

$$M_U = M_T - M_L - M_D$$

where M_U = Undocumented net migration,
 M_T = Total net migration,
 M_L = Legal net immigration (including refugees),
and M_D = 1.5 * (net driver's license address changes).

M_D is an estimate of domestic migration, with the assumption that one driver's license address change between California and the rest of the United States represents 1.5 persons. While this alternative method of estimating annual flows of undocumented migrants must be considered preliminary and exploratory, it does provide an estimate of total undocumented persons that is between the DOF based estimate and the Los Angeles County estimate. Using the Census Bureau figure of 1.02 million undocumented in California in 1980 as a base and adding the annual alternative estimates of undocumented net migration between 1980 and 1992, the alternative method gives an estimate of approximately 800,000 undocumented persons in 1992.²

Table 1

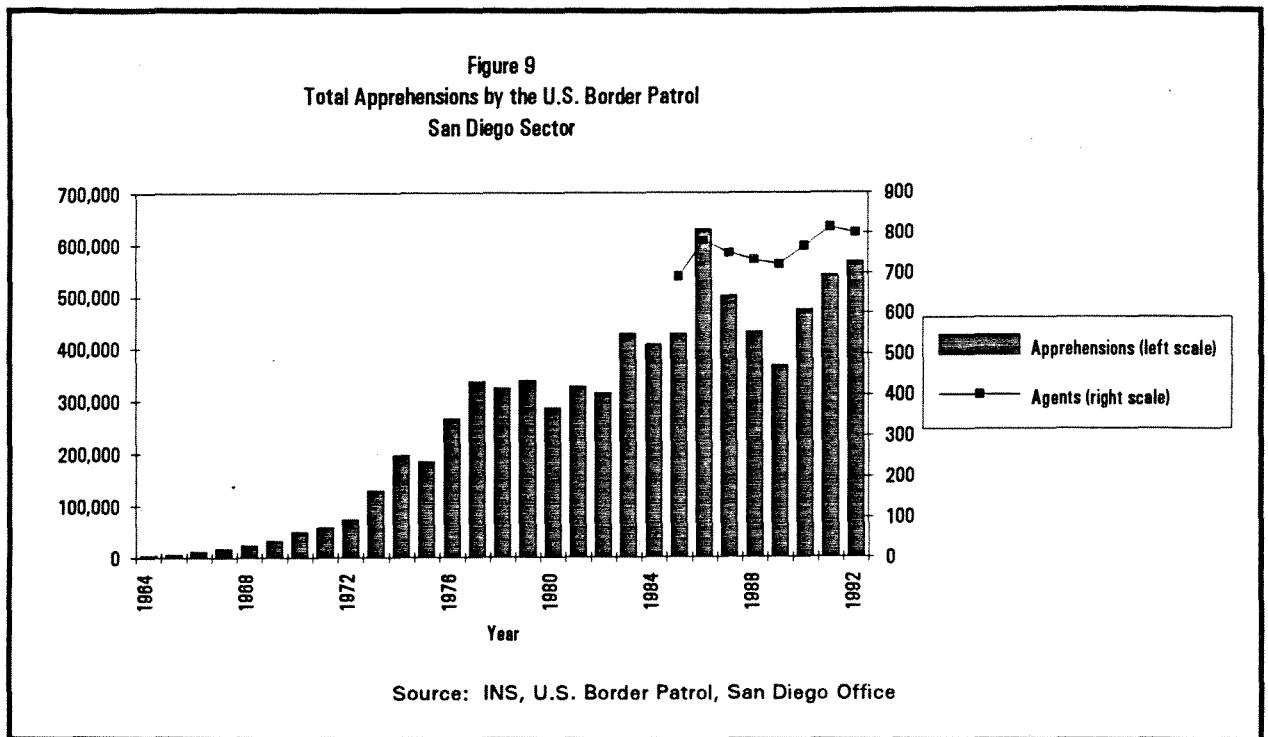
Net Migration to California, 1980-1992
Alternative Method of Estimating Undocumented Migration

Fiscal Year	Total	Legal	Domestic	Undocumented
1980	272.0	148.0	79.5	44.5
1981	288.0	116.0	3.0	169.0
1982	285.0	101.0	16.5	167.5
1983	233.0	106.0	13.5	113.5
1984	332.0	119.0	63.0	150.0
1985	368.0	129.0	115.5	123.5
1986	378.0	134.0	112.5	131.5
1987	373.0	139.0	154.5	79.5
1988	418.0	137.0	196.5	84.5
1989	453.0	146.0	126.0	181.0
1990	274.0	148.0	54.0	72.0
1991	261.0	203.0	-19.5	77.5

Source: California Research Bureau and California Dept. of Finance

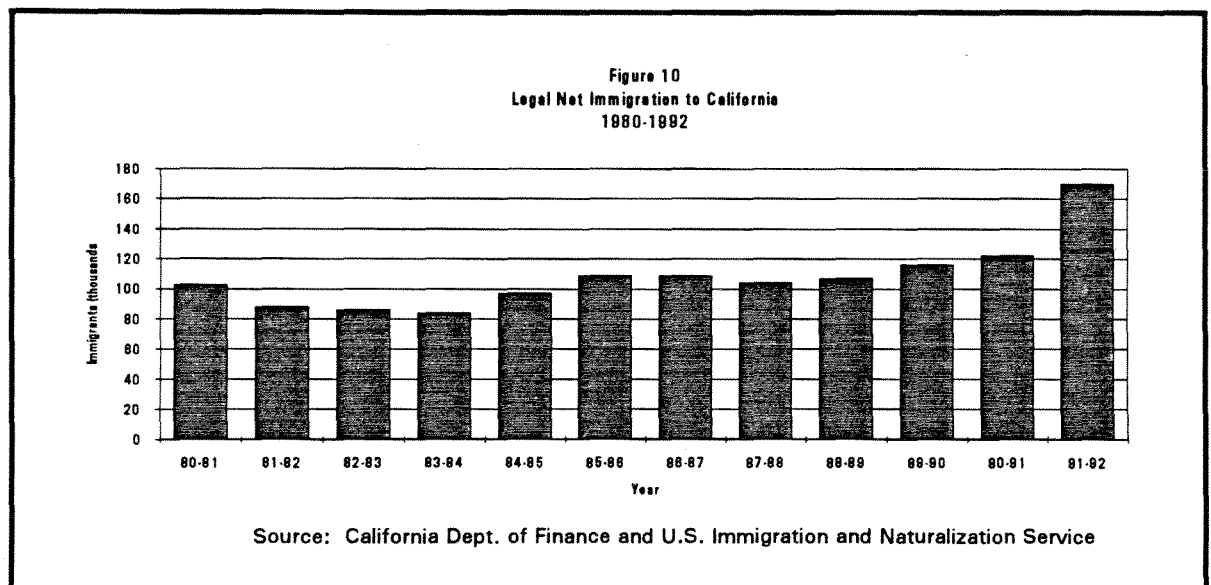
One of the primary goals of IRCA was to decrease the number of undocumented immigrants entering the United States each year. As shown by Figure 9, apprehensions of undocumented immigrants at the border in San Diego did decline for three years after IRCA was signed, but have since increased. Of course, border apprehensions are a function not only of the number of undocumented immigrants attempting to cross, but also the size and efficiency of the border patrol. At least some of the change in apprehensions can be attributed to changes in the number of border agents. The alternative method of determining net undocumented migrants, shown in Table 1, shows a decline from pre-IRCA levels for all years except fiscal year 1989.

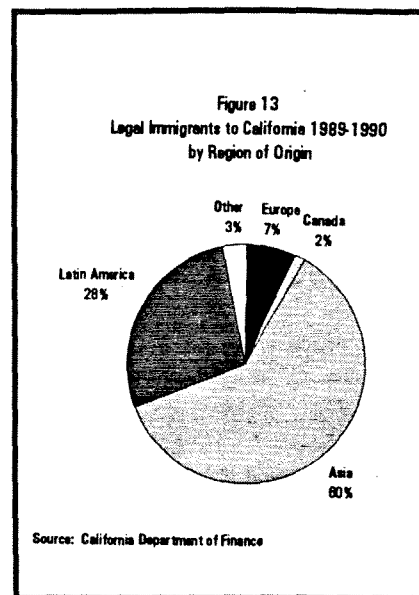
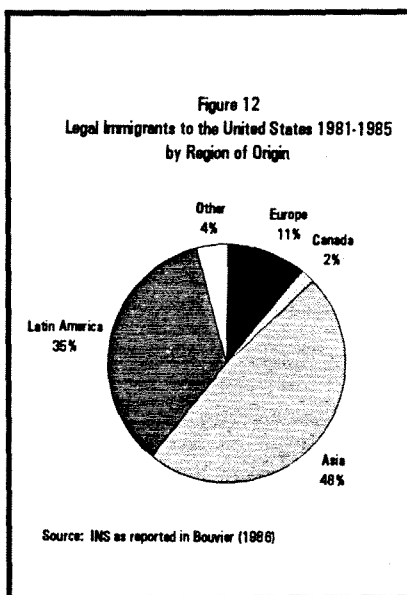
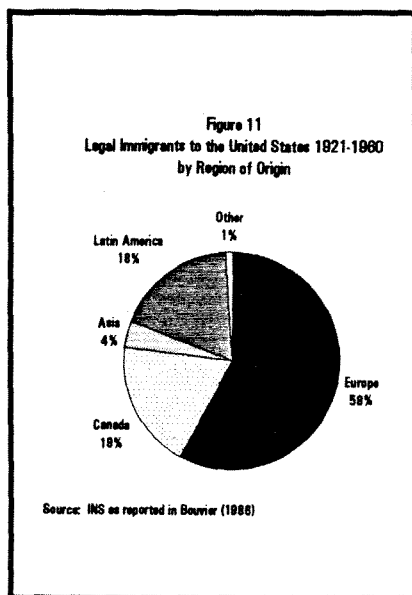
Socioeconomic characteristics of undocumented residents are even more difficult to determine than the number of undocumented residents. The amnesty applicants, who are by definition previously undocumented residents, perhaps provide the best proxy of the characteristics of undocumented migrants.



**Legal Immigrants
(Excluding
Refugees)**

The California Department of Finance estimates that California received 170,000 foreign net legal immigrants between July 1991 and July 1992, representing an increase of almost 40% over the preceding year, and the highest level in at least twenty years (see Figure 10). The increase may be attributed to the Immigration Act of 1990, which became effective in October of 1991, and increased the number of legal immigrants allowed into the United States under both the family reunification and needed job skills provisions of U.S. immigration policy. California's share of total legal immigration to the United States was around 25% during the 1980s.





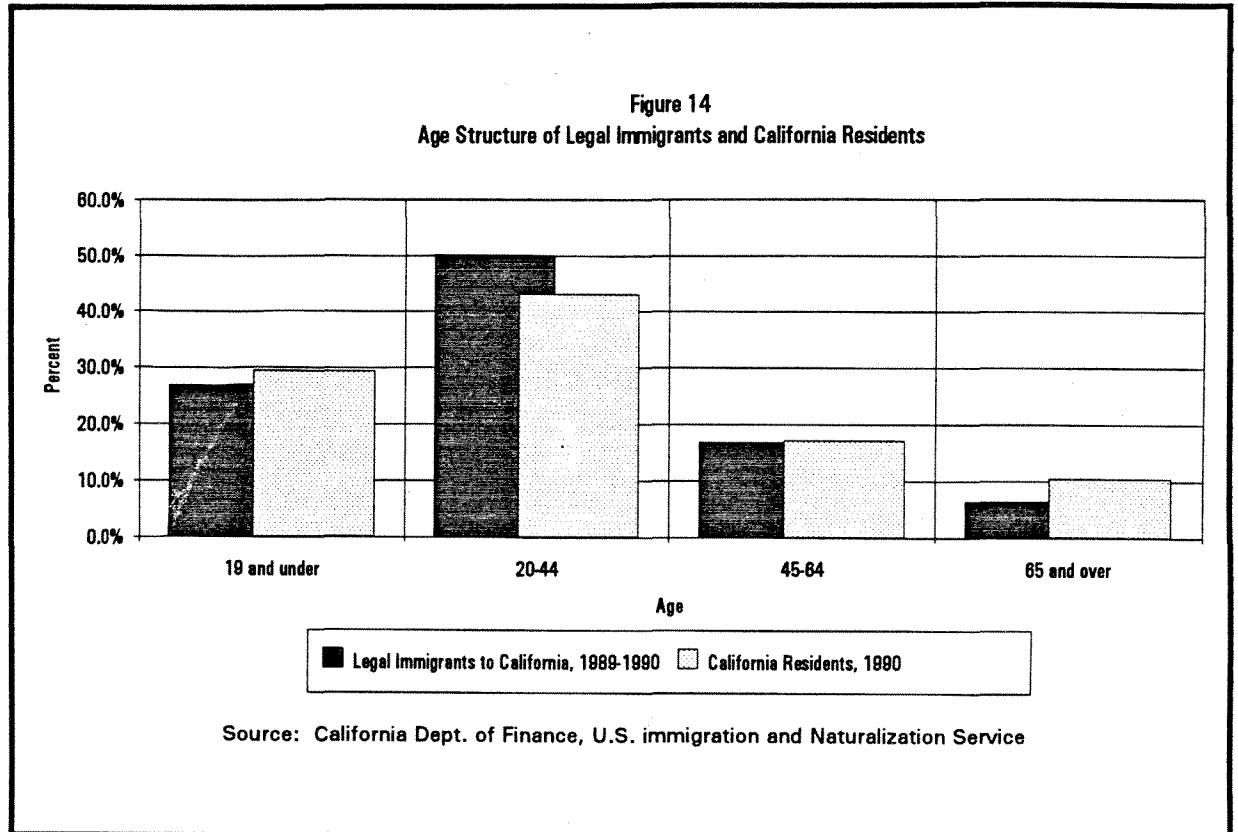
As shown in Figure 11 and Figure 12, the regions of origin of immigrants to the United States have changed dramatically in the past thirty years. Prior to 1960, most of the legal immigrants to the United States were from Europe or Canada (77%). By 1985, most of the legal immigrants to the United States were from Asia or Latin America (83%). For California, recent legal immigrants were also predominantly from Asia and Latin America. As shown in Figure 13, in fiscal year 1989, 88% of California's legal immigrants were from Asia or Latin America. Mexico (17%) and the Philippines (16.3%) were the leading countries of origin of the legal immigrants to California (see Table 2).

Table 2
Countries of Origin for Legal Immigrants
to California 1989-1990

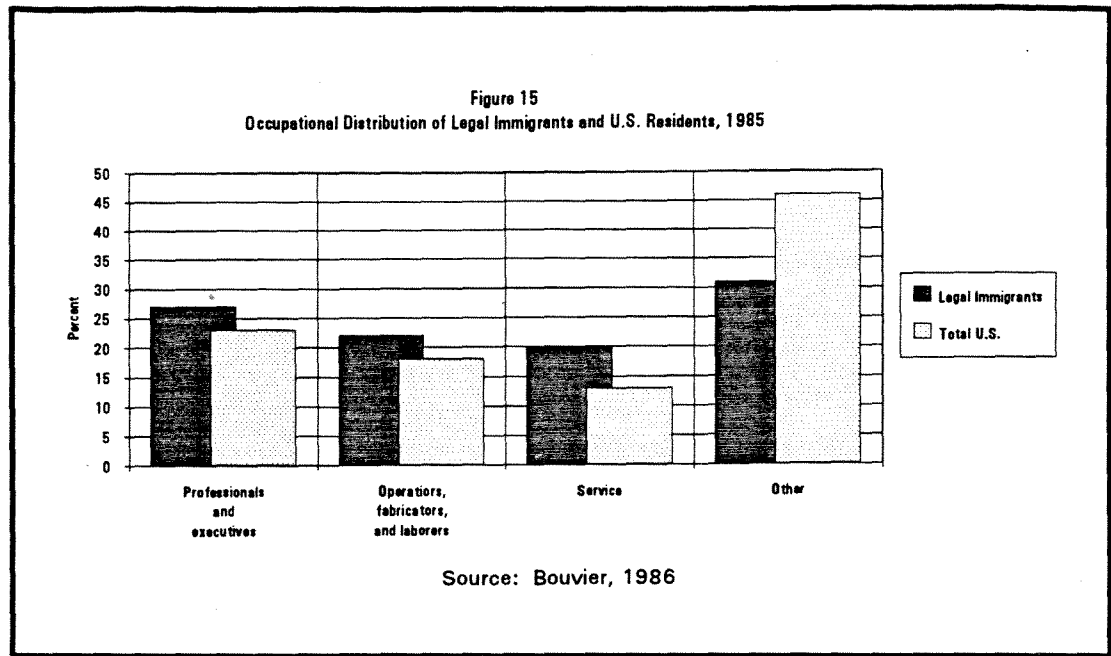
Country	Number	Percent
Mexico	26,677	17.0
Philippines	25,602	16.3
China (Mainland)	10,894	7.0
Iran	8,859	5.7
Korea	8,849	5.6
Taiwan	6,128	3.9
El Salvador	5,443	3.5
India	5,273	3.4
All others	58,986	37.6

Source: California Dept. of Finance, U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service

The age structure of legal immigrants, like all other types of immigrants, shows that the legal immigrants tend to be concentrated in the early working ages. Figure 14 compares the age structure of recent legal immigrants to California to the resident population of the state.



Additional socioeconomic information on legal immigrants is difficult to obtain. The INS does collect information on occupational, but not educational, backgrounds of the immigrants. However, many of the incoming immigrants do not list an occupation, and even for those who do, the listed occupation may not be the occupation which the immigrant takes up in the United States. In 1985, for example, of the 570,000 legal immigrants to the United States, only 39% reported an occupation. As shown in Figure 15, the occupational distribution among those who did report an occupation was similar for the legal immigrants and the U.S. resident population: 27% were professionals and executives (compared to 23% for all workers in the U.S.), 22% listed blue collar occupations (18% for the U.S.) and 20% reported service occupations (13% for the U.S.).



General Information on Immigrants

As stated previously, census data does not generally provide information on specific types of immigrants, but it does provide the most detailed information available on immigrants in general. Figure 16 and Table 3 provide examples of some of the data available from the 1990 census. According to the 1990 census, and as shown in Figure 16, the share of the population that is foreign-born was almost three times higher in California than in the entire country (21.7% vs. 7.9%). Historically, California has had a higher foreign-born share than the nation since at least 1900, with current levels not seen in the state since 1920.

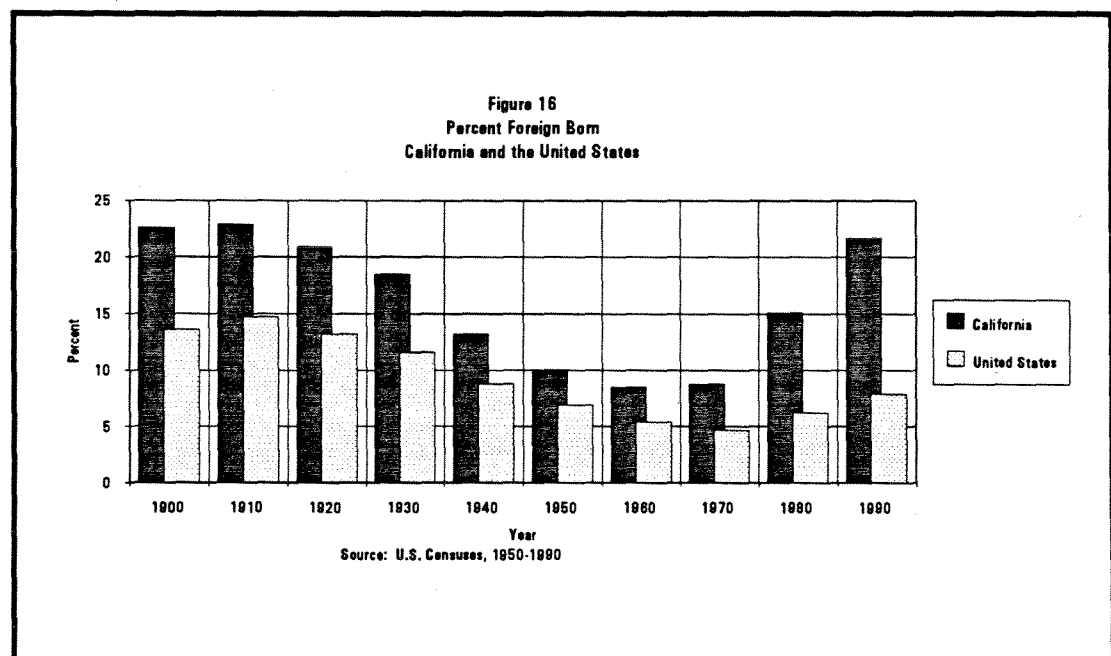


Table 3 provides some descriptive data on foreign-born persons in California, domestic migrants to California, and persons who have been residents of the state since at least 1985. Domestic migrants tend to be younger, better educated, and less likely to receive public assistance or Social Security than other U.S.-born persons in the state. Not surprisingly, recent foreign-born immigrants to California tend to be younger and earn less income than immigrants who have resided in the United States for at least ten years. However, household incomes for immigrants who have been in the country for over 10 years are similar to incomes for domestic migrants. Immigrants who arrived prior to 1980 are no more likely to receive public assistance than are U.S. born residents of California.

Table 3
 Characteristics of Households, Families, and Persons Based on the Migration Status of the Householder

	— Foreign Born —		— U.S. Born —	
	— Arrived in U.S. — 1980-90	Pre-1980	Domestic Migrants 1985-90	Residents of Calif. Pre-1985
Total Persons	3,065,200	5,390,600	1,826,100	19,433,700
Median Age	25.0	29.1	27.9	34.3
Percent (of age 25+):				
Less Than High School	46.3	44.9	9.5	17.4
College Graduates	19.9	17.8	38.1	23.8
Average Number of				
Children Ever Born	1.8	2.0	1.3	1.7
Median Household Income	\$22,300	\$31,300	\$31,500	\$34,900
Percent Receiving:				
Public Assistance	4.8	3.8	2.7	4.1
Social Security	1.5	7.6	4.8	13.0
Average Hours Worked				
per Week	39.6	39.1	41.0	38.8
Percent in Labor Force	48.1	46.5	53.6	51.5

Source: California State Census Data Center, 1990 Census

Conclusion The greatest gaps in our knowledge of immigrants to California revolve around undocumented immigration. Annual flow, current residents, and sociodemographic characteristics of undocumented immigrants are largely unknown. Information on refugees, legal immigrants, and amnesty applicants is more available, though far from complete. With the recent release of detailed individual level data, the 1990 census can provide a rich resource for deepening our understanding of immigration to California.

END NOTES

1. In this discussion, any person who entered the United States as a refugee is included in estimates of refugee populations. This includes ex-refugees who have become naturalized citizens.
2. Deaths to undocumented immigrants are not considered in this estimate. Given the young age structure of undocumented immigrants and return migration to Mexico, the number of deaths to undocumented immigrants in California is probably no more than three to five thousand per year.

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PART III: COSTS AND BENEFITS

Government can record who uses its services, but it does not document the contributions its residents make to their surroundings. Public services that newcomers use are more easily measured, when they are measured, than the benefits newcomers can offer.

Recent studies have tried to estimate, with varying successes, the public costs of documented or undocumented immigration in the counties of Los Angeles, San Diego and Orange. No comprehensive cost-benefit review has been carried out statewide.

Manuel Moreno-Evans, project director of last year's Los Angeles study, says the greatest obstacle to this kind of demographic research is "the absence of data bases that contain sufficient information on immigrants."¹

Agrees RAND's Georges Vernez: "Whether immigrants 'pay their way' for the public services they receive is possibly the most controversial issue pertaining to immigration. Estimates can be found to support either side of the argument, and all suffer from serious methodological deficiencies."

Among the biggest costs are educating the children of newcomers, who have higher birthrates than the native population. (See Table 3, page 26.) California schools are spending nearly \$5,000 on every child in their classrooms, and more than one in five has not mastered English.

On the other hand, immigrants are considered a boon to the Social Security system because they tend to be younger, leave older relatives behind and won't be eligible for Social Security benefits for many working years. By the time they collect, their children will be paying into the system.

Immigrant Families May Receive Less Welfare

When Social Security and Medicare are factored in, "Immigrant families on average are seen to receive much less total welfare payments and public services than do average native families," says Julian Simon in his 1989 book, The Economic Consequences of Immigration.

Federal law has made it illegal to employ undocumented immigrants, which theoretically eliminates their potential for

paying income taxes. However, Simon reports past studies found illegal immigrants were paying five to 10 times as much in taxes as the cost of the welfare services they used. Illegal immigrants currently are ineligible for most major health and welfare programs. (See Part IV, California Services for the Foreign-Born.)

University of California economics professor George Borjas contends that immigrant welfare participation is on the rise. Using 1980 data that excludes Social Security and Medicare, he says 9 percent of U.S. immigrant households were on welfare compared to 8 percent of native households. In his 1990 book, Friends or Strangers, The Impact of Immigrants on the U.S. Economy, Borjas asserts immigrant households originating in Europe and some Asian countries had low welfare rates, while Latin American immigrants had high rates.

However, Borjas does acknowledge that evidence “does not support the conjecture that immigrant households are generally more welfare-prone than native households.”

The Orange County Register on May 23, 1993, reported some able-bodied immigrants and refugees — working through a network of middlemen, doctors and clinic owners to feign mental illness — are fraudulently claiming disability benefits from the Social Security Administration. The newspaper said no figures were available to gauge the precise extent of the fraud, which is being investigated in Southern California by the state Justice Department. The newspaper stated: “Refugees are perfect pawns for such a con because Social Security has few disability evaluators who speak such languages as Vietnamese, Armenian and Khmer.”

The state adds \$186 per month to federal Supplemental Security Income (SSI) payments received by low-income aged, blind and disabled persons. Forty-two percent of the nation’s foreign-born SSI recipients are in California.

Santa Clara County recently determined nearly four of 10 people on its General Assistance rolls were immigrants with sponsors who had pledged the newcomers would not become public financial burdens. The county’s study was sparked by a jump in caseload from 1,959 in 1990 to 5,542 in 1993. Its report cited a 1992 opinion from the state Legislative Counsel that “state law does not contain any specific authority to permit counties to make aliens ineligible for General Assistance solely because of

the existence of the sponsorship agreement." However, the Santa Clara County report said, San Diego, Orange and Contra Costa counties take a different approach to family responsibility laws and have fewer sponsored immigrants on welfare. It suggested Santa Clara County begin requiring sponsors to promise that welfare payments will be paid back.

The U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) and State Department can deny permanent resident visas to applicants who are "likely to become a public charge in the future." Factors that can be considered include the alien's income, history of employment, assets, job skills, number of dependents, education, whether the alien or family members have received public assistance and whether family members have signed affidavits promising support. Since most lawful immigrants are admitted as relatives of U.S. citizens, these factors would suggest an incentive for immigrants and their families to avoid public assistance.

Los Angeles County The Los Angeles study, put together by a team of county researchers with help from outside experts, found newcomers paid \$4.3 billion in taxes to state, federal and local governments in 1991-92. "These people are carrying more than their own weight," commented David Hayes-Bautista, a UCLA scholar who monitored the study. But the down side of this equation was that county coffers were not adequately reimbursed by other public treasuries for direct services to newcomers. The study said the county was shorted by more than \$800 million.

Looked at another way, 60 percent of immigrants' tax revenues went to the federal government, 29 percent to the state and only 3 percent to the county, responsible for providing most services.

Interestingly, the study suggested documented and undocumented immigrants tended to use less than their share of some public services. Although they represented 25 percent of the population, they accounted for 23 percent of criminal-justice spending and 21 percent of spending in the Department of Public Social Services. At 68 percent, however, they represented a disproportionate share of spending on public health, perhaps because newcomers tend to hold low-wage jobs lacking health benefits.

But also because of those low-wage jobs, Moreno-Evans says revenue lost from undocumented persons who fail to report taxes is less than 1.5 percent of all the income-tax revenue lost in the unreported, underground economy.

Business Taxes Omitted Critics complain an omission of business-related taxes skewed the Los Angeles revenue figures, since many businesses depend on immigrants as owners, employers and customers. The Urban Institute said "the study is a positive step in addressing these concerns, but should not yet be treated as a definitive answer."

Valerie Small Navarro of the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF) has noted the study failed to include naturalized citizens or other long-term immigrants who likely have higher incomes and pay more taxes than new arrivals. Further, she has observed, it was conducted during an economic downturn that may have held down tax revenues and increased demand for services.

San Diego County A Rea & Parker, Inc., study commissioned by the Auditor General's Office last year at the request of the state Senate Special Committee on Border Issues suggested California's state and local governments are spending a net \$3 billion on illegal immigrants statewide. This conclusion was reached by extrapolating estimates of net costs in San Diego County.

Leaving out federal revenues, the study suggested state and local taxes of \$60.5 million were paid by the county's undocumented population, estimated at 200,000. The net cost of state and local services to them was pegged at \$146 million.

The study surveyed about 150 undocumented immigrants in San Diego County, finding their median age was 25.5 years and they had completed a median 5.1 years of schooling. Workers were divided equally among construction, agriculture and private landscaping jobs. Only 2.5 percent had ever received welfare; 27.2 percent reported having visited a U.S. doctor. Nearly 30 percent used false Social Security numbers. Although nearly 50 percent had taxes withheld from their pay, only 19 percent filed income-tax returns. Eighty-nine percent said they would send any extra earnings to relatives outside the United States, but their pay averaged only \$131 per week.

Annual criminal-justice costs associated with the undocumented in San Diego County were estimated at \$105.7 million, public health costs at \$26.6 million, education costs at \$60.6 million and social services at \$13.4 million.

Critiques of the Rea & Parker report, titled "A Fiscal Impact Analysis of Undocumented Immigrants Residing in San Diego County," were presented in February 1993 to the Assembly Select Committee on California-Mexico Affairs by several professors at Southern California universities.

Manuel Garcia y Griego, assistant professor of social sciences, and Leo Chavez, associate professor of anthropology, both of UC Irvine, said in their 25-page analysis there were "serious errors" in the report's estimate of undocumented aliens at 9 percent of San Diego County's population. They added:

"We shall also note, however, that a study that avoided the errors we describe probably would show that undocumented immigrant residents take more in local and state services than they contribute in state and local taxes, even though the outcome would be different at the federal level. Although most of this testimony focuses on the limitations of this study, in our conclusion we also argue that we need to go beyond cost-benefit analysis based on fiscal impacts and short-term effects and think more broadly about the role of immigrants in California and what should be appropriate and intelligent state and local government responses."

The Senate Rules Committee has commissioned a follow-up study by Rea & Parker that will re-examine and re-calculate cost and revenue estimates used in the previous report. "The enlarged analysis should, therefore, lead to procedural changes and greater certainty in terms of cost implications to the state of California in (sic) local governments so that state and local governments can implement appropriate cost-saving measures," the contract reads.

Orange County An Orange County report earlier this year found too little local data existed to accurately analyze the fiscal effects of undocumented immigrants. County officials did cite \$3.5 million in costs that could be directly attributed to the undocumented, including \$1.3 million in Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) for citizen children born in the United States of undocumented parents.

The Orange County Grand Jury in June 1993 reported its assessment of the impacts of immigration, suggesting:

“This mass movement of people has an adverse effect on jails, welfare, public education, social services and medical care. These programs serve as a magnet, and are a severe strain on state and county coffers.... The welfare system of this country has, if not by design then by default, become the principle financial resources (sic) for acculturation of low-income immigrants.... Forty-four percent of the children in Orange County’s AFDC programs and 15 percent of adults on General Assistance are either refugees, sponsored aliens or citizen children.”

In 1989, Orange County Superior Court Judge David O. Carter allowed the INS to interview convicted criminal defendants in his courtroom during a nine-month period. The INS determined 36.4 percent of them were undocumented immigrants.

Other Factors Moreno-Evans of the Los Angeles study team notes a more thorough study would weigh the long-term costs and contributions of all immigrants and the costs to all levels of government. Also unmeasured, he says, are the effects of California’s immigration on employment, unemployment, prices, wages and consumer markets.

The Massachusetts Office for Refugees and Immigrants, in a 1990 review of pertinent literature, flatly declared:

“All studies on immigrant use of state services point to one conclusion — immigrants, whether they are legal residents or undocumented, put more into the system through taxes than they take out in services.... They increase demand for goods and services, thus encouraging investments and fueling an expansion of the market.... They increase jobs for native workers by starting up small businesses at higher rates than native workers, and by stemming the decline of certain failing industries that face strong import competition.... The net effect of an increase in labor supply due to immigration is to increase the aggregate income of United States workers. The U.S. Council of Economic Advisors, the Heritage Foundation and the Wall Street Journal agree with these findings.”

Costs to the State Governor Wilson's proposed 1993-94 state budget calculated California's costs for major services in 1992-93 resulting from federal immigration laws at \$4.8 billion.

This tally included health, welfare, education and criminal justice costs and services affecting refugees, legal and undocumented immigrants and their citizen children.

Wilson contends the federal government should assume a greater share of the expenses associated with its immigration and refugee policies and practices, including costs of public services for newcomers required by federal law. He requested \$1.45 billion from Washington for 1993-94, but California will get less than \$600 million. Wilson sought:

- \$324 million in State Legalization Impact Assistance Grants (SLIAG) to cover federally required services provided to amnesty immigrants,
- \$104 million for refugee resettlement,
- \$209 million for AFDC covering the eligible citizen children of undocumented parents,
- \$31 million for Medi-Cal health services for citizen children of undocumented parents,
- \$534 million for Medi-Cal health services for legalized and undocumented immigrants, and
- \$250 million for the costs of undocumented immigrants in state prisons.

Federal law requires states to provide Medi-Cal health coverage for pregnancies and medical emergencies to needy undocumented residents. Refugees are eligible for a variety of assistance programs, including AFDC. Medi-Cal costs for undocumented recipients, amnesty immigrants and refugees total nearly \$1 billion, Wilson said in his budget package. Wilson added:

"...Much of the recent growth in statewide AFDC caseload has been associated with growth in the number of refugee families enrolled in the Unemployed Parent program and the increased number of citizen children enrolled as child-only cases. These families constitute about 22 percent of statewide AFDC caseload, at a state cost of over \$400 million."

**Criminal Justice
and Undocumented
Immigrants**

The Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA) authorized federal reimbursements to states for the costs of imprisoning undocumented immigrants, but no federal funds have been appropriated for this purpose. The Wilson administration estimated 12 percent, or about 12,750, of the state's prison inmates were undocumented immigrants in the autumn of 1992.

The state Board of Corrections estimates that, statewide, about 10 percent of the counties' jail inmates are undocumented. The California Youth Authority believes nearly 8 percent of its wards are not in the state legally.

The Legislature's Joint Committee on Prison Construction and Operations reported in March 1993 that at least 15 percent of California's prison inmates are undocumented, compared with 5.6 percent in state prisons nationwide. Roughly 17,000 alien felons, including at least 5,000 from California, were deported by the INS in 1992. But, the committee's report said, "many re-enter because of porous borders, (and) minimum sanctions if caught again. For varying reasons, many are not subject to deportation, (and) can end up on parole or probation."

The California Office of Criminal Justice Planning in January 1993 directed all city and county jails to report suspected illegal alien arrestees to the INS or face loss of federal law-enforcement grants, the report added.

It concluded criminal-justice costs for approximately 9,300 undocumented felons sent to California's state prisons during a year's span were \$500 million, including at least \$112 million for the 58 counties.

**The Impact on
Schools**

California's largest single category of cost associated with federal immigration policy is schooling, from kindergarten through 12th grade, for undocumented immigrants, legal immigrants and citizen children. The Wilson administration reports public schools enroll about 866,000 such students, nearly 17 percent of the state's total enrollment, at a state and local cost of more than \$3.6 billion.

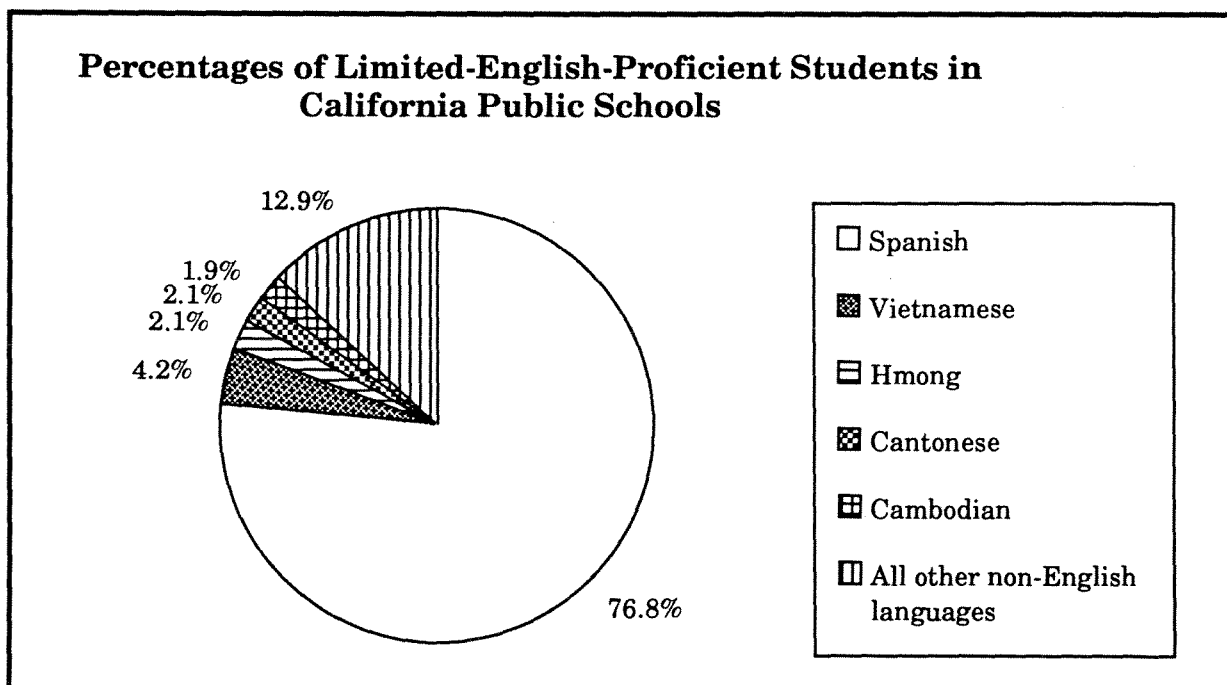
Some 1.2 million schoolchildren lack a proficiency in English, and the state earmarks \$175 million for tutoring and other services for its minority-language schoolchildren. Hundreds of

thousands of adults enroll in English as a Second Language (ESL) classes taught in school districts and community colleges. (See Part IV: California Services for the Foreign-Born.)

The Los Angeles County study estimated that immigrant youngsters, roughly half of them undocumented, made up 12.7 percent of the county's schoolchildren at a public cost of \$822.5 million in 1991-92. The citizen children of undocumented persons represented another 10 percent, and another \$662.3 million.

Foreign-born residents of the United States who received their schooling in this country have significantly higher earnings than other immigrants. Writes Vernez, "These findings underscore the vital role U.S. education has played in the mobility of immigrants' children...." Other evidence suggests newcomers who fare well in ESL classes will have far more success in California's workplaces than those who can't communicate in English.

More than 1 million formerly undocumented immigrants in California who received amnesty under IRCA have taken federally funded English-language classes. This group offers a snapshot, admittedly blurry, of California's non-English speaking, undocumented population. Ninety-six percent of amnesty students were of Hispanic origin, primarily Mexican, and a third were not literate in their native language.



The Role of Language Skills Simply put, California's new wave of immigrants — nearly 90 percent of them from Asian and Latin American countries — will be more likely to find work if they have learned English.

A survey by the U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement in 1990 illustrates the phenomenon. Only 5 percent of Southeast Asian refugees who didn't speak English were employed in the United States that year. But among those who spoke English well, 52.3 percent were working.

Significantly, a new census report shows 8.6 million people in California spoke a language other than English at home in 1990.

The California Policy Seminar is preparing to publish a comprehensive study that finds ESL programs for California's newcomers vary in effectiveness. Some ESL students are taught by teachers who don't know the students' native languages, hampering the potential for learning.

The paper, prepared by Michael Peter Smith and Bernadette Tarallo of the University of California, Davis, Department of Applied Behavioral Sciences, is based on interviews through interpreters with 170 Latino and Asian newcomers in Sacramento and San Francisco.

"The acquisition of English language skills was regarded by nearly all of the respondents ... as critical to their future success and mobility in this country," they write. "The acquisition of English language skills by California's new immigrants is too important to both the new immigrants and the future economic vitality and social stability of the state and nation to be left to chance. Yet today only the legally recognized refugees are likely to be enrolled in such programs in significant numbers."

The Farm Worker Services Coordinating Council, created by Governor Pete Wilson to study the delivery of public services to farm laborers, reports non-English-speaking workers recognize the importance of learning English but face overflowing enrollments in ESL classes. The council said its public hearings showed insufficient classes in rural areas and class hours conflicting with farm workers' schedules. "The average educational level for California farm workers is generally low," said the council in November 1992. "Consequently, these workers frequently need more preparatory work, and the classes may not be of sufficient duration for the workers to learn English."

The Impact in the Workplace It is a commonly held perception, refuted by economists, that immigrants compete for jobs with natives. Economist Borjas in his book, Friends or Strangers, says there is not “a single shred of evidence that immigrants have a sizable adverse impact on the earnings and employment opportunities of natives in the United States.”

In debunking popular assumptions, Borjas contends:

- The economy is not limited to a fixed number of jobs, but can expand to employ more people as the population increases, due to immigration’s boost in demand for goods and services;
- Immigrants are not perfectly interchangeable with natives, since they differ in their experiences and backgrounds;
- There is no evidence immigrant labor is cheaper than equally skilled native labor; and
- There is no reason to believe that employers prefer to hire immigrants over equally qualified natives.

Business Week has declared that immigrants are bolstering the American economy, particularly high-tech industries in the Silicon Valley and elsewhere. It reported in its July 13, 1992, issue that 40 percent of the 200 researchers in the prestigious communications wing at AT&T Bell Laboratories were foreign-born, and that Asians make up a third of the Silicon Valley’s engineers.

Borjas notes new federal changes will mean the entry of more skilled newcomers in the 1990s, although he says most immigrants will continue to be relatively unskilled.

RAND’s Vernez has elaborated on that observation: “The new wave of immigrants has relatively low levels of education, and the educational gap between native-born persons and newly arrived immigrants has been increasing since the 1960s.”

Vernez recently told the Senate Office of Research he did not know of any “complete accounting of the costs and benefits of the patterns” associated with immigration. “The question, of course, is in the long-term we are seeing that you have a fairly large

population with a relatively low education. New jobs disproportionately are being created at a level that requires a somewhat higher level of education, so in that sense one could begin to be concerned about the pattern.”

**Immigrant
Entrepreneurs**

But an undisputed aspect of the pattern is the greater inclination of the foreign-born to start up their own businesses, employing other newcomers and providing services to immigrant communities. Immigrant-income analyses often exclude the self-employed, ignoring a significant and successful group. A 1991 paper prepared for the Federal Reserve Bank of New York found immigrant self-employment rates were at least 7 percentage points higher than the native rate.

Reasons for this immigrant entrepreneurship include:

- Immigrants tend to live together, creating enclaves with specific needs, tastes and requirements that other immigrants are equipped to meet.
- Enclaves may provide easier access to start-up capital, such as loans from community members.
- Many immigrants bring experiences in business ownership and operation from their native countries. Newcomers from nations with high self-employment rates are more likely to possess managerial and business skills.

**Stemming Illegal
Immigration**

U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein, during a recent Senate Judiciary Committee hearing on a deputy attorney general's nomination, urged the Justice Department to develop a strategy to curb the flow of undocumented immigrants. She warned of a “terrible backlash” if the federal government fails to improve its control over the borders.

In mid-June, President Clinton announced a drive to strengthen investigation and prosecution of criminal smuggling operations, combining stronger penalties with revisions in political asylum procedures to detain smuggled immigrants who are apprehended. The crackdown does not affect immigrants smuggled across the U.S. - Mexican border in trucks or buses by “coyotes.”

Deportation is the only penalty imposed on illegal arrivals, who may attempt to enter again. The Border Patrol apprehended a record 1.8 million persons attempting illegal entry in 1986, the year IRCA was enacted to combat undocumented immigration. Mounting public criticism is focusing on the undocumented, who, under IRCA, are not qualified for employment in the United States.

But Professor Borjas, in Friends or Strangers, notes all that is required for a black market in immigration to flourish is weak enforcement of laws and sizable differentials in economic opportunities. He suggests fewer undocumented immigrants are apprehended at the southern border when economic conditions in Mexico improve.

“The evidence, therefore, implies that fluctuations in the number of apprehensions, which is presumably a proxy for the size of the illegal flow, partly reflect differences in economic opportunities between the two countries,” Borjas writes.

Measured by gross domestic product, the Mexican economy is just four percent the size of the U.S. economy.

Some proponents of the proposed North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) are hopeful its enactment could sufficiently improve economic conditions in Mexico to encourage more Mexicans to remain in their home country.

NAFTA, negotiated among trade ministers from Mexico, Canada and the United States last year, would promote free trade among the three countries by phasing out or reducing tariffs, duties and other barriers.

An analysis of NAFTA by the state Employment Development Department suggests:

“NAFTA is seen as a way for U.S. companies to gain better access to the growing Mexican market and for Mexico to accelerate its economic growth through closer ties to the U.S.... NAFTA is still expected to boost investor confidence in Mexican economic growth and stability.”

However, the EDD analysis suggests that rapid economic development and reforms in Mexico could increase immigration, rather than decrease it, by displacing Mexican farmers and some

other low-wage workers. It suggests California should anticipate an additional 300,000 Mexican immigrants over the next six to 15 years.

Free trade agreements tend to equalize labor rates over time. In some occupations and industries, the wage difference between American and Mexican workers is as much as 20 to 1, the EDD reports. Over the long haul, as wage discrepancies narrow between the two economies, economic incentives for crossing the borders may diminish.

END NOTE

1. Manuel Moreno-Evans testified Feb. 25, 1993, at a state Capitol hearing on "Immigrants, Immigration and the California Economy" conducted by the Assembly Select Committee on California-Mexico Affairs. His comments and those of Valerie Small Navarro, Manual Garcia y Griego and Leo Chavez are taken from a transcript of that hearing.

PART IV: CALIFORNIA SERVICES FOR THE FOREIGN-BORN

As the Los Angeles Times has opined (Appendix B), public assumptions that disproportionate numbers of immigrants are receiving welfare stem from the menu of services limited to the much smaller number of qualifying refugees. At 600,000, newcomers classified as refugees amount to less than a tenth of California's foreign-born population of 6.8 million.

This section highlights some state-administered services that may be available to some immigrants or refugees in California. In the discussion of the Refugee and Immigration Programs Bureau, we also mention what is not being done.

State entities must be contacted separately; there is no overall coordination of services.

Governor Wilson's Farm Worker Services Coordinating Council, made up of 10 state agencies and departments, in a 1992 report noted a lack of coordination in services affecting farm workers, whose ranks may include hundreds of thousands of foreign-born:

"A basic assumption and major underlying theme behind the formation of the council was that there is a lack of adequate coordination among state agencies providing services to farm workers and their families. This lack of coordination was apparent soon after the council's formation as participating departments and agencies began learning about each others' organizations, programs and services. Similarly, the lack of coordination at the federal and local levels of government exacerbates the frustration and barriers to services experienced by farm workers."

The council said a need for greater coordination, outreach and access became a reoccurring theme of its public hearings and data collection.

Appendix A offers a background paper on California costs associated with carrying out federal policies related to immigrants and refugees.

REFUGEE AND IMMIGRATION PROGRAMS BUREAU

California's attention to its foreign-born centers primarily on those admitted to the United States as refugees. The state administers federal funds targeted for this group through the Refugee and Immigration Programs Bureau in the Department of Social Services. Refugees, who may have been direct victims of persecution in their home countries, can qualify for resettlement assistance, including training in English, employment services, cash grants, food stamps and medical assistance.

Despite its seemingly all-encompassing title, the bureau is not an information clearinghouse on issues affecting the foreign-born. It does not have the ability to collect or analyze data. It does not provide direct services to immigrants. It does not offer input to decision-makers in Washington on immigration and refugee issues affecting the state.

The activities of the federally funded bureau are limited to those allowed by the Office of Refugee Resettlement within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

The bureau was charged with overseeing federal State Legalization Impact Assistance Grants (SLIAG) in the wake of passage of the Immigrant and Refugee Control Act (IRCA) of 1986, but this program is to expire in 1994.

Bruce Kennedy, chief of the bureau, said in an April 6, 1993, statement to the Senate Office of Research:

"Despite the assigned scope of the organization, the bureau does acknowledge that its role is often assumed to be more expansive than authority and funding allow. Many inquiries are directed to the bureau because, by title and current involvement, the organization is assumed to have responsibility for all aspects of immigration activities.

"There are currently no programs designed for or funded to provide benefits and services specifically targeted at many legal and illegal immigrants by either the federal or state governments.

"Further, the ability of the state to impact federal policy in this area is limited. For example, the Department of State recommends annual refugee resettlement ceilings and

country-of-origin divisions based on U.S. international foreign policy interests, not on the state's desire or ability to assume the resulting new arrivals to the state. Interaction with federal agencies beyond those who supervise and fund the programs is also limited.

"The bureau used to receive statistical data from the Immigration and Naturalization Service, which is primarily a law-enforcement agency. With staff reductions, that data is no longer collected or available to state officials.

"Clearly, the Refugee and Immigration Programs Bureau does not have a broad role in overall immigration issues and is not currently structured or funded to assume such a role."

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Amnesty Education This SLIAG-funded program has provided classes in English and civics for more than 1 million adult immigrants who entered California illegally years ago but received amnesty under IRCA.

Among the 1.6 million residents who applied for amnesty in California, an estimated 30,000 adults still must receive at least 40 hours of English-language instruction as a requirement for status as permanent residents.

However, the Amnesty Education Office acknowledges that English training beyond 40 hours is necessary for a working knowledge of the language. The office, within the state Department of Education, reports many amnesty students would like additional training in English. SLIAG funding has never matched the demand for services.

Governor Wilson in January announced his intention to use \$17 million of the state's 1993 SLIAG allocation for classes targeting 50,000 amnesty immigrants, including farm workers who were exempted from IRCA's English requirement. New federal law governing the distribution of these funds resulted in some confusion and delay in determining whether this was an acceptable plan. Approval was received from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in mid-March.

Historically, 10 percent of California's SLIAG funding has been used for amnesty education. Of that amount, roughly 45 percent had gone to adult education classes, 45 percent to community-based organizations and about 10 percent to community colleges.

This English literacy program is advertised via Spanish-language radio stations, bus signs, church fliers, at INS offices and word of mouth.

Emergency Immigrant Education This federally funded program is providing \$13 million for mainstreaming limited-English-speaking students into California classrooms. This is the last year of funding authority for the program, which must be reauthorized by Congress if it is to continue. The program has grown steadily. It serves 350,000 students this school year, compared with 150,000 in 1984-85.

Bilingual Education Among California's 5.2 million schoolchildren are 1.7 million who speak a language other than English at home. Of those, 1.2 million are found to lack sufficient fluency in English to participate in classroom learning without assistance. Help for these children ranges, at the discretion of local school districts, from English classes or tutoring to full bilingual education. California receives \$40 million under the federal Bilingual Education Act for this purpose; the state provides about \$175 million in Economic Impact Aid earmarked for language-minority students.

Bilingual education is aimed at providing a transition for students, from learning subject matter in their native languages to comprehending coursework taught solely in English. A child receives instruction in various subjects in her own language, to help ensure she understands the material, and also receives English instruction. This provides her with both a knowledge of English and an understanding of other subjects until she is able to comprehend all class instruction in English.

Many school districts lack sufficient bilingual teachers. Districts are required to provide language instruction to students who have a limited knowledge of English, whether or not the districts receive additional funding for that purpose. California's bilingual education law, which contained this requirement, expired in 1987. But other Education Code sections have been interpreted to continue the general policy. Efforts to reinstate the law have been met by vetoes from Governors Deukmejian and Wilson.

In the wake of this year's resignation of state schools Superintendent Bill Honig, who was convicted on conflict-of-interest charges, Melinda Melendez, then director of policy analysis for the Association of California School Administrators, wrote of bilingual education:

"The leadership exercised by the state superintendent in a situation where there is no comprehensive statute in place can be a major factor in the program's stability and effectiveness. In large school districts that have major program structures for bilingual education and a strong bilingual constituency, local leadership by school board members and superintendents can make a big difference because of local autonomy. In small school districts, however, the shortage of resources and a smaller, less vocal constituency for bilingual education may prompt some retrenchment if there is little state-level support and leadership."

Adult Education More than 540,000 adults with a limited proficiency in English were enrolled in adult-education English as a Second Language (ESL) classes taught through local school districts in 1990-91. Another 22,000 high school students took the adult classes concurrently with their regular course work. Not counted in this tally were students who took ESL classes through community college districts.

Despite the high numbers served, demand for the classes exceeds their availability in some areas. The classes, financed with state and federal Adult Education Act money, are provided to those who lack English skills. (Prospective students are not asked their residency status, but foreigners who are in California on student visas are charged for the lessons. No other group is charged.) Peter Wang, ESL consultant for adult education in the state Department of Education, says 120 applied for 40 seats in a recent ESL class a few blocks from the Capitol in Sacramento.

Classes typically run three hours, twice a week, for a semester. Students may repeat classes if seats are available. "The most difficult problem is with the people that don't have any education in their home country," particularly newcomers from Laotian mountain regions that until recently had no written language, Wang said. "Some have never held a pencil.... We are using a lot of pictures (to teach) survival English."

In some parts of the state, school districts recruit educated Laotians, Cambodians and others for grooming as certificated bilingual teachers to assist newcomers. In Palm Springs, local hotels have begun making their facilities available to school districts for teaching ESL classes for employees.

Three measures — AB 1321 (Wright), AB 1891 (Woodruff) and AB 1943 (Lee) — enacted last year will improve and expand adult education effective July 1, 1993. California's growing adult population, as reflected in the 1990 census, qualifies the state for new federal funding.

Wang says ESL students tend to be motivated. "Every dollar the state spends on adult education is greatly rewarded. After they learn English they immediately can go out there and work and make money and pay taxes."

More than 10,600 immigrants were enrolled in citizenship classes offered through adult-education programs in 1990-91.

HIGHER EDUCATION

An Alameda County Superior Court judge last year ruled the 20-campus California State University system could continue charging in-state fees to students who were undocumented immigrants living in California. About 500 of CSU's 360,000 students were thought to be affected by the ruling. However, a Los Angeles County Superior Court judge subsequently ordered CSU to end the practice. Both orders are under appeal to resolve the conflict, while the practice continues.

Both the University of California and the California Community Colleges under a separate court ruling treat undocumented students as out-of-staters, a determination allowed to stand by the state Supreme Court. Out-of-state students are required to pay non-resident tuition costs.

The CCC system enrolls many thousands of documented immigrants. It reports it is unaware of the citizenship status of another 42,000 students.

Persons who are in California on temporary visas are charged non-resident tuition at public colleges and universities; California immigrants who are legal permanent residents are not charged the higher fees.

University of California In the fall of 1992, the University of California enrolled:

65	IRCA amnesty residents
126	Approved petitioners awaiting immigrant visa numbers
72	Political asylees
21	Diplomats
20	Foreign officials and family members
163	Treaty traders or investors
5,511	Persons with student visas
60	Temporary workers with special skills
800	Exchange visitors or family members
362	"Other" students
153,965	U.S. citizens and permanent residents.

California State University In the fall of 1991, CSU enrolled:

1,605	Refugees
38,877	Non-citizen residents
10,968	Persons with student visas
310,374	U.S. citizens.

California Community Colleges In the fall of 1991, the CCCs enrolled:

18,929	Refugees
168,731	Non-citizen, permanent residents
10,788	Non-citizen, temporary residents
18,364	Persons with student visas
1,239,157	U.S. citizens
42,000	Others (not known to fit above categories).

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Office of Migrant Services

The state contracts with local housing authorities to finance the operation of 27 migrant service centers around the state for agriculture workers, many of them immigrants. The office's operating budget for 1992-93 is \$4.7 million. During the annual harvest season, from April through October, 2,268 housing units serve 13,600 migrants.

These workers pay about \$3.50 per day for housing. Through the centers, the state also finances some additional services, such as

subsidized child care, summer school and tutoring, small medical clinics and job information.

Workers must present wage slips and Social Security numbers to be eligible for housing and services. (Under IRCA, it is illegal for employers to hire undocumented immigrants.)

DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH

The Department of Mental Health's Ethnic Minority Services Information Booklet, 1989-90, lists scores of county-run mental health programs designed to improve services to ethnic minorities, although immigrants are not specifically targeted. Funding sources are state, federal, local and private. Besides black and Hispanic persons, targeted groups include Korean, Vietnamese, Mien, Laotian, Afghan, Filipino, Persian, Chinese, Cambodian, Hmong, Japanese and Thai.

Metropolitan State Hospital in Los Angeles County targets Vietnamese, Korean, Chinese, Cambodian, Japanese, Filipino, Laotian and Spanish-speaking populations for services. The 850-bed hospital includes a 25-bed Asian-Pacific unit that offers bilingual/bicultural in-patient mental health services.

The state no longer receives federal funding for targeting refugees for mental health care.

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Immigrants who are lawful permanent residents of the United States generally are eligible, with some exceptions, for the same public services available to citizens if they meet qualifications for need. However, a prospective immigrant's application for a visa to become a permanent U.S. resident may be denied by the federal government if the applicant is considered likely to become a public charge. Even legal immigrants who travel outside the United States may encounter difficulty re-entering if they are discovered on public assistance, according to the National Immigration Law Center in Los Angeles, although public-assistance records are confidential. For these reasons, some newcomers may be reluctant to seek health and welfare benefits. Formerly illegal immigrants who were granted amnesty under 1986 federal law were ineligible for public assistance for five years. Immigrants who are in this country illegally generally are

not eligible for major health and welfare services, but Congress has determined that pregnant women can receive public health care and that emergency medical care must be provided to illegal immigrants in need.

The Orange County Register has reported the state Justice Department is investigating fraudulent disability claims filed by some Cambodian refugees in Southern California under the federal-state Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program. The newspaper alleged that refugees were coached by middlemen to claim mental illnesses.

The San Diego Union-Tribune in a recent series pointed to Medi-Cal abuses by non-residents, who can cross the border legally or illegally to obtain high-quality care at university medical centers.

Refugees, who may be suffering physical or psychological effects of political persecution, are eligible for a number of public-assistance programs. The "State Plan for Refugee/Entrant Assistance and Services" for 1992, prepared by the Refugee and Immigration Programs Branch of the Department of Social Services, states:

"California intends to assist, as fully as possible, the refugee's rapid transition from entry into California to economic self-sufficiency through stable, productive employment. To that end, the state has adopted the following goals:

- *Maintain the refugee family through the provision of cash assistance, food stamps, medical assistance and other services until the refugee family can become self-sufficient.*
- *Place as much decision-making authority and fiscal control as possible at the local level (where the programs are administered).*
- *Place employable refugees in employment as quickly as possible, consistent with a plan for self-sufficiency.*
- *Coordinate/integrate existing refugee employment services with other service systems for welfare recipients.*

- *Increase utilization of private sector resources, including ethnic community-based resources for resettlement, specifically for employment and/or delivery of services to refugees."*

The American-born children of undocumented immigrants can be eligible for welfare grants under Aid to Families with Dependent Children, Medi-Cal and other programs. These children are U.S. citizens.

FARM WORKER SERVICES

The 1990 census counted 382,000 Californians working in farming, forestry and fishing industries, 296,000 of them foreign-born. Governor Wilson's Farm Worker Services Coordinating Council reports census data under counts farm workers. The council has also stated:

"...It appears that migration patterns may also be changing. Instead of returning to Mexico, more workers and their families appear to be settling here. If these trends continue, California farm worker assistance programs are likely to become immigrant integration programs for up to 100,000 newly arrived workers each year..."

"A study conducted by California State University, Fresno, identified over \$352 million as being spent in 1990-91 on governmental programs and services both specifically for farm workers and their families and on programs and services in agricultural areas that are likely to serve a significant number of farm workers. While the total amount of resources devoted to farm worker services is significant, it is equally significant that the lack of coordination in delivering those same services has left many farm workers and their families without even their most basic needs being met."

The council has recommended publication of a multi-agency, multi-language resource directory listing services available to farm workers in housing, health, transportation, labor-law enforcement, education and other areas. It also has urged coordination and publication of these agencies' toll-free information numbers.

PART V: WHAT OTHERS ARE DOING FOR IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

New York City The Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs was created in 1990 by Mayor Dinkins and is funded by the mayor's office. Its responsibilities include working with community groups to coordinate outreach to immigrants, assessing immigrant needs and obtaining funds for services. The three-member office is a liaison among immigrant communities, local government and state agencies. It advocates the city's positions on federal issues and runs forums on topics ranging from immigrant rights to detection of immigration fraud. Information concerning fraud that comes to the attention of the office, including scams that target immigrants for abuse, is referred to law-enforcement authorities. Office Director Elizabeth Aivars is a media contact and coordinates responses among immigrant-advocacy groups to issues raised in the media.

New York State The governor's office includes three positions — on ethnic affairs, Jewish affairs and Asian affairs — that deal with issues and services affecting the foreign-born from the governor's perspective.

The state Department of Social Services includes an Office of Economic and Rehabilitative Services, which houses the Bureau of Refugee and Immigration Affairs. The bureau is a point of contact on all issues regarding services and benefits for the foreign-born.

The bureau in its early years was part of the governor's office, but was shifted to the department about 11 years ago.

The director of the bureau is New York's point person, outside the governor's office, on issues related to refugees and immigrants. The director is appointed by the head of the department without legislative confirmation.

The current director is not an immigrant, but staffers typically are immigrants or refugees.

The bureau of 15 is almost entirely financed with federal SLIAG and refugee monies. The positions on minority affairs in the governor's office are funded by the state.

The bureau works closely with the governor's office in securing federal funding for immigrant and refugee services.

Florida The mission of the Refugee Programs Administration is narrowly defined by its federal funding requirements; it administers federal programs for refugees. However, the office on an unofficial and informal basis also provides information to the administration and Legislature on the impacts of immigration.

Texas The Governor's Office of Refugees and Immigrant Affairs coordinates the delivery of services available to immigrants and refugees, analyzes impacts of immigrants and refugees in Texas and promotes adequate federal funding to cover services for them. The office also runs a \$1 million, SLIAG-financed anti-discrimination media relations campaign.

Marguerite Rivera-Houze, deputy director of the office, said in an April interview: "We look at where the impacts are. It makes it easier at the federal level to speak to those issues and it has diffused political anti-immigrant constituencies.... It has made it (debate over immigration) much more neutral."

The office is intended to enable the state to seek maximum federal funding according to the impacts immigrants and refugees have on public services in Texas.

Referring to the 1990 legislation that created the office, Rivera-Houze said: "I argued initially that lots of entities were involved with immigrants and refugees but there was no locus of responsibility for overseeing the impact and assisting in coordination of services. So we were losing money at the federal level, and we were not being as cost effective as we could be at the local level.

"We had a (legislative) resolution, that if immigrants were legally residing in our communities, we had a responsibility to ensure they became productive in our work force. If our state had impacts that kept that from happening, it was the responsibility of the federal government" to provide sufficient funds to overcome those impacts.

Pending state legislation, supported by Governor Richards, would move the Office of Refugees and Immigrant Affairs from the

governor's office into the administration, probably to the Department of Human Services but perhaps either the Department of Labor or Commerce. Rivera-Houze said Richards perceives the office as more program-oriented than policy-oriented.

However, even when housed in an administrative department, the office will maintain a separate telephone listing so that it can be easily accessible to newcomers.

The legislation that created the 18-member office permitted it to accept gifts, grants and donations. It is funded by nearly \$2 million in federal SLIAG and refugee monies.

Massachusetts The Massachusetts Office for Refugees and Immigrants is a federally funded agency within the Executive Office of Health and Human Services. It has its own telephone listing to maximize access to the public. The office supports programs for refugees and immigrants, acts as their public advocate, coordinates state services for them and works to ensure mainstream public services are accessible to newcomers.

The office runs a statewide information and referral program and has begun a volunteer-based citizenship education project. It provides some 20 immigrant self-help groups with grant information and funding for developing organizational skills and leadership training.

The office supplies information to immigrant communities on a variety of issues, including changes in immigration laws and recourses against job discrimination based on race or ethnicity.

A governor's advisory council provides the governor with its views of the needs of the state's refugee and immigrant communities and the quality of public services available to meet them. It also is charged with increasing communication and cooperation among groups that serve refugees and immigrants, and with gathering data on the impact of public policies and practices.

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APPENDIX A

"A Failed Federal Promise"

An overview and breakdown of Governor Wilson's request for \$1.45 billion in federal assistance for costs associated with immigrants and refugees in California.

Prepared by the California Health and Welfare Agency.

(Used with permission.)

Immigration



A Failed Federal Promise

A Call for A Renewed Federal Partnership on Immigrant and Refugee Programs

The United States was founded by immigrants seeking a better life for themselves and their families. Today, America continues to offer a home to immigrants, as well as a safe harbor for those refugees fleeing oppression and persecution. These new residents arrive hopeful and energetic, enriching the state with diverse traditions and culture.

Some of the nation's immigrants and refugees have special needs which require government assistance in order to facilitate a rapid assimilation. The nation's immigration and refugee policy, set by the federal government, acknowledges these needs by requiring that the new residents have access to medical, educational and other services that are provided to U.S. citizens by state and local governments. Along with the mandate to provide services was a recognition by the federal government of the cost of such services, and a promise to provide financial support to states. California, home to 54 percent of the nation's Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) immigrants, nearly 40 percent of the nation's refugees and more than 50 percent of the nation's undocumented immigrants, recognizes the importance of health and welfare services to these new residents.

Unfortunately, the federal government has failed to honor its commitment to reimburse the states for the cost of services mandated by federal law. As many states across this nation struggle with long-term budget problems, they are carefully assessing programs and expenditures. For programs that are constitutionally the state's responsibility, they must live within their means. However, for program costs mandated by the federal government, they are rightfully turning to Washington D.C. to compensate the state for these federally imposed costs.

The cornerstone of the federal-state relationship must be fairness and honesty. California is looking to Congress and the Clinton Administration to forge a new relationship with the states; one that honestly recognizes the financial strain imposed by federal mandates without fair compensation.

Because the nation as a whole benefits from the social and economic contributions of these new residents, the cost of assimilating immigrants and refugees should be borne by all Americans. California enriches the nation with its talented and diverse population. It is unfair that Californians disproportionately bear the short-term cost of assimilating our new residents.

This paper documents \$1.4 billion owed to California by the federal government for social, health, and correctional services provided to immigrants and refugees as a result of the national immigration policy. The Wilson Administration plans to work closely with Congress, especially the members of the California delegation, and the Clinton Administration to successfully obtain full funding of these expenses.

FEDERAL IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE LAW

Immigration and refugee policy, because it raises issues of national sovereignty and citizenship, is determined at the federal level. The federal government establishes admissions and eligibility policy for legal immigration and refugees, and sets numerical limitations for annual admissions. Moreover, enforcement along our nation's borders to control illegal immigration falls within the sole jurisdiction of the federal government.

The policy by which we as a nation provide services and benefits to promote assimilation and self-sufficiency among immigration and refugee populations is implemented at the state and local level. These services include health care, education, job training and public assistance.

Refugee Act of 1980

The Refugee Act of 1980 was enacted to address two specific objectives: (1) establish a systematic procedure for the admission of refugees of special humanitarian concern to the United States; and (2) create an effective resettlement program to promote refugee self-sufficiency. These programs would be federally funded, but implemented and administered by the states, local government and non-profit agencies.

In theory, the Act created a federal-state partnership. The federal government would retain responsibility for the admission of refugees and reimburse the states for the cash and medical assistance provided during the first 36 months of resettlement. Moreover, the federal government established grant programs designed to help refugees become self-sufficient as soon as possible. The states, in turn, agreed to administer resettlement programs and assume financial responsibility for a refugee after 36 months.

The federal government's intent to reimburse the states was explicit:

"Because refugees admitted to the United States are a result of a national policy decision and by federal action, the federal government clearly has a responsibility to assist States and local communities in resettling refugees--assisting them until they are self-supporting and contributing members of their adopted communities."

(P.L. 96-212: Refugee Act of 1980, S. Report 96-256).

Initially, the federal government covered 100 percent of the cost of refugee categorical assistance programs, including AFDC, SSI/SPP, and Medi-Cal for the first 36 months a refugee was in the United States. Since 1986, however, federal funding has been reduced to the point that California is now fully responsible for the non-federal share of cost for categorical programs, and receives only limited assistance for other resettlement costs.

These funding reductions have occurred in the face of rising refugee admissions -- more than double 1985 admissions levels -- thus resulting in a tremendous cost shift to the states and minimizing opportunities for refugee self-sufficiency.

State Legalization Impact Assistance Grants (SLIAG)

The Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) was passed in 1986 for the purpose of trying to regain and secure control of our nation's borders from illegal immigration. One of the major provisions of IRCA was its one-time offer of amnesty to those residing illegally in the U.S. before 1982. While IRCA specifically barred amnesty recipients from receiving federal benefits for a period of five years (with the exception of Medicaid), it recognized that the

states would incur costs in state and local service programs. For this reason, the law established the \$4 billion SLIAG program, promising to reimburse the state and local governments for the health, education, and public assistance costs associated with this new population.

Acting in good faith and relying on the law, the states have provided essential health, education, and public assistance to this new population. However, the federal government has failed to keep its commitment and make available the reimbursement promised to the states under the law. Of the roughly \$800 million still owed to the states, nearly \$500 million is owed to California. Lack of payment from the federal government has resulted in the states paying for IRCA-mandated costs with state and local funds.

OBRA 1986

In 1986, Congress passed the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (OBRA '86) which directed states to provide certain medical services to undocumented immigrants. OBRA '86 requires states to provide emergency medical services, including labor and delivery services, through the Medicaid program to all undocumented immigrants who are otherwise eligible.

Incarceration of Undocumented Immigrant Felons

Included in IRCA is a provision to reimburse states for the costs of incarcerating undocumented felons. The law is clear:

“Subject to the amounts provided in advance in appropriation Acts, the Attorney General shall reimburse a State for the costs incurred by the State for the imprisonment of any illegal alien or Cuban national who is convicted of a felony by such State.” (P.L. 99-603, Title 5, Section 501 (a))

CALIFORNIA'S NEWEST RESIDENTS

California has grown by over six million people since 1980. While much of the growth is due to natural increase -- births minus deaths -- (45 percent), domestic immigration (18 percent), and foreign immigration (37 percent) have also been factors in the state's burgeoning population.

In recent years, California has received more immigrants than any other state in the nation. In 1991, according to the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), California was the intended state of residence for fully 40 percent of all legal immigrants. Eleven of the top twenty metropolitan areas of intended residence, including three of the top five, are in California.

Refugees

The number of refugees admitted into the United States is set by federal statute and is approximately 125,000 per year; the actual number of refugees has been approximately 90,000 annually over the past five years.

Of the more than 1.1 million refugees admitted since the Refugee Act of 1980, approximately 325,000 have been assigned residence in California as of October 1992. California received nearly one-third of all of the refugees admitted during this time period, over four times more than Texas, the state with the second highest number of refugees. The Department of Finance estimates that from 1980 through 1989 an additional 270,000 refugees moved to California from their original state of settlement. Today, California is home to more than 600,000 refugees.

Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) Residents

Of the 2.9 million amnesty applicants granted residency under IRCA, 1.5 million reside in California. The IRCA legislation allowed two categories of undocumented immigrants in California to become legal residents through the process of amnesty: those here before 1982, and special agricultural workers (SAWS). Qualification for SAWS classification is farm employment for at least 90 days between May 1985 and May 1986.

Some 54 percent of the nationwide pre-1982 amnesty applications and 53 percent of SAWS applications were made in California. Approximately 900,000 pre-1982 immigrants have been approved for residency in California as of August 1992. In addition to these pre-1982 immigrants, some 550,000 SAWS also have been legalized.

Citizen Children

Children born in the U.S. whose parents are undocumented immigrants are full-fledged U.S. citizens and are eligible for the full range of government programs even though their parents are not. Although the number of citizen children on state aid has rapidly increased in the last several years, there is no credible estimate of the number of citizen children born in California as citizenship is not part of the parental information required for a birth certificate. However, in a November 1992 report on immigration, Los Angeles County reports that as of January 1, 1992 there were 250,000 citizen children of undocumented parents living in that county alone.

Undocumented Immigrants

According to estimates by the California Department of Finance, there are approximately 1.3 million undocumented immigrants living in California, more than 50 percent of all undocumented immigrants living in the U.S. The Department of Finance estimates that approximately 100,000 undocumented immigrants move to California each year.

DEMAND ON STATE SERVICES

SSI/SSP

Refugees are immediately eligible for assistance under the Supplemental Security Income/State Supplementary Payment (SSI/SSP) program if they are aged, blind or disabled. The federal government pays for the SSI portion of the grant and California pays for the SSP portion of the grant.

In fiscal year 1993-94, of the roughly 600,000 refugees in California, 5,900 will receive SSI/SSP benefits for an annual state General Fund cost of \$20 million.

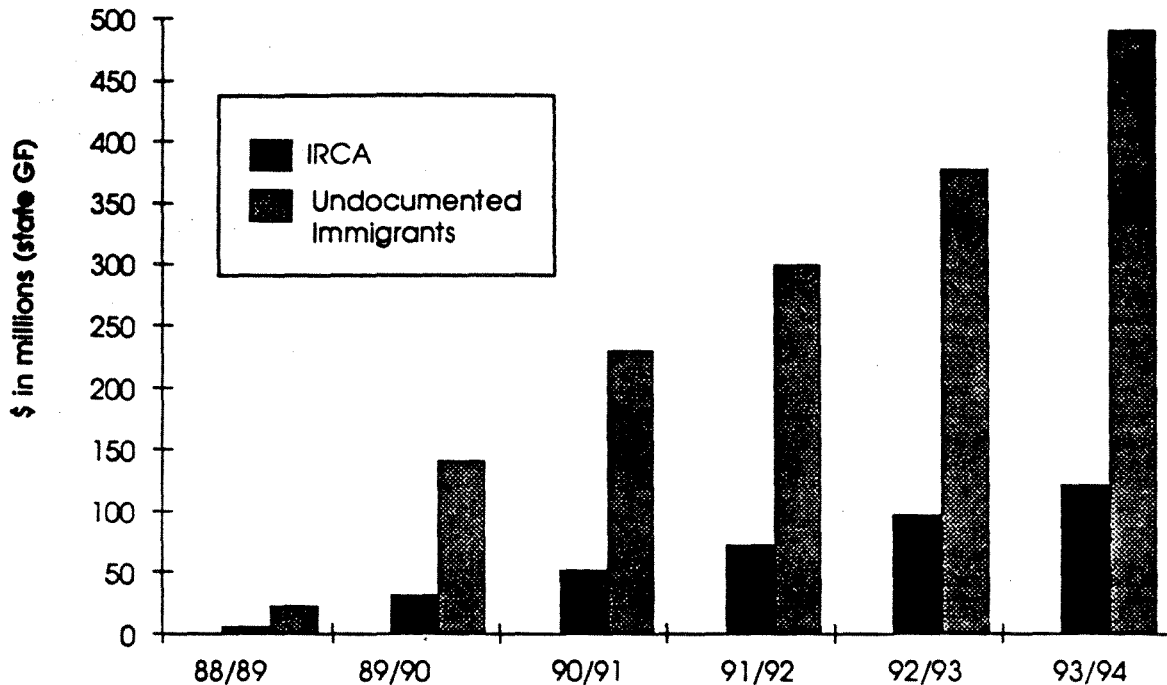
Medi-Cal

IRCA immigrants and refugees are immediately eligible for Medi-Cal benefits, as required by federal law.

Approximately 22,500 refugees are eligible to utilize Medi-Cal services each month for an annual state cost of \$11.4 million. (These costs are for refugees who have been residing in the U.S. for 36 months or less.)

About 90,000 residents legalized under IRCA are eligible to utilize Medi-Cal services for an annual state cost of more than \$130 million.

Medi-Cal Expenditures for Recent Immigrants



As stated previously, under OBRA '86, the state is required to provide emergency and labor/delivery services to undocumented immigrants in California who meet Medi-Cal related income and other standards of eligibility. More than 400,000 undocumented immigrants are eligible to utilize Medi-Cal services each month for an annual state cost of \$489 million. The federal government is supposed to pay half of the costs mandated by OBRA '86.

The state supplements these services by providing prenatal services to undocumented immigrants funded solely with state funds in order to reduce future state costs associated with complicated births. In fiscal year 1993-94, this state-only program will cost more than \$93 million.

Citizen children of undocumented immigrants who receive assistance under the Aid to Families with Dependent Children program are automatically eligible for Medi-Cal services. The state will spend \$41 million in fiscal year 1993-94 for health services for these children.

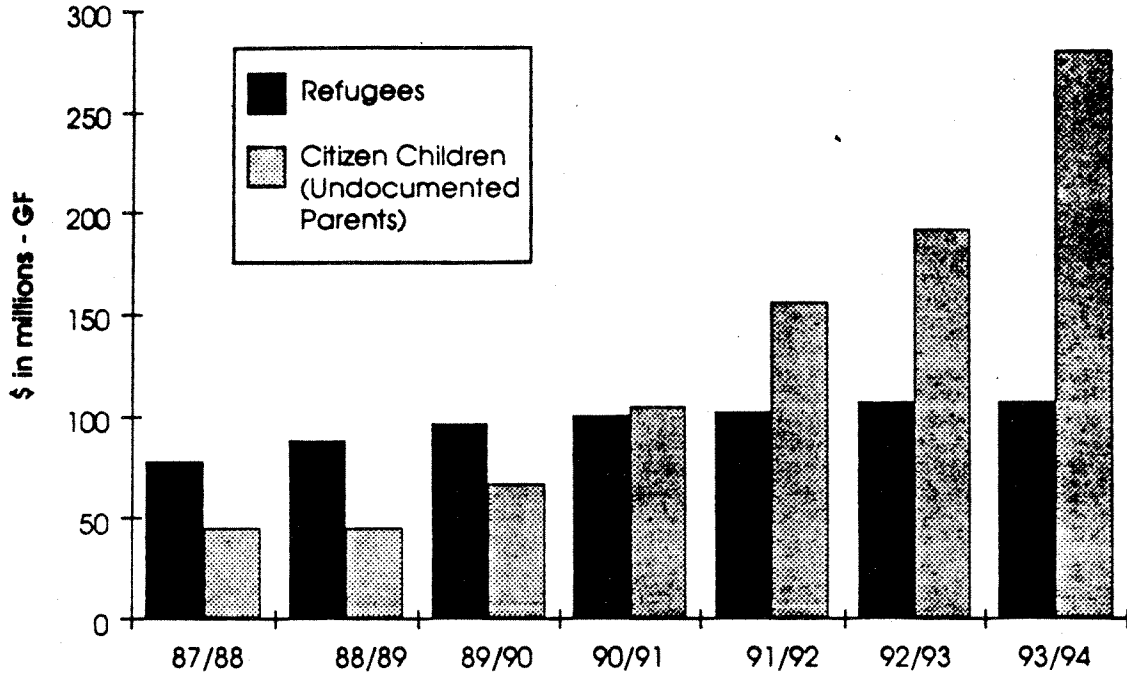
Aid to Families with Dependent Children

Refugees are immediately eligible for Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) payments upon arrival in the United States. Approximately 90,500 refugees will receive AFDC benefits each month in California in fiscal year 1993-94 for an annual cost of \$106 million state General Fund.

Individuals legalized under IRCA are not eligible for AFDC for the first five years of their citizenship. However, the five year ban on public assistance ended in May 1992 for the first group legalized. By the end of 1993, all individuals legalized under IRCA will have been in the U.S. as legal residents for five years and will be eligible for AFDC.

Children of IRCA or undocumented immigrants represent the fastest growing segment of California's new AFDC caseload. As citizens of the U.S., these children are eligible for the full range of public services even though their parents are not. For fiscal year 1993-94,

AFDC Expenditures for Recent Immigrants



108,500 children of IRCA parents will receive AFDC at a state General Fund cost of approximately \$131 million annually. Approximately 206,100 children of undocumented parents will receive AFDC in fiscal year 1993-94 for an annual state cost of \$278 million. Citizen children currently make up about 12 percent of AFDC recipients.

Corrections

There were approximately 12,750 undocumented people in the California adult prison system as of October 31, 1992. Undocumented inmates represent nearly 12 percent of the entire state prison population. In addition, the number of undocumented inmates in the state's county jails is estimated by the State Board of Corrections to range from 9 to 11 percent of the average daily jail population, approximately 6,200 to 7,500 individuals. The counties of San Diego and Los Angeles report that an average of 11 percent of their daily jail population are undocumented people.

Finally, the state's Youth Authority estimates that 7.8 percent of the Youth Authority population are undocumented young people. This translates to an estimated 665 undocumented young people in California's Youth Authority system.

IRCA already authorizes the U.S. Attorney General to reimburse states for costs of incarcerating undocumented immigrants convicted of state felonies. However, funding has not been appropriated for this purpose.

During the last Congress, S. 2340 and H.R. 440 (New York Senator D'Amato and Congressman Schumer) were introduced to provide state financial assistance in this area. Both bills failed. The State of New York filed suit in the U.S. District Court on April 24, 1992 to force the federal government to take custody of undocumented inmates in its prisons and work release programs.

A FAILED FEDERAL PROMISE

Federal funding commitments made in the Refugee Act of 1980 and the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 to support federal immigration and resettlement decisions have eroded or been renegeed upon, resulting in a significant unfunded cost shift to states and local governments. Also, additional support and service obligations related to children of undocumented parents have gone unrecognized by the federal government.

The lack of federal funding to meet program obligations mandated by the federal government has impacted states unequally, with California bearing an extremely disproportionate burden of the cost shift. California and other states can no longer shoulder these unfair cost shifts and therefore rightfully look toward the federal government for the financial resources owed to meet federal program mandates.

Thus, California is asking the federal government to provide a total of \$1.4 billion in funding in fiscal year 1993-94 for the following program areas (the numbers assume the federal government will start reimbursement at the beginning of the new federal fiscal year, October 1, 1993 and therefore do not reflect annualized costs):

State Legalization Impact Assistance Grant. Since the first State Legalization Impact Assistance Grant (SLIAG) funds were available, California has requested that the federal government pay state SLIAG bills in full. This has not occurred. The Wilson Administration is asking the federal government to pay the \$324 million owed to California for state services, including AFDC, Medi-Cal, and SSI/SSP already provided to individuals legalized under IRCA.

Refugee Resettlement Funding. The Refugee Act of 1980 required that states be reimbursed for non-federal costs of social and medical

services during the first 36 months that a refugee is in the country. Since 1985, promised funding has been reduced so that states are now fully responsible for these costs. The Wilson Administration is requesting that the federal government resume meeting its responsibility by providing full funding for refugees. This would mean that the federal government would provide \$104 million to California in fiscal year 1993-94 to pay for services provided under the AFDC, SSI/SSP and Medi-Cal programs.

A FAILED FEDERAL PROMISE

State Legalization Impact Assistance

Grant. The Wilson Administration is requesting \$324 million owed to California for services provided to individuals legalized under IRCA.

Refugee Resettlement Funding. The Wilson Administration is requesting \$104 million to California in fiscal year 1993-94 to pay for services provided under the AFDC, SSI/SSP and Medi-Cal programs.

Citizen Children of Undocumented Immigrants. The Wilson Administration is requesting \$240 million in fiscal year 1993-94 to pay for \$209 million in AFDC costs and \$31 million in Medi-Cal costs for this population.

Medi-Cal for IRCA and Undocumented Immigrants. The Wilson Administration is requesting \$534 million for costs which will occur in fiscal year 1993-94.

Corrections. The Wilson Administration is requesting \$250 million in fiscal year 1993-94 to pay for the cost of keeping criminals illegally residing in California in the correctional system.

Citizen Children of Undocumented Immigrants. As a result of federal immigration policy, California has incurred significant costs for providing services to citizen children of undocumented immigrants. The Wilson Administration is requesting that the federal government assume the full cost of this obligation. As a result, the federal government should provide California with \$240 million in fiscal year 1993-94 to pay for \$209 million in AFDC costs and \$31 million in Medi-Cal costs for this population.

Medi-Cal for IRCA and Undocumented Immigrants. As a result of federal immigration policy and OBRA '86, the states are incurring costs for providing health care to undocumented immigrants living in the U.S. The Wilson Administration is asking the federal government to recognize its obligation to provide states with the funding necessary to pay for mandated services under IRCA and OBRA '86, and pay California \$534 million for costs which will occur in fiscal year 1993-94.

Corrections. California is incurring a heavy cost associated with incarcerating undocumented immigrants in the state's correctional system as a result of federal immigration policy. The Wilson Administration is asking the federal government to provide \$250 million in fiscal year 1993-94 to pay for the cost of keeping criminals illegally residing in California in the correctional system.

California recognizes the importance of these services to promote the rapid assimilation of some refugees and immigrants. The Wilson Administration plans to work closely with the State Legislature, Congress, and the Clinton Administration to obtain the funding owed to California. However, if a commitment from the federal government is not received by May 15, 1993 to provide the \$1.4 billion for state costs incurred as a result of federal immigration and refugee policies, an additional \$1.4 billion in reductions will have to be made in existing state

programs to ensure California's budget is balanced as required by law.

CONCLUSION

Living in a country whose history is based on immigration, no American can ignore the great benefits immigrants bring to our nation. California, the most diverse of all fifty states, welcomes new immigrants with open arms, valuing the diversity immigrants bring to our work force, education system and culture.

California encourages the federal government to acknowledge its sole authority over immigration and refugee policy, and fulfill its promise to the states to provide financial support for costs as a result of the national immigration and refugee policy. The Wilson Administration plans to work with Congress, especially with members of the California delegation, and the Clinton Administration to successfully obtain the full \$1.4 billion owed to California.

For more information, please contact Jennifer Nelson, California Health and Welfare Agency, (916) 654-3345 or Craig Brown, Youth and Adult Correctional Agency, (916) 323-6001.

APPENDIX B

Los Angeles Times editorial regarding immigration myths.

Immigration

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 1993


 EDITORIALS OF THE TIMES

New Myths and Old Realities About Immigration

Dealing with this controversial issue will require adherence to fact, a reflection on history and the willingness to work together

Although we're proud to be a "nation of immigrants," Americans have never really been comfortable with foreign newcomers. Even in Revolutionary times, Thomas Jefferson worried that immigrants could undermine the new political culture of the nation. And Benjamin Franklin warned against letting German immigrants settle in Pennsylvania. Even great men underestimated the ability of the new nation, with the freedom it offered, to absorb people from all over the world and turn them into Americans.

Remembering the history of immigration to this country—and the often generous, sometimes mean-spirited response of native-born Americans to it—helps make it easier to remain calm amid the recent near-hysteria over illegal immigration, epitomized by the overreaction to news that two women whom President Clinton considered for attorney general, Zoe Baird and Kimba Wood, once employed illegal immigrants as baby-sitters. In Wood's case, she did nothing illegal, but any association with "illegal aliens" was enough to send the Clinton Administration into a dither.

Wood's case reflects the new Administration's profound ignorance of the complex realities of immigration. That is not harsh criticism, however, because most Americans are in the same situation. And while no sin, this widespread ignorance has allowed myths about immigration to take hold. For many years this newspaper has tried to take a thoughtful and balanced stance on immigration issues. We remain convinced that there are humane and constructive ways to better regulate the flow of newcomers to this country. But before restating them, it is important to first refute some of the more egregious myths about immigration.

Myth: Illegal immigration is an out-of-control problem. A gross oversimplification. It is better to think of illegal immigration simply as a fact of life in Los Angeles and any other place close to the U.S.-Mexico border. To be sure, problems come along with it, like overcrowding, border crime and other forms of exploitation of

illegal immigrants, but so do many benefits, such as low-cost labor that helps keep many small U.S. companies in business.

Myth: We are being silently invaded. In fact, the movement of people across our borders goes both ways—in and out. Although some foreigners come to stay, many are migrants who come to work for a time before returning home. This has especially been the case with Mexicans and other Latin Americans, many of whom live here just long enough to build nest eggs in a U.S. economy that, even in bad times, is far more robust than those of their homelands.

Myth: U.S. borders are out of control. Veteran Border Patrol agents say they have never had things under better control. Although controversial in many respects, the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) of 1986 increased the Border Patrol's size and budget. The construction of a new, sturdier border fence with surplus Navy landing-strip material has reduced illegal border crossing dramatically. In fact, the Border Patrol is actually building new border access roads for its own use because agents are confident that smugglers won't be able to use them even when border guards aren't around.

Myth: The level of immigration today is higher than ever before in U.S. history. Though in some recent years the absolute number of immigrants to this country has reached the level of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the last great era of U.S. immigration from Europe, the actual immigrant percentage, relative to overall U.S. population, is a quarter of what it was a century ago because the population is much larger now.

Myth: Today's immigrants are harder to Americanize. Even if one is

willing to accept the insulting premise that today's mostly Asian and Latin American immigrants are not as capable as the immigrants of our great-grandparents' day—and we are not willing to do so—sheer numbers are once again on the side of Americanization. Not only are there more native-born Americans to help the process along but the influence of U.S. mass media—movies, music, et al.—is pervasive. And English is increasingly the world's most popular language.

Myth: Immigrants take jobs. Myth: Immigrants take welfare. The contradictory nature of these two is obvious, but that doesn't keep them

both the federal and state governments have been reducing it in recent years. As for illegal immigrants, they do not qualify for welfare. Period. Even the otherwise generous amnesty provisions of IRCA prohibited immigrants who legalized their status from receiving public assistance for five years.

All this is not to downplay in any way the real challenges posed by immigration for American society. As noted above, for all the benefits that immigrants bring, they also bring problems. And when those problems fester they contribute to xenophobia, nativism and other anti-immigrant

sentiments. Among the solutions this newspaper has endorsed in the past to help this country better deal with immigration, and which we urge the Clinton Administration to consider:

—More federal financial aid to local jurisdictions heavily impacted by immigration. Immigration is a federal government responsibility, but immigrants tend to congregate in a handful of states and

cities, where they add to the cost of public services such as schools, safety and public health. California, and especially cities like Los Angeles and Santa Ana, needs federal help to pay for those services. President Clinton announced last week that he will consider Gov. Pete Wilson's request for help; Clinton's words are encouraging. But the \$4 billion allocated for local assistance when IRCA was enacted has never been fully paid out—and more money than that is needed.

—The Border Patrol should be separated from the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service and be consolidated with the Customs Service and other federal agencies into a new, more efficient border management agency. That new agency should then put all its resources at the border



The continuing saga: Immigrants of 1910 and today.

from being repeated.

In fact, most foreigners do come here looking for work. But most of the jobs they take are so menial and low-paying that Americans won't take them. Raising the pay to make those jobs more attractive to Americans isn't as easy as it sounds. Research indicates, for example, that if wage scales in light manufacturing in Southern California were not kept low with immigrant labor, the jobs would be not here but in other countries where wage scales are even lower.

The immigrants-on-welfare myth stems from confusion over the benefits extended to refugees under a separate section of U.S. immigration law. Refugees from communist nations, like Vietnam, do get education and relocation assistance, although

and ports of entry to stop illegal immigration there. Once relieved of its border patrolling duties, the INS should focus its resources on assisting immigrants, particularly encouraging them to become citizens.

—To improve the enforcement of IRCA, and to make sure it is applied in a non-discriminatory fashion, all workers in this country should be required to have counterfeit-proof Social Security cards. And the responsibility for administering IRCA should be transferred from the INS to the Department of Labor, which should combine its enforcement with other workplace laws such as wage and hour standards and worker-safety rules. The Labor Department should be given a sufficient budget to carry out these added responsibilities.

—To deal with the most fundamental cause of immigration, poverty in "sending" countries such as Mexico and Haiti, the United States should encourage development projects abroad and free trade, so that poor countries can prosper and put their people to work at home. The impending North American Free Trade Agreement with Mexico and Canada must be put into effect as only the first step in this direction. But it will be an important first step because 60% or more of the illegal immigrants to this country come from Mexico. And, as a logical follow-up to NAFTA, the United States and Mexico should negotiate a guest-worker program to allow those migrants who will inevitably keep crossing the border to look for work to at least do so legally.

The Biggest Myth of All. That's just a short list—but with some big, complicated proposals. But then the international migration of human beings is, in itself, a very big and very complex phenomenon—one that responds more to the immutable laws of economics, and the unpredictable vagaries of human behavior, than to laws passed by legislatures. As one Border Patrol veteran once told us, "It can't ever be stopped, just regulated." Like him, we long ago concluded that the biggest immigration myth of all is that this "problem" is somehow amenable to easy, or glib, "solutions."

