

KNOW THE FACTS

IMMIGRATION AND THE ECONOMY

Immigration has shaped American history and is a fundamental part of our social fabric. Yet, popular discourse has painted international migration as a growing concern, evoking all sorts of anti-immigrant sentiments. Consequently, many of us are divided between appreciating and fearing what immigration represents. The Immigration Committee is working on a series of informative posts about contemporary immigration challenges. We invite you to learn more about immigration myths and facts. This month's post is about [immigration and the economy](#).

MYTH: "Immigrants don't pay taxes"

The "immigrants don't pay taxes" myth is most likely rooted in the assumption that immigrants who receive cash for work do not pay federal taxes. There are several issues with that myth:

- 1) Most immigrants currently in the United States are documented and actively participate in our economy. In addition to the general benefits of paying their fair share (having proof of income for buying a house, for example), immigrants have a further incentive to pay federal taxes: those who intend to apply for citizenship are expected to present proof of at least five years of their federal income taxes to have their petitions examined by USCIS.
- 2) All immigrants, whether they are documented or not, help to fund our local governments through sales taxes, ad valorem taxes, and utility and public service taxes. In fact, in a study about the top 10 revenue sources funding the Town of Jupiter, Jim Kuretski (city councilor) found that immigrants contributed to every one of those sources.
- 3) Immigrants living in Florida have a spending power of more than \$90 billion dollars and, according to the New American Economy, they pay nearly \$29 billion in taxes each year. It is exactly because immigrants pay taxes and support our economy that leaders across the political spectrum signed the **Florida Compact on Immigration**.
<https://www.flcompact.org/compact>

FACT: Florida's economy depends on immigrants

While we know that immigrant labor and taxes nurture our economy, we also know that immigrant criminalization often incurs significant costs. If we examine SB168, for example, a bill that passed this legislative session, we know that:

- 1) SB 168 requires that the local police detain undocumented immigrants in our local jails. This will cost our local government a substantial amount of money that will not be reimbursed by the Federal government.
- 2) 25% of Florida's workforce is made of immigrants. The culture of fear created by SB168 is expected to cause an exodus of mix-status families – those who have both documented and undocumented immigrant family members. Using the effects of a similar anti-immigrant law passed in another state, it's expected that this exodus will result in a \$1.4 billion loss in wage earnings.
- 3) It is estimated that Florida will lose an additional 30,000 jobs due to SB168. In Palm Beach County alone, we have more than 10,000 immigrant entrepreneurs, who propel our economy as both employers and as consumers.
- 4) By driving immigrants into the shadows, SB168 will discourage them from participating in the Census. Because our demographic growth in Palm Beach County is largely attributed to immigration, federal funding and congressional representation will for the next decade are at risk.

Sources: 1) <https://research.newamericaneconomy.org/report/economic-cost-of-florida-senate-bill-168-and-house-bill-527/>
2) <https://www.fwd.us/action/defeat-sb168/> 3) <https://www.sun-sentinel.com/opinion/commentary/fl-op-com-sanctuary-census-20190420-story.html> 4) <https://www.miaminewtimes.com/news/miami-police-chief-jorge-colina-slams-florida-anti-sanctuary-city-bill-sb-168-11127176>