

Immigration: America's Demographic Edge

Developed countries like the United States are aging rapidly, and many face population stagnation or decline. This “demographic transition” leaves fewer workers to power the economy and pay into social programs, even as the population of elderly retirees increases. The implications of these trends even affect national security: the healthier the U.S. economy and budget remains, the easier it will be to project influence on the international stage.

Immigrants make the U.S. population younger and sustain healthy population growth, giving the U.S. a demographic advantage over other developed countries. A new report from the Bipartisan Policy Center (BPC) explores this connection in detail. Key findings include:

- **Immigrants prevent population stagnation.** America's population would stop growing between 2040 and 2050 without immigrants. Between 2010 and 2050, immigrants increase the projected rate of annual population growth from 0.24 percent to 0.63 percent.

+0.4%
population growth
- **Immigrants counteract aging trends.** Nearly 95 percent of newly admitted immigrants are under the age of 65. Projections show that without immigrants, the U.S. population would age about 30 percent faster over the next 50 years, as measured by the ratio of retirement-age people to working-age people.

30%
slower aging
- **Immigrants increase the fertility rate.** Immigrant women between the ages of 15 and 50 have children at a 50 percent higher rate than women who were born in the U.S. This increases population growth and improves America's aging picture.

50%
higher fertility
- **Immigration improves Social Security's finances.** Compared to a low immigration scenario, Social Security's trustees project that compared to a low immigration scenario, a high level of immigration would lower long-term actuarial deficits by 17 to 19 percent.

↓17-19%
SS deficits
- **Immigrants are net contributors to Medicare.** Between 2002 and 2009, immigrants contributed \$14 billion more to Medicare than they used in benefits. By contrast, U.S.-born individuals used more benefits than they contributed.

\$14B
Medicare surplus
- **Immigration grows the economy.** Immigration sustains economic growth by providing additional workers to enter the labor force. A previous BPC study found that immigration reform could boost economic growth 4.8 percent over 20 years.

+4.8%
economic growth

On the international stage, all of these domestic benefits make immigration an important power asset. Nations with stronger economies have an easier time influencing world events. If the U.S. continues to harness immigration's economic and fiscal benefits, it can expect to have an easier time maintaining its prominent position in global affairs.

To access the full report and learn more about key issues in the immigration debate, please visit us online at <http://www.bipartisanpolicy.org/immigration>.