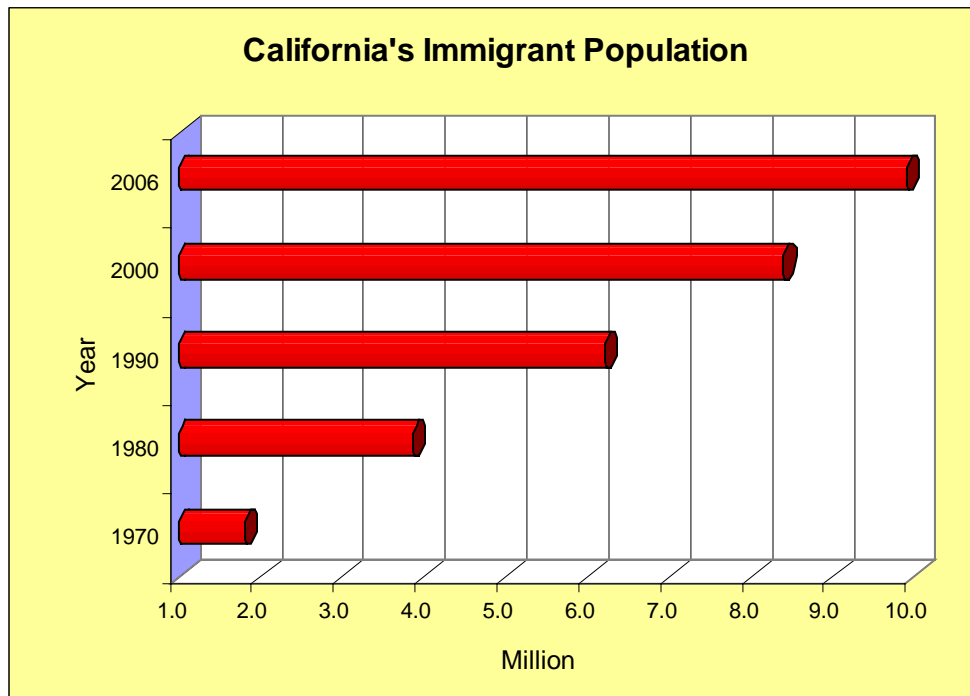


## *Econ Brief!*

### Immigration in California

California's foreign-borne population has increased rapidly in recent years. Between 1970 and 2006, the number of immigrants in California increased more than five-fold from about 2 to 10 million. California's share of immigrant population has reached 27 percent, 14 percent higher than that of the United States. Immigrants have accounted for 40 percent of the state's population growth since 2000. About 45 percent of California's immigrants are naturalized citizens. However, more than 40 percent of the nation's undocumented immigrants reside in California.



Nearly one-half of California's immigrant population is from Latin America and one-third from Asia. The leading countries of origin are Mexico, China, Vietnam, Iran, India, El Salvador, Korea, and the Philippines. The majority of Latinos reside in Southern California, San Joaquin Valley, and Central Coast. While most Asians live in the San Francisco Bay Area and Sacramento. Iranian immigrants are centered in Southern California and the Bay Area. Counties with the highest proportion of foreign-borne population are Santa Clara, San Francisco, and Los Angeles. Immigrants make up the majority of residents in six cities: Union City, Alhambra, Daly City, Glendale, Santa Ana, and El Monte.

Three of every four immigrants in California are between ages of 25 and 44. Their median age is 38, compared to 44 for U.S.-borne residents. The educational attainment of immigrants varies by the country of origin. For example, nearly two-thirds of immigrants from India have college degrees, but more than 60 percent of immigrants from Mexico have not completed high school.

Historically, immigration of educated and skilled labor has contributed to economic growth and technological advancement in the United States. However, the debate over illegal immigration points to its positive and negative economic and fiscal impacts. The negative impacts emphasize the growing pressure that immigrant families place on public funds earmarked for local support of health care, education, and criminal justice. In contrast, the positive effects indicate that immigrant families generate approximately one-third to one-half of their estimated costs to the state by paying sales taxes, DMV taxes, and other assorted fees. They also point out that undocumented immigrants work at low wages and minimal benefits, thus reducing production costs in labor-intensive industries like agriculture, construction, and services. Without them, increased production costs would result in higher prices.

Source:

*Just the Facts: Immigrants in California*, Public Policy Institute of California, April 2007 and June 2008

*The Financial Impact of Illegal Immigrants*, The Standard & Poor's Ratings Services, April 07, 2006