



2015/16 Advocacy Packet

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HOW IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES STRENGTHEN PA

Pennsylvania has been built on immigrant contributions. From the early arrival of Pennsylvania “Dutch” to Italians, Irish, African, and Chinese, to more recent waves of Latin American, South and Southeast Asian, Eastern European, Korean, Arab, and new African immigrants, most Pennsylvanian families were once immigrants, and newcomers continue to build the strength and prosperity of our state.

New job growth, new businesses and purchasing power: Immigrants are a critical component of Pennsylvania’s labor force and business community. Immigrants comprised 7.1% of the state workforce in 2011.¹ Latinos and Asians wield \$26.4 billion in consumer purchasing power, own businesses with sales and receipts of \$14.8 billion and employ more than 73,000 people.² In 2010, Pennsylvania immigrants were more than 50 percent more likely to own a business than the overall state average.³

Filling the gap created by an aging workforce and urban population loss: Without immigrants, Pennsylvania’s population would have declined between 2000 and 2013.⁴ Pennsylvania ranks fourth among all states in the percentage of people 65 and older and immigration is necessary to help fill the labor force gap created by baby boomers’ retirement.⁵ Immigration to cities like Philadelphia has played a key role in turning around population decline.

Free and Welcoming Society: Pennsylvania has attracted diverse groups of people from many nations and walks of life, seeking liberty and a better life. Our communities are strongest when everyone who lives in them feels welcome. In the spirit of inclusion in which our country was founded, we should continue to welcome newcomers and oppose measures that isolate or scapegoat immigrants.

Paying taxes: Immigrants pay more in taxes than they receive in benefits. Undocumented immigrants paid \$135 million in Pennsylvania state and local taxes in 2010⁶ and undocumented immigrants contribute approximately \$8.5 billion in Social Security and Medicare funds each year⁷. Many states have found that immigrants have a positive net fiscal impact on their state budgets.⁸

Immigrants feed Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania’s \$6.7 billion agriculture and food production industry is key to the state remaining competitive in the global economy. Leaders in Pennsylvania’s agribusiness sector have testified to the need for immigrant labor to supplement waning domestic interest in farming jobs and sustained expansion of this sector.⁹

Immigrants seek integration and civic participation: Immigrants continue to work hard to integrate and participate fully in the civic life of their new country. 52% of Pennsylvania immigrants are naturalized citizens.¹⁰ PICC has registered more than 23,000 new citizens to vote since 2008. Demand for English classes has been growing each year with a shortage of available programs and long waiting lists.

¹ Immigration Policy Center, “New Americans in Pennsylvania”, May 2013.

² Humphreys, J.M., *The Multicultural Economy 2010*, Selig Center for Economic Growth, University of Georgia, 2010.

³ Fiscal Policy Institute, “Immigrant Small Business Owners”, June 2012.

⁴ Bipartisan Policy Center, “Immigration in Pennsylvania”, January 30, 2014.

⁵ U.S. Census Bureau, *The Older Population: 2010*, November 2011.

⁶ Immigration Policy Center, “Unauthorized Immigrants Pay Taxes, Too”, April 2011.

⁷ Eduardo Porter, “Illegal Immigrants Are Bolstering Social Security With Billions”, *New York Times*, April 5, 2005.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Howells, M., “Senate Agriculture & Rural Affairs.” *PLS Committee News*, Pennsylvania Legislative Services, Oct. 23 2007; Carl Weiss, “Immigration Reform Will Help Pennsylvania Agriculture”, *PennLive Op-Ed*, October 23, 2013; Pennsylvania Farm Bureau, 2014 Agricultural Labor Reform, January 2014

¹⁰ Immigration Policy Center, “New Americans in Pennsylvania”, May 2013.



BENEFITS OF THE PENNSYLVANIA DREAM ACT

The Pennsylvania Dream Act will provide the opportunity for undocumented students who have graduated from high school in Pennsylvania, or have a GED certificate, to pay in-state tuition rates at public institutions of higher education in the Commonwealth. The PA Dream Act will improve college access for undocumented youth and allow them to give back to the state they grew up in.

The PA Dream Act has bipartisan support and shows the welcoming and inclusive spirit of Pennsylvania.

- **The PA Dream Act provides a way for hardworking students to continue their education.** The Act helps undocumented youth who have attended Pennsylvania high schools and provides an incentive for them to finish high school and pursue higher education.
- **Dream Acts with broad bipartisan support already exist in 20 states, and they have provided economic benefits to public colleges.** Dream Acts do not provide free tuition; they simply allow undocumented students who have lived in a state for years to pay in-state tuition rates. These Acts increase college revenues because they enable students who otherwise would not be able to afford college to enroll at the in-state tuition rate.
 - **Dream Acts increase revenue for public institutions of higher education.** A 2011 review of studies found that in-state tuition policies correlated with a 31% increase in college enrollments among undocumented students. Studies in Massachusetts and Texas show net gains in tuition revenue.
- **Dream Acts have been found to be beneficial for state economies in the long-term.** A Maryland study found that for each annual Maryland Dream Act cohort, the net long-term economic benefit to state, local, and federal governments would equal \$24.6 million. Studies in Colorado, Hawaii, New Jersey, and New York also predicted that tax revenues would rise as a result of Dream Acts.
- **The students affected are already here and their families contribute to Pennsylvania's economy.** In 2010 alone, families headed by unauthorized immigrants paid approximately \$135 million in Pennsylvania state and local taxes. The PA Dream Act would maximize students' potential to contribute back to society by becoming productive taxpayers.
- **Pennsylvania needs to encourage population growth, particularly among the young cohorts affected by the Dream Act.** Nationally, Pennsylvania ranks fourth in percentage of the population age 65 and over. Our rate of growth is well below the national average. If Pennsylvania is going to stay economically competitive, it must implement public policies that welcome young families – many of which are immigrants – to the Commonwealth.
- **Many students who would benefit from this bill were brought here at young ages, may not even know their status, and consider Pennsylvania their home.** Every year, approximately 800 undocumented youth graduate from Pennsylvania high schools without the same opportunities as their classmates. Many of these students have lived in our state longer than new residents who relocated two or three years ago from another state. Demanding that immigrant students return to a country they may not know or remember is unfair, unrealistic, and encourages them to seek low-wage, low-skill labor opportunities.
- **The Dream Act is timely, as federal policy now provides many youth with lawful presence.** Since August 2012, hundreds of thousands of youth and young adults have enrolled in the new federal program Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), which allows these young adults who finished high school or GED access to employment authorization. Providing access to affordable higher education will ensure these young adults maximize their skills and capacities as they participate in the workforce and contribute to Pennsylvania.



ACCESS TO DRIVER'S LICENSES FOR ALL

What We Want: Access to uniform or unmarked licenses for all drivers in Pennsylvania.

History

Prior to 2002, residents of Pennsylvania were able to legally obtain a driver's license with a Tax ID Number, or ITIN. In 2009, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation wrongly cancelled the licenses of tens of thousands of Pennsylvanians who had obtained their licenses legally.

Economy

The ability to legally drive allows immigrants to fully contribute to the local economy. Access to transportation is necessary for the many immigrant workers, business owners, parents, and students in Pennsylvania.

- In 2012, undocumented Pennsylvanians contributed **\$134 million in taxes in PA.**¹
- Drivers who cannot obtain licenses or insurance cost the state millions of dollars in damage claims each year, driving up premiums for everyone else. When New Mexico passed a law allowing driver's licenses for undocumented residents, the **state's uninsured rate dropped by over 20% in only 5 years, reducing insurance premiums and saving millions of dollars.**²
- When New York considered allowing undocumented immigrants to obtain driver's licenses, the State Department of Insurance estimated that expanded license access would **reduce the premium costs associated with uninsured motorist coverage by 34 percent, saving New York drivers \$120 million each year.**³

Public Safety

The roads and highways are safer when everyone behind the wheel has a license, insurance, and identification. For this reason, police officers and sheriffs around the country are in favor of this right being granted to all people.⁴ An unmarked license is necessary to encourage all drivers in Pennsylvania to obtain a license. A marked license would perpetuate the fear many immigrants have of deportation and family separation.

Proven Effective

Eleven states (California, Colorado, Connecticut, Illinois, Maryland, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Vermont, and Washington) as well as Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia already allow their residents to obtain driver's licenses regardless of immigration status. New Mexico and Washington provide an unmarked license.⁵

Human Rights

The right to mobility, to move freely, is inscribed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Many other fundamental rights — to work, to education, and to human dignity — are only accessible via valid identification and adequate transportation.

¹ <http://www.nilc.org/taxes.htm>

² <http://www.nilc.org/driverlicenses.html>

³ <http://www.nilc.org/DLaccessstoolkit3a.html>

⁴ <http://www.nilc.org/driverlicenses.html>

⁵ <http://www.nilc.org/driverlicenseemap.html>



RAISING THE MINIMUM WAGE

Raising the minimum wage to \$10.10 an hour and adjusting it annually for inflation would benefit one million low wage workers in Pennsylvania, will boost our state's economy and build stronger communities. Every state bordering Pennsylvania has raised their minimum wage – it's time we did too!

- **Raising the Pennsylvania minimum wage to \$10.10 will help one million workers.**¹ Over 80% of those who would be affected are adults over age 20, and almost half of workers who would see their wages go up work full time.
- **Raising the wage helps create jobs, not eliminate them.** Study after study has proven that increasing the minimum wage helps to create jobs. When one million people have a little more money in their pockets, they will spend it at businesses in their community, boosting local business and local economies.
- **Raising the minimum wage helps women and families meet their basic needs.** Six out of ten Pennsylvanians who work at the minimum wage are women. By raising the minimum wage, we'll take a major step toward lowering the gap between what men and women earn for the same work.
- **Eliminating the tipped minimum wage is critical.** The tipped minimum wage at \$2.83 has not changed since 1998. When tips fall short, low wage workers have unstable incomes that fall far below minimum wage.
- **Raising the minimum wage would help immigrant and refugee workers.** Immigrant workers are disproportionately represented in low-wage employment due to barriers such as limited English proficiency and education level.²
 - 59.7% of the foreign born population (age 16 and older) in PA are employed³
 - 35% of all Latino workers will benefit⁴
 - 29% of all Asian workers will benefit
- **We must fight back against wage theft.** Wage theft is the practice of underpaying or failing to pay workers money that they are legally owed. This doesn't just hurt the worker who isn't paid, it hurts the entire Commonwealth in the form of lost tax revenues and leads to a "race to the bottom."
 - In 2013, Pennsylvania workers lost over \$250 million to wage theft
 - Pennsylvania lost \$8 million in income tax revenue in 2013 due to wage theft

Adapted from materials created by Raise the Wage PA. www.RaisethewagePA.org

¹ Cooper, David. *Raising the Federal Minimum Wage to \$10.10 Would Lift Wages for Millions and Provide a Modest Economic Boost*, Economic Policy Institute, Briefing Paper #371, December 2013. <http://s2.epi.org/files/2013/minimum-wage-state-tables.pdf>

² Dietrich, S. M. *When Working isn't Enough: Low-Wage Workers Struggle to Survive*. <https://www.law.upenn.edu/journals/jbl/articles/volume6/issue3/Dietrich6U.Pa.J.Lab.%26Emp.L.613%282004%29.pdf>

³ American Community Survey. *Selected Characteristics of Native and Foreign Born Populations: 2009-2013 5 year Estimates*. http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_13_5YR_S0501&prodType=table

⁴ Economic Policy Institute analysis of Harkin-Miller Minimum Wage proposal using current Population Survey Outgoing Rotation Group microdata



FAIR FUNDING FOR PENNSYLVANIA SCHOOLS

Every Pennsylvania student deserves a quality education no matter where they live. Pennsylvania must adopt an education funding system that provides enough resources so students in every school have a fair shot at academic success.

Pennsylvania's system for funding public schools is broken:

- We are one of only three states without a basic education funding formula to distribute sufficient resources both fairly and predictably.
- Pennsylvania has the widest funding gap between wealthy and poor school districts of any state in the country. Per pupil spending in PA's poorest districts is 33% less than in PA's wealthiest districts.¹
- The absence of a funding formula, combined with state funding cuts in recent years, hits our students hard.

Our public school funding system fails to provide enough resources to educate all students to academic standards, produces racial disparities and a wide gap between the wealthiest and poorest schools, and is so unpredictable from year to year that school districts cannot effectively budget or plan.

Research shows that school funding reform matters: increasing funding investment and equity reduces achievement gaps and provides a lifetime boost to low-income students.

Since 2010-11:

- 93% of school districts reduced staff
- 50% furloughed teachers or other staff
- 74% cut or reduced at least one academic program
- 57% increased class size²

PICC supports The Campaign for Fair Education Funding proposal:

- A student-driven, long-term, predictable education funding system that equitably distributes enough state funding to ensure students in every public school meet academic standards and are prepared for success as adults.
- Directs adequate funding to districts and students based on real costs, addressing student challenges like poverty, English proficiency, homelessness and foster care placement; and district factors like district size and sparsity, local tax effort and district wealth, and charter school enrollment.
- Ensures that all districts receive minimum funding increases while the new formula is being phased in.

Adapted from materials created by The Campaign for Fair Education Funding. www.fairfundingpa.org

¹ NCES 2015

² PASA-PASBO Report, January 2015



THE CASE AGAINST RESTRICTING ACCESS TO PUBLIC BENEFITS

Pennsylvania Senate Bill 9 has been introduced in the 2015 Legislative Session with the ostensible intention of cracking down on people illegally receiving benefits. They mandate that agencies administering a wide variety of public benefits must, in addition to verifying applicants' legal immigration status, require applicants to present government-issued ID.

IMPACT: Denial of benefits to eligible people – especially Pennsylvania's most vulnerable citizens; unnecessary use of tax payer money; creation of hostility towards immigrants; deterring eligible people from seeking benefits

Government ID is Increasingly Hard to Get, Even for Citizens:

It can take months of work and countless visits to the Social Security Administration, PennDOT, and the Department of Health to obtain or replace government-issued ID. Many US citizens do not have government issued ID and laws requiring a government issued ID disproportionately impact low-income workers (\$35,000 annually or less) and people of color¹. It is estimated that about 800,000 Pennsylvanians will lack the identification required by this bill⁵.

A Waste of Taxpayer Money - Implementation is Costly, Savings are Unlikely:

In 2008, the Rendell Administration estimated that the bill would cost \$19 million to implement² and of that \$14 million would be administrative funding.⁵ The current Unemployment Compensation system is not equipped to handle the proposed changes as most applicants do not submit paperwork and there are no "service centers" to submit identification.⁵ In 2006, Colorado passed a similar bill. State agencies experienced an initial implementation cost of \$2 million and could not identify any savings achieved.³ A study by the US House of Representatives Committee on Oversight and Government Reform in July 2007 found that for every \$100 spent by federal taxpayers to administer immigration documentation requirements in the Medicaid program, the federal government saved only 14 cents.⁴

The "Problem" Doesn't Exist:

Undocumented immigrants are *already* barred from *all* major public benefit programs in PA. There is not even one documented case of an undocumented immigrant receiving benefits that they should not have gotten. The PA Department of Welfare investigates any claims of people improperly receiving benefits. Due to language and cultural barriers, documented, eligible immigrants use public benefits at lower rates than citizens. Other barriers to immigrants accessing public benefits include: 1) fear that immigration service will consider them a public charge, blocking a future citizenship application, 2) lack of knowledge about services or eligibility, and 3) in mixed-status families, fears that family members could be deported. Therefore, emphasis should be placed on increasing access rather than increasing barriers.

May Violate Federal Law:

If this bill becomes law and results in delays of eligible people getting public benefits then it is in violation of federal law and thus becomes vulnerable to lawsuits. California faced a lawsuit after making changes to its identification requirements.

¹ "Citizens Without Proof: A Survey of Americans' Possession of Documentary Proof of Citizenship and Photo Identification," Brennan Center for Justice at NYU School of Law, November 2006, available at http://www.brennancenter.org/dynamic/subpages/download_file_39242.pdf

² Rossi, Vincent. Fiscal Note. March 31, 2008.

³Mark P. Couch, "Colorado Immigration Law Falls Short of Goal; State Agencies: \$2 Million Cost and No Savings," *Denver Post*, Jan. 25, 2007, available at http://www.denverpost.com/ci_5081255.

⁴Majority Staff of the House of Representatives Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, "Medicaid Citizenship Documentation Requirements Deny Coverage To Citizens And Cost Taxpayers Millions," July 24, 2007, available at <http://oversight.house.gov/documents/20070724110341.pdf>.

⁵Community Legal Services. *SB 9 Is Costly and Would Delay or Deny Unemployment Compensation to Eligible Citizens*

Pennsylvania's \$48.8 Million Settlement Over Immigrant Benefits Stemmed from the Ridge Administration's Interpretation of Federal Law

Recently Pennsylvania reached a settlement with the federal government to pay \$48.8 million over five years. The settlement resolves claims that Pennsylvania used federal funds to provide Medicaid, food stamps, and TANF benefits to non-citizens who were not eligible for them.

- **This settlement stemmed from a dispute over the Ridge administration's interpretation of federal law.**
 - The 1996 federal welfare reform law (called PRWORA) barred the use of federal funds for certain benefits to legal immigrants who have been in this country for less than five years.
 - The administration of Governor Tom Ridge interpreted the law differently from the federal government, and did not bar recent legal immigrants from these benefits.
 - The "five-year bar" to immigrant eligibility for Medicaid was implemented by Governor Rendell in July 2009.
- **The immigrants who received benefits were here legally.**
 - For decades, Pennsylvania's Department of Human Services has required proof of applicants' legal immigration status, and has checked that status through the federal government's SAVE database.
 - Benefits are only issued to immigrants who are here lawfully and eligible for benefits.
 - Although Pennsylvania may have improperly billed the federal government for benefits for recent immigrants, the individuals who received them had proper immigration status and would have been eligible for federal funding if they had been here for five years or more.