



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on November 5, 2012

## CIS: Most New Jobs Going to Immigrants

The addition of 171,000 jobs in October according to Friday's [employment report](#) is moderately good news for President Obama in the final days before the election. But the jobs picture might not be such good news for Americans, the [Center for Immigration Studies reported](#) last week.



According to Steven Camarota and Karen Zeigler, well more than 50 percent of new jobs went to immigrants during the Obama presidency, leaving Americans out in the cold without work.

That's because immigrants are still pouring into the country, [CIS reported](#), at a rate of more than a one million annually.

### The Numbers

The employment picture for Americans is grim. "Since President Obama took office, 67 percent of employment growth has gone to immigrants (legal and illegal)," [CIS reported](#).

As well,

- There were 1.94 million more immigrants (legal and illegal) working in the third quarter of 2012 than at the start of 2009, when the president took office. This compares to a 938,000 increase for natives over the same time period.
- Most of the immigrant growth in employment was the result of new immigration, rather than immigrants already in the country taking jobs. Some 1.6 million new immigrant workers arrived from abroad since the start of 2009 — we estimate 70 to 90 percent entered legally.
- Immigrants made employment gains across the labor market. In occupations where immigrant gains were the largest, there were 2.2 million unemployed natives.

In Obama's defense, [CIS noted](#) that a "large share" of new jobs were going to immigrants before he took the oath of office. Yet Obama has worked to give jobs to immigrants who are here illegally. The key policy in that regard came down just this year, when Obama [offered amnesty](#) to "young" illegal aliens and said they could apply to work in the country legally. Border-jumping Mexicans and others [showed up](#) in lines more than a mile long in some cases. About 1.7 million illegals are eligible for the amnesty, the [New York Times reported](#). [That declaration](#) from Obama, which for all intents and purposes declared the failed DREAM Act law, followed [a series of statements](#) and [two major](#) policy mandates that [ended deportations](#) of illegals who met DREAM criteria. Beyond that, as [CIS noted](#), the [Obama administration declared](#) legal war on Arizona [for trying to](#) control the flow of illegals across its border.

Other numbers show, however that the weather is clearing a little for Americans. "Natives have done better in the labor market recently," CIS reported. "From the third quarter of 2011 to the third quarter of 2012, two-thirds of employment growth went to native-born workers."

In the third quarter CIS reported, 7.6 million Americans with less than a high-school education were



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unemployed (30.8 percent for dropouts), along with 18.1 million with only a high-school degree (18.1 percent). Nearly 16 million Americans with some college were unemployed (13.8 percent), and 9.2 million college graduates did not have work (eight percent).

## Analysis

In its analysis, [CIS noted](#), again, that President Obama inherited a tough economy, and that immigrants were already taking millions of jobs. “During the Bush administration a large share of employment growth also went to immigrants — 44 percent,” CIS reported. Still, “In the fourth quarter of 2008 there were 4.38 million more natives working than in the first quarter of 2001” when Bush took office. “Among immigrants, the number working increased by 3.48 million.”

CIS also reported the difference between the number of jobs immigrants took and the number of new immigrants who entered the country. “The net gain in employment among immigrants was 1.94 million and the number of new arrivals was 1.58 million. The fact that the net gain is so similar to the number new arrivals indicates that most of the net increase was due to new arrivals from abroad, and was not the result of immigrants already in the country gaining or regaining employment.”

Although the largest gains among immigrants are in lower paid jobs, such as “building cleaning and maintenance, farming/fishing/forestry, personal care, and production (manufacturing),” immigrants also got work in “higher-paying occupations such as those in computer science, math, and management. Clearly, immigrant gains were not confined to a few lower-wage, lower-status occupations.”

Indeed, “immigrants made significant gains in computer science, management, business and finance, and architecture and engineering,” [CIS reported](#).

While unemployment among natives is not as high in these occupations as in lower-status occupations, there are still a significant number of native-born Americans unemployed (980,000) in these occupations. An argument could be made that if there is a shortage in these higher-skilled occupations then the jobs should go to unemployed natives. In addition, more Americans should be encouraged to enter these fields by improving math and science education and making college scholarships more available rather than relying on foreign sources of labor. Offering higher wages and better benefits is one way the labor market induces workers to retrain, relocate, or re-enter the labor force when demand is strong for certain skills. Bringing in immigrants would seem to preempt that process.

CIS also tackled the [persistent myth](#) that immigrants “do the jobs Americans won’t do,” presenting data that show a majority of workers in every major occupation are American citizens.

CIS concluded the obvious: Immigrants are knocking Americans out of the workforce, and neither party seems likely to do anything about it. “The overwhelming majority of these new workers were admitted legally,” [CIS reported](#).

This president, like those before him, has chosen not to reduce immigration despite the worst job market since the Great Depression. While natives have done better in the labor market recently, there remain a very large number of native-born Americans not working. There are also a very large number of natives unemployed in the occupations where immigrants made the largest gains. Moreover, there are millions of native-born Americans of every education level not even in the labor force. It is unfortunate that both presidential candidates have chosen to not even discuss possible job competition between immigrants and natives.



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## Romney on Immigration

Like Obama, GOP standard-bearer Mitt Romney is a leftist on immigration. As [The New American reported](#) in early October, Romney said he would honor the Obama amnesty for “young” border jumpers, and his website makes clear he is unconcerned about the effect immigrants have on the country.

According to Romney’s website, “Our immigration system is not optimized for today’s economy. The United States is currently excluding too many workers who will start businesses, create jobs, foster innovation, and help grow our economy.”

That flies in the face of data from CIS, but Romney, who criticized the administration after Friday’s anemic jobs report, believes: “We do not grant enough visas to high-skill job creators and innovators our economy needs to make up for labor shortages and gaps in skills.” Also:

The current system sends away the great majority of the over 300,000 foreign students who are earning advanced degrees at U.S. universities. And the system for bringing in temporary, seasonal workers is so cumbersome and time-consuming, that too often an employer finds that harvest or tourist season passes before temporary worker visas are approved.

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