



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on August 13, 2012

Illegal Aliens a Drain on U.S. Taxpayers, Report Says

Illegal aliens are largely poor and uneducated and drain the welfare and public education systems, according to a survey from the [Center for Immigration Studies](#). The study, "[Immigrants in the United States: A Profile of America's Foreign-Born Population](#)," paints a startling picture of the nearly 11 million illegals and their children.

The survey shows that about 40 million immigrants live in the United States. A little less than 28 percent, or 10.5 million, have crossed the border illegally and are flouting U.S. law.

Illegals are about 3.5 percent of the [U.S. population](#).

The Number of Illegals

[According to](#) the CIS, about "28 percent of all immigrants are in the country illegally. Roughly half of Mexican and Central American and one-third of South American immigrants are here illegally."

Given that about 11.7 million Mexican immigrants live in the United States, about 5.85 million are here illegally. Mexico is largest provider of immigrants, legal and illegal, to the United States. Its government is notorious [for encouraging](#) illegal immigration to the United States and has issued pamphlets showing the illegals how to evade American authorities.

[CIS arrived](#) at its figure of 10.5 million using data from not only the [Census Bureau](#) but also the [Department of Homeland Security](#) and the [Pew Hispanic Center](#). CIS noted that research indicates that most estimates of the illegal population are about 10 percent too low, meaning the real population could be as high as 11.5 million.

Most illegals live in California (2.6 million), Texas (1.8 million), and Florida (604,000), meaning three states alone account for more than five million or 46 percent of the illegal population. Adding in Illinois (505,000) and New York (480,000) brings the total to about six million, which means about 57 percent of illegals live in just five states. More than 50 percent live in four states.

Again, these totals might be 10 percent higher than CIS reported.

Poverty

Illegals have a tendency to live in poverty or near poverty, [CIS reported](#). Noting that near poverty is defined as less than 200 percent of the poverty threshold, "26 percent, the national [poverty] rate for illegal immigrants by themselves, is about twice that of natives. The rate is even higher (30 percent) when their U.S.-born children are included. ..."

Nationally, illegal immigrants and their U.S.-born children account for 9.9 percent of all persons in poverty, compared to their 4.9 percent share of nation's total population. Illegal aliens clearly have low incomes, and the low-income population in the United States is clearly larger because of immigration. Nonetheless, illegal immigration accounts for only a modest share of the total





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population in poverty. Moreover, it should also be clear that most illegal immigrants do not live in poverty.

Of immigrants in general who live in poverty, [CIS reported](#), 40 percent are illegals or their young children. “Based on the 2010 and 2011 CPS, 4.4 million illegal immigrants and their children live in poverty, out of 11.4 million immigrants and their children in poverty,” according to CIS.

Most low-income immigrants are not illegal aliens. Put a different way, legal immigration has a larger impact on the size of the poor population in the United States than does illegal immigration.

Illegals live in poverty at high rates because they earn much less money compared to Americans. The average household income for illegals is \$49,191. For Americans, it is \$68,361, a difference of about \$19,000. The difference in median income between illegals and Americans, just below \$15,000, is less but still significant. The median income for illegal household is \$35,755, for Americans, \$50,437.

The per-person household incomes show a similar disparity. The average for illegals is \$12,991. For Americans, it is \$28,185, a difference of about \$15,000. The median was \$9,443 for illegals versus \$20,795 for Americans, a difference of \$11,352.

Welfare

Given that illegals tend to earn less money and live in poverty, they are also prone to use welfare. In Texas, for instance, 58 percent of illegal households collect some form of welfare, [CIS reported](#), with 49 percent using food assistance and 41 percent using Medicaid. In California and Illinois, 55 percent use welfare. The list of states goes down from there.

Nationally, 47 percent of illegals use welfare; 39 percent use food assistance and 35 percent use Medicaid.

[According to](#) CIS, “high rates of Medicaid and food assistance use by illegal immigrant households is not caused by an unwillingness to work on the part of illegals.” Almost all illegal households have at least one member working, a higher rate than American households, CIS noted. But because half of all illegals didn’t finish high school, “their their average income in the modern economy will be very low.”

Education

As one would imagine, a population of more than 10 million illegals is a crushing burden on public schools. Illegals are 1.3 million of the school-age population and about 2.4 percent of 5- to 17-year-olds, [CIS reported](#). Taxpayers provide some \$40 billion to educate illegals and their offspring.

“School-age illegal aliens plus the U.S.-born children of illegal aliens comprise about 7.2 percent (3.9 million) of the total school-age population,” [CIS reported](#).

In states like Nevada, Arizona, Texas, California, Washington, Illinois, and New Jersey illegal immigrants comprise a much larger share of the school-age population than they do nationally.

Since per-student expenditures in the United States are roughly \$10,000 a year, it is likely that some \$13 billion annually goes to educate illegal aliens in public schools. The total cost for educating illegal aliens and their U.S.-born children likely comes to over \$39 billion a year.

In its section on the income of illegals, [CIS reported](#) that public education — at \$39 billion to educate illegals — highlights the “fiscal problem” they create.

We estimate the combined total income of illegal immigrant households at about \$162 billion. If



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these estimates are correct, it would mean that just to cover the costs of education they would have to pay 24 percent of their income. Even if illegal immigrants paid all the income and payroll taxes that they should, given their lower income and large household size it seems doubtful that they would pay enough in taxes to cover the education of their children, let alone all the other costs they create.

But again, this is because of the education level of illegals, not because they do not work. The vast majority of working-age illegals work. ... But because of their education levels, a very large share of illegal immigrants have low incomes. This is the primary reason that their presence in the United States tends to strain public coffers.

Insurance

Unsurprisingly, most illegals do not carry health insurance. About 62 percent of illegals, or about 6.5 million, lack health insurance, compared to 14 percent of Americans. Across 11 states, well more than half of illegals are uninsured. In Texas, 72 percent are uninsured. In North Carolina, the figure is 69 percent; in Colorado, it's 66 percent.

Adding in the children of illegals to the total uninsured brings the number to 7.3 million, or 50 percent their total population.

"Illegals also account for a large share of the total uninsured population," [CIS reported](#).

Nationally, 14.6 percent of all uninsured persons in the United States are estimated to be illegal aliens or the young children of illegal immigrants. This compares to their 4.9 percent share of the nation's total population. In some states the impact is much larger. In Arizona, California, Nevada, and Texas, roughly one-fourth of the uninsured are illegal immigrants and their children. In New Jersey, Washington, and North Carolina roughly one-fifth of the uninsured are illegal immigrants.

Related Story:

[CIS: 40 Million Immigrants in U.S. In 2010](#)

Photo: In this June 15, 2012 file photo, Ricky Campos, left, and Katye Hernandez, both illegal immigrants from El Salvador, who live in Silver Spring, Md., hold signs saying "Thank You

President Obama": AP Images



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