



Estimated Cost of Educating New Illegal Children at \$760 Million

According to an estimate from the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR), the cost of educating the thousands of illegal immigrant children who have recently crossed the border is \$761 million this school year.

Between January 1 and July 31, over 30,000 unaccompanied minors have been placed with sponsors in the United States. The Department of Education has responded by asserting that every child, regardless of immigration status, is “entitled” to a public school education. But according to FAIR, the price for providing that public school education is astronomical. Based on earlier estimates of the cost of educating [Limited English Proficiency] students in public schools, we came up with an estimate of how much it will cost taxpayers in each state to educate illegal alien minors in the coming school year,” the study explains.



FAIR issued the [report](#) on the 37,000 “unaccompanied minors” after reviewing data from the Department of Health and Human Services and education funding formulas in all 50 states. It estimated the cost per pupil of educating the minors to be more than each state’s average cost per student.

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“These kids will require special Limited English Proficient (LEP) classes conducted in Spanish, or in other languages indigenous to Central America, as well as other taxpayer funded services, such as free and reduced school meals. Once again the costs of federal government’s failed immigration policies are borne at the local level, and the nation’s public school system is where the costs are most visible,” FAIR said.

The report broke down the costs by states, with the biggest impact being seen in California, Texas, Florida, and New York. In the state of New York alone, the cost will be \$147 million. California, host to nearly 4,000 unaccompanied minors, faces costs of over \$63 million.

The cost of educating students who do not speak English is at least 30 percent higher than teaching students who speak English fluently. These states face additional challenges as they do not have enough qualified bilingual teachers to educate the new students.

The estimate confirms concerns raised by critics that the influx of immigrants will create an undue burden on American taxpayers. “We’re not doing American students any favors by dumping in tens of thousands of additional illegal alien children,” FAIR’s Bob Dane told Fox News. “We want to have



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compassion for illegal alien kids, but let's not lose sight of the rule of law and compassion for American students."

But immigration rights groups claim the high price is small when considering that it helps children in need. "We're one of the wealthiest countries in the world," said Jorge Baron, of the Northwest Immigrant Rights Project. "We should be able to handle this if we focus our energy and some resources and we make sure that kids are treated well, and treated the way we, in America, believe kids should be treated."

Despite these claims, however, the federal government is going to have a difficult time justifying the cost. Fox News explained, "Thirty-five states are still spending less per pupil than they did in 2008, and school infrastructure is suffering." Data from the National Center for Education Statistics shows that the average age of public school buildings is 44 years old. More than half of those buildings require repair and estimates for those repairs are as high as \$4.5 billion.

States are asking the federal government to pay the tab for the cost of educating the illegal immigrant children. Arizona and officials in Miami-Dade County have requested that the federal government pay the additional costs.

In a letter submitted to Education Secretary Arne Duncan, Arizona's Department of Education Superintendent John Huppenthal wrote, "It is unreasonable to ask Arizona schools and Arizona taxpayers to pay for these expenses. These unaccompanied minors in question did not illegally cross in Arizona, but rather they were bussed into our state by the federal government."

For years, critics of illegal immigration have warned about the financial and cultural impact that it has had on the United States and the federal government's unwillingness to enforce immigration laws.

John F. McManus, president of The John Birch Society, pointed out during his "Stealing the American Dream" speaking tour in 2010 that Article IV, Section 4 of the U.S. Constitution states that it is the role of government to "protect each of the states against invasion." McManus posed the question that if the presence of 12-20 million illegal aliens in the United States does not constitute an invasion, what does? McManus has also accused those who support amnesty of "rewarding law-breakers."

McManus noted the cost of educating, incarcerating, and providing medical care to the millions of illegals in America adds up to approximately \$36 billion annually.

Likewise, the influx of illegal aliens has helped contribute to the disappearance of the American culture, something that the American people fear, according to an August poll by Reuters/Ipsos. That poll revealed that 70 percent of Americans believe illegal immigrants are threatening traditional American beliefs and customs, and jeopardizing the economy.

Reporting on the poll, the *Washington Times* wrote, "About 63 percent of voters said the illegal immigrants place a burden on the country's sluggish economy, which is already a hot-button issue in this year's midterm elections."

According to the poll, more voters in New England oppose illegal immigration than the rest of the nation, with nearly 80 percent responding that illegal immigration poses a threat to the American way of life.

An August poll from the Polling Company also reveals that the majority of voters would like to see significantly lower immigration levels and they oppose President Obama's plans to move forward with executive action to grant amnesty.



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That poll revealed that 74 percent of voters want to see Obama work with Congress on immigration. Likewise, 58 percent of voters said they support an approach to immigration that includes extra funding for immigration enforcement, swift return of young illegal immigrants to their home countries, and a restriction on the president's ability to legalize illegal immigrants on his own. Furthermore, over two-thirds of those polled believe that illegal immigrants should be denied jobs and welfare benefits to encourage them to return to their home countries. Of that two-thirds, 64 percent included union members and 48 percent were Hispanic.

And with schools facing additional costs resulting from an influx of illegal immigrant students, it is not likely that the support from the American people will increase.

"Obama's refusal to secure the border and enforce the law combined with his unwillingness to allow states to participate in immigration enforcement has created a massive unfunded mandate and unanticipated costs to school districts across the country," [said](#) Dan Stein, president of FAIR. "School districts are scrambling to maintain minimum standards with limited resources yet this administration's enforcement policy appears to be, 'we won't-you can't, but you pay.'"

"Tens of thousands of additional illegal alien minors — many with limited English skills, no financial support and extraordinary needs — are straining the resources of jurisdictions burdened by tens of thousands of illegal aliens children already enrolled," Stein added.



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