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Characteristics of the Illegal Alien Population

One way to get a sense of what the illegal alien population is like is to look at the illegal aliens who were given amnesty in the late 1980s (under the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986). This group of almost three million illegal aliens, all of whom had been in the United States since before 1982, was made into legal aliens and has since been surveyed by the federal government. The government study found that out of the amnestied illegal alien population:¹

- 94 percent had migrated for economic reasons.
- 55 percent lived in California.
- 70 percent were from Mexico.
- 13 percent were from Central America.
- 74 percent had never been apprehended.
- 15 percent spoke English.
- 80 percent used public health services.
- 49 percent had no health insurance.

Their median age was 32, with an average household of four, seven years education, an hourly wage of \$5.45, an annual individual income of \$8,982, and annual family income of \$15,364.

Remember, at the time of this survey, many of the illegal aliens

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As President Obama closes the books on his first year in office, his record, as opposed to his rhetoric, now defines his political agenda. During 2009, President Obama's record on immigration policy points to

were well established, having lived in the United States for over ten years. Many less successful illegal aliens would have left the country. The above profile of amnestied illegal aliens represented the most successful people in the illegal alien population. A profile of the overall current illegal alien population could be expected show worse results.

On the basis of this and similar information, estimates can be made of the costs to our society from illegal immigrants (see FAIR's state cost studies). Additional factors must be taken into account, such as the illegal aliens' school-age children (who number roughly 1.5 million). More difficult to estimate is the effect of displacement of American workers (the roughly 730,000 low-skilled workers a year who lose their jobs because of competition from illegal alien workers). The total costs are enormous, even after counting to their benefit the taxes collected from the illegal aliens (giving the net cost).

certain inescapable conclusions. The overriding objectives of this administration are to enact a massive amnesty for current illegal aliens and vastly expand future flows of immigration to the United States.

Updated 11/07

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[1] INS Report on the Legalized Alien Population, M-375, March 1992.

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