

Study: Lack of work is not driving illegal immigration

St. Petersburg Times (Florida)

December 7, 2005 Wednesday, 0 South Pinellas Edition

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Section: NATIONAL; Pg. 4A

Length: 332 words

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Body

A **lack** of jobs in Mexico does **not** seem to be a major reason that immigrants come to the United States illegally, according to a **study** released Tuesday.

Rather, the **study** by the Pew Hispanic Center suggests stemming **illegal immigration** to the United States would require addressing wages, job quality, long-term prospects and perception of opportunity in Mexico, according to researchers.

"There is more distance to be covered than just finding jobs for these people in Mexico," Rakesh Kochhar, the **study's** author, said during a telephone news conference.

The **study** also found that, despite the **lack** of legal right to **work** in the United States, immigrants have little trouble finding employment here.

The center estimates there are 6.3-million **illegal** workers in the United States, about half of whom are from Mexico.

Researchers interviewed almost 5,000 men and women applying for Mexican identification cards at consulates in New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Dallas, Fresno, Atlanta and Raleigh, N.C.

About 5 percent of Mexican immigrants who have been in the United States for less than two years were unemployed in Mexico, the **study** found.

And after six months in the United States, only 5 percent of the immigrants reported being unemployed.

The immigrants generally make poverty-level wages in the United States - about \$300 per week - but it's roughly twice what they made in Mexico, according to the report.

According to the **study**, the Mexican immigrants appear to provide different types of labor needed round the country: construction in Atlanta, Dallas and Raleigh; hospitality in New York; manufacturing in Chicago; and agriculture in Fresno.

It's **not** news that there is demand for low-wage labor among American companies, said Mark Krikorian, executive director of the Center for **Immigration Studies** in Washington D.C.

But instead of a guest-worker program or amnesty for **illegal** immigrants, Krikorian said, removing them gradually would, among other things, improve wages for American workers.

Classification

Study: Lack of work is not driving illegal immigration

Language: ENGLISH

Publication-Type: Newspaper

Subject: RESEARCH REPORTS (91%); IMMIGRATION (90%); HISPANIC AMERICANS (90%); ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS (89%); WAGES & SALARIES (89%); FOREIGN LABOR (89%); RESEARCH INSTITUTES (78%); AMNESTY (73%); PRESS CONFERENCES (70%); POVERTY & HOMELESSNESS (66%); EMBASSIES & CONSULATES (53%)

Geographic: RALEIGH, NC, USA (92%); ATLANTA, GA, USA (91%); CHICAGO, IL, USA (90%); NEW YORK, NY, USA (90%); LOS ANGELES, CA, USA (79%); NEW YORK, USA (92%); NORTH CAROLINA, USA (79%); DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, USA (79%); CALIFORNIA, USA (79%); UNITED STATES (94%)

Load-Date: December 13, 2005

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