

Report: U.S. relies heavily on illegal workers;
Half on farm, 25% in home, 10% in eateries

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Byline: JULIA MALONE

Body

Washington --- Nearly half of America's farm workers, 25 percent of household workers and 10 percent of restaurant employees are illegal immigrants, according to a new study about America's undocumented foreign population.

The report, produced for the privately financed Pew Hispanic Center, was timed for release as President Bush meets today with Mexican President Vicente Fox to discuss border and migration issues.

Although a major amnesty plan is not on the agenda, officials continue to discuss a possible increase in permits to allow more temporary workers from Mexico.

Cox Washington Bureau

The Pew research indicates that the majority of the 7.8 million illegal residents in the United States come from Mexico. It also found that close to 4 percent of the urban workforce is illegal.

These undocumented workers tend to be clustered in low-wage service and labor jobs, including garment-making, meatpacking and agricultural work, the study found. They also make up 6 percent of construction laborers and almost 5 percent of all manufacturing workers.

Philip Martin, one of the researchers and an economist at the University of California, Davis, estimated that 47 percent of the 2.5 million farm workers are in the United States illegally. Large farms that employ contract labor tend to have more illegals than smaller farms. Fruit and vegetable growers tend to hire illegal help more often than livestock farmers do, he said.

Martin said the supply of cheap, illegal labor has been plentiful during the past 20 years. He noted, however, that the agriculture industry also could find ways to substitute for those workers, if the flow were reduced.

"There are alternative ways to get any kind of work done," Davis said. The wine industry relies on machines for three-fourths of its harvest, and other commodities, including Georgia's Vidalia onion industry, could follow that lead, he said.

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The Pew study's statistical portrait of the **illegal** workforce drew conflicting conclusions from groups that monitor immigration.

"What we've seen in the last decade is that entire low-wage sectors of the economy are dependent on immigrant **workers**," said Frank Sharry, executive director of the National Immigration Forum, an immigrant advocacy group.

"To us, it cries out for a comprehensive solution," said Sharry, whose group has called for a process for legalizing immigrants already here and allowing more to come with the government's permission.

Steven Camarota, research director for the Center for Immigration Studies, which favors a reduction in immigration, said the Pew **report** left out important consequences of the influx of undocumented **workers**.

"Does the modern American economy need a lot of high school dropouts?" Camarota asked, referring to the **illegal** population, which tends to have low education and low skill levels.

"The fiscal outcome of **illegal** immigration is overwhelmingly negative," he said, adding that this group costs more in social services than do other residents. "The reverse is true for [immigrants] with college degrees," he said.

Classification

Language: ENGLISH

Subject: **ILLEGAL** IMMIGRANTS (92%); **FARM** LABOR (92%); IMMIGRATION (89%); LABOR FORCE (89%); FOREIGN LABOR (89%); SERVICE **WORKERS** (78%); WAGES & SALARIES (78%); AMNESTY (78%); GARMENT **WORKERS** (78%); FACTORY **WORKERS** (78%); RESEARCH **REPORTS** (78%); RESEARCH INSTITUTES (77%); ECONOMICS (77%); TEMPORARY EMPLOYMENT (73%); MIGRATION ISSUES (73%); EXECUTIVES (71%); SCHOOL DROP OUTS (62%); HIGH SCHOOLS (61%); SECONDARY SCHOOLS (50%)

Company: UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA (55%); UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA (55%)

Organization: UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA (55%); UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA (55%)

Industry: **FARM** LABOR (92%); AGRICULTURE (90%); GARMENT **WORKERS** (78%); AGRICULTURAL TRADE (78%); MISC VEGETABLE **FARMING** (78%); FRUITS & VEGETABLES (78%); FACTORY **WORKERS** (78%); VEGETABLE **FARMING** (78%); LIVESTOCK (73%); FRUIT & NUT **FARMING** (73%); RESTAURANTS (73%); ANIMAL **FARMING** & BREEDING (73%); ANIMAL SLAUGHTERING & PROCESSING (72%); APPAREL MFG (68%); ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE INDUSTRY (67%); CONSTRUCTION (67%); HIGH SCHOOLS (61%); SECONDARY SCHOOLS (50%)

Person: VICENTE FOX QUESADA (56%)

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