



# IMMIGRATION POLICY CENTER

*...providing factual information about immigration and immigrants in America*

*For Immediate Release*

## **Unreliable CIS Data Is Out-of-Date and Context** *Restrictionist Group Analysis Long on Fear, Short on Solutions*

**March 9, 2009**

**Washington D.C.** - Newspaper and television are running a narrow story quoting out-of-date and out-of-context data prepared by the immigration restrictionist group, the Center for Immigration Studies (CIS), who are alleging that 300,000 "illegal immigrants" will benefit from jobs created by the recently-approved economic stimulus plan. Unfortunately, these stories provide no counter-analysis from other research groups or experts who study these issues.

In order to provide a more balanced analysis, the Immigration Policy Center (IPC) has produced a fact check which clarifies CIS' fuzzy claims:

***If you torture the numbers long enough, they will tell you anything.***

CIS's estimates of the number of undocumented workers who will take stimulus jobs are manufactured, relying upon mischaracterizations of government projections and outdated estimates of the undocumented workforce.

- CIS asserts that the stimulus bill will create two million new construction jobs based on a 2007 estimate by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) on how many "construction-oriented" jobs are directly created by each \$1 billion of "federal highway expenditures." Yet "construction-oriented" jobs include technical and management positions for which undocumented immigrants, who tend to be less-skilled, are unlikely to qualify.
- CIS then claims that 15% of these two million new construction jobs (roughly 300,000) will go to undocumented workers because an estimated 15% of construction workers were undocumented in 2005-before the economic collapse and before the huge job losses in construction. Ironically, CIS itself also claims that undocumented workers are leaving the country.
- In using this estimate, CIS is applying the highway jobs-creation formula to all infrastructure projects in the stimulus bill when, in fact, we know that the reach of the stimulus bill goes well beyond highways. There is no way to know how many less-skilled jobs will be created much less how many might be filled by undocumented workers.

*(more)*

***E-Verify is not a silver bullet and is not ready for primetime.***

- The costs of E-Verify, which CIS promotes relentlessly, [would decrease federal revenues by \\$17.3 billion over 10 years](#) according to the Congressional Budget Office (CBO).
- E-Verify relies on an [error-ridden database](#) that includes 17.8 million discrepancies, over 12 million of which pertain to native-born U.S. citizens. Expanding the program means that U.S. citizens would have to ask the government for permission to work and rely on a government database for speed and accuracy. Up to 3 million workers a year would have to navigate a bureaucratic maze to fix their records.

***Real solutions come from real reform.***

- E-Verify won't keep undocumented immigrants out of the workforce, nor will any of the other "enforcement only" policies that have been tried and failed over the past two decades.
- Comprehensive immigration reform that includes a path to legal status for undocumented immigrants already in the United States would eliminate the pool of exploitable, underground workers whom unscrupulous employers use to undercut wages and working conditions for all workers.

The truth is that no one knows the percentage of jobs that will go to undocumented workers. However, restrictionist groups like CIS are not pursuing solutions, but rather scare tactics and mass deportation strategies. To ensure that U.S. citizens and immigrants legally authorized to work in the U.S. get the jobs they deserve, we must comprehensively address the broken immigration system, legalize our workforce, and enforce labor laws against bad-apple employers who take advantage of the broken system. Scaring us with big numbers is not a solution.

- View the IPC fact sheet in its entirety: [A Stimulus For Fear](#)
- View the IPC fact sheet on E-Verify: [How Expanding E-Verify in the Stimulus Bill Would Hurt American Workers](#)
- View the Immigration Impact Blog Post: [CIS' Dubious Data Deflects Rational Immigration Debate](#)

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For press inquiries contact:

Wendy Sefsaf, 202-507-7524 (office) or email [wsefsaf@ailf.org](mailto:wsefsaf@ailf.org)

Andrea Nill, 202-507-7520 (office) or email [anill@ailf.org](mailto:anill@ailf.org)