

whether we stabilize or whether we continue to grow.

- Do we have insufficient labor to run our economy? Does California need more unskilled labor? If both parties now agree that we must "end welfare as we know it," where are we going to get the jobs to start welfare recipients up the economic ladder?
- Does immigration help us to develop a more fair, egalitarian society? Does it advance the interests of America's minorities?

The answers to these questions are crucial to the immigration debate. Our society must look at the long term domestic impacts of immigration and answer the public's hard questions. It is not enough to answer in slogans.

Twenty-five years ago, a presidential commission spent a lot of time and money looking at reasons for population growth. The Commission on Population Growth and the American Future reported:

*We have looked for, and have not found, any continuing*

*economic argument for continued population growth. The health of our country does not depend on it, nor does the vitality of business nor the welfare of the average person."*

Since that time, we have added 60 million new Americans, and California has doubled its population.

Inquiring minds want to know why? Who benefits? Who loses? Will immigration leave a better place for our grandchildren to grow up?

These questions will not go away. □

# Time for a Moratorium

*Family analogies illustrate common-sense justification*

by Jack C. Terrazas  
and Yeh Ling-Ling

Much time and energy have been spent on the immigration debate. How about letting common sense guide our immigration policy for all?

Item: Po Wong, director of the Chinese Newcomers Service

*Jack C. Terrazas is the president of the National Hispanic Alliance based in Chicago and Yeh Ling-Ling is the founder of the Diversity Coalition for an Immigration Moratorium based in San Francisco. This article is reprinted by permission from the San Francisco Chronicle, June 12, 1996.*

Center in San Francisco, indicated in 1993 that of the 11,000 new Chinese immigrants who were looking for work through his agency, only 2 percent were successfully placed. He has also said: "I don't think our community is equipped to welcome this large a number ... It's very depressing to see so many people come here looking for work."

Think of America as comparable to a family with 10 children, including Paul who is blind, Mary, who has learning disabilities, and Peter, who has severe emotional problems. Would it be wise and responsible for such a family to adopt their neighbors' children, even if they were beautiful and talented?

If the parents adopted their neighbors' children or have more of their own, fewer of their limited

resources would be left, particularly for the three children with disabilities. Although the new additions did not cause Paul, Mary and Peter's problems, their presence would make it much more difficult financially for the family to afford expensive specialists. A significant portion of the family's income would have to be spent on food, day care, health care and other expenses for the new members of the family.

Is the situation in the United States so different? We now have 263 million residents, versus 60 million, when the Statute of Liberty was erected. We have \$5 trillion in national debt and 39 million Americans live below the poverty line. Today's high-tech economy requires fewer and fewer workers. Millions of our workers are unemployed, millions are

underemployed, and we also have countless discouraged workers in addition to those who have never found work.

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***"A Wall Street Journal/NBC News poll in March showed that the majority of Americans favor a five-year moratorium on all immigration."***

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Is it wise for the U.S. to continue to absorb about 12 million immigrants a year? Immigration is not the sole cause of America's problems, but continued mass immigration, legal and illegal, makes existing educational, budgetary, social and economic problems much more difficult to solve. Our immigration policy is also a disincentive for developing nations to provide for their own citizens.

Proponents of mass immigration argue that the current percentage of immigrants in the U.S. today is much lower than around the turn of the century. Therefore, according to them, the U.S. should continue to maintain high levels of immigration. Those advocates fail to understand that America is similar to a family which once was very affluent and had only one child. Under those circumstances, the family could well afford to adopt four children, even though this would mean a 400 percent increase in family size.

Unfortunately, the parents have been laid off from work, are heavily in debt and now have 10 children, some of whom have not been fed three meals a day. Would it be wise to adopt one more child, even if this only meant a 10 percent increase in family size?

Many existing legal immigrants and citizens in this country are feeling the effects of mass immigration as our schools, labor markets and freeways are overflowing. A Roper Poll released this past February showed that 78 percent of blacks and 52 percent of Hispanics want annual immigration to be less than 300,000 a year. A Wall Street Journal/NBC News poll in March showed that the majority of Americans favor a five-year

moratorium on all immigration.

Reducing legal immigration only requires an act of Congress signed into law by the president at no cost to taxpayers. Illegal immigration can be significantly curbed by taking away the job and benefit magnets in the United States through employer sanctions and tamper-proof documents to verify immigration status. Our national leaders should practice democracy and exercise some common sense by immediately enacting a five-year moratorium on legal immigration with an all-inclusive ceiling of 100,000 a year. Such a moratorium would allow us to address existing problems and to develop a long-term, sustainable immigration policy. □

**Argentine goal: Increase population from 33 to 100 million**

BUENOS AIRES

President Carlos Menem yesterday used a meeting with members of the Bolivian community to promise that foreign residents in the country will have the right to vote in future national elections. The president promised that they will be able to vote "just like Argentines, not only in municipal elections, but also in provincial and national elections."

Menem added that "this is one of the big dreams of our liberators, San Martin and Bolivar — Latin American unity."

President Menem was speaking at Government House where he announced a health care scheme for Bolivian immigrants. At the gathering he signed autographs and kissed children. He received an ovation for his comments. "I love Bolivia," Menem said.

The president invited foreign residents to "beget children because if we want to govern we must populate." Menem said that Argentina's goal was to increase its population of 33 million to 100 million.

— The Buenos Aires Herald, January 30, 1996

Submitted by Leon Bouvier

# The U.S. — Retirement Home for Immigrants

*Changes needed to block abuse of SSI, Medicaid*

by Robert Rector

The U.S. welfare system is rapidly becoming a deluxe retirement home for the elderly of other countries. In 1994, nearly 738,000 noncitizen residents were receiving aid from the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program. This was a 580% increase — up from 127,900 in 1982 — in just 12 years. The overwhelming majority of noncitizen SSI recipients are elderly. Most apply for welfare within 5 years of arriving in the U.S.

An analysis by Norman Matloff of the University of California at Davis shows that 45% of elderly immigrants in California received cash welfare in 1990. Among Russian immigrants the figure was 66%; among Chinese, 55%. Worse, recent

immigrants are far more likely to become welfare dependents than those who arrived in the U.S. in earlier decades. If current trends continue, the U.S. will have more than three million noncitizens on SSI within 10 years.

Without reform, the total cost of SSI and Medicaid benefits for

benefits for resident aliens.

Professor Matloff found that most elderly immigrants are well aware of U.S. welfare policies and procedures when they arrive here. Besides word of mouth, many receive formal counseling or read publications on how to obtain welfare benefits. For example, "What You Need to Know About Life in America," a Chinese-language publication sold in Taiwan and Hong Kong and in Chinese bookstores in the U.S., includes a 36-page guide to SSI and other welfare benefits. The largest-circulation Chinese-language newspaper in America, *World Journal*, runs a regular "Dear Abby"-style advice column on

SSI and other immigration-related matters.

Prudent restrictions on providing welfare to recent immigrants long have been part of the American tradition. America's first immigration law, passed by Congress in 1882, prohibited the entry of paupers and others who were likely to become public charges. Similar restrictions have appeared in subsequent immigration laws. Today, the Immigration and Nationality Act declares

Projected costs (in billions) for resident aliens

	Number of aliens on SSI	SSI cost	Medicaid cost	Total
1995	854,323	\$4.3	\$7.7	\$12.0
1996	988,794	\$5.1	\$9.3	\$14.4
1997	1,144,430	\$6.1	\$11.4	\$17.5
1998	1,324,563	\$7.3	\$14.0	\$21.3
1999	1,533,049	\$8.7	\$17.0	\$25.7
2000	1,774,351	\$10.4	\$20.8	\$31.2
2001	2,053,634	\$12.3	\$25.4	\$37.7
2002	2,376,876	\$14.7	\$31.0	\$45.7
2003	2,750,997	\$17.5	\$37.9	\$55.4
2004	3,184,003	\$20.9	\$46.2	\$67.1

Source: SSI and Medicaid costs from Committee on Ways and Means, U.S. House of Representatives, "Overview of Entitlement Programs," 1994 Greenbook.

elderly noncitizen immigrants will amount to more than \$328 billion over the next decade. The cost of providing SSI and Medicaid benefits for these individuals will reach more than \$67 billion a year by the year 2004 (see table).

Even if the rapid increase in the number of elderly noncitizens receiving welfare were to halt and remain at current levels — which is highly unlikely — U.S. taxpayers would still pay more than \$127 billion over the next 10 years for SSI and Medicaid

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