



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on May 10, 2016

Report: Immigrants Receive More Welfare Than American Citizens

According to a newly released report by the Center for Immigration Studies, legal and illegal immigrant-headed households receive an average of \$6,241 in welfare, 41-percent more than native households, which receive an average of \$4,431. That represents a total cost of \$103 billion in welfare benefits to those households, the *Washington Examiner* writes.

The *Daily Caller* observes that this study follows up on a report from the Center for Immigration Studies last year that found that 51 percent of immigrant households receive some type of welfare, compared to 30 percent of native households. The September 2015 study by CIS was significant, as it revealed much higher welfare participation rates than had been previously indicated.

Monday's report, based on 2012 figures, goes beyond participation and estimates dollar costs connected to immigrants and welfare. That report revealed a number of significant findings.

Based on the figures, the study reveals that immigrants from Mexico and Central America were the major recipients of welfare benefits, averaging \$8,251 annually — “86 percent higher than the costs of native households,” the report indicates.

But the same study finds that immigrants from other parts of the world receive significantly less welfare than even native-headed households. The report shows that the average European immigrant household receives \$3,509 in benefits and the South Asian immigrant household receives \$2,565 on average.

The report's author — Jason Richwine, a Harvard-educated analyst of immigration data — notes that while illegal immigrants cannot receive benefits directly, they are able to receive welfare benefits through their U.S.-born children, though possibly not as much. Illegal immigrant households receive an average of \$5,692, while legal immigrants receive \$6,378.

Legal or illegal, immigrant households receive more benefits than native households. Overall, the report finds that on average, immigrant households receive 33 percent more cash welfare, 57 percent more food assistance, and 44 percent more Medicaid benefits than the average American household.

Medicaid is the largest welfare program, Richwine notes.

He [contends](#) that the report's findings reveal the impact of immigration on the deficit and could be used by those opposed to immigration:

While it is important for Americans to understand the rate of welfare use among immigrants,





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expressing that use in dollar terms offers a more tangible metric that is tied to current debates over fiscal policy. With the nation facing a long-term budgetary deficit, this study helps illuminate immigration's impact on the problem.

This is particularly clear when one examines the taxes paid by each type of household. Last year's report by CIS showed that immigrant households pay just 89 cents in federal income and payroll taxes for every dollar paid by native households.

Furthermore, an analysis by the Heritage Foundation, cited by Richwine, revealed that in 2010, immigrant households paid \$4,344 less in taxes than they received in services. The deficit for native households, on the other hand, was \$310.

Richwine notes that the National Research Council will release a new analysis later this year with the latest figures.

Mark Krikorian, executive director of CIS, takes it a step further, noting that failure to change the current immigration policy will force taxpayers to continue to foot the bill for immigrant households. "If we continue to permit large numbers of less-educated people to move here from abroad, we have to accept that there will be huge and ongoing costs to taxpayers," he wrote in a statement.

Richwine contends that much of the discrepancy in welfare benefits to immigrant families versus native households has to do with the lower levels of education and larger families of immigrants. "Over 24 percent of immigrant households are headed by a high school dropout, compared to just 8 percent of native households," he writes. "In addition, 13 percent of immigrant households have three or more children, vs. just 6 percent of native households."

Richwine determines that the findings point to one conclusion: A significant change to the welfare state is an absolute necessity:

In order to reduce the cost of immigrant welfare use, either the welfare system or the immigration system must change. The former option is sometimes described as "building a wall around the welfare state" to prevent new immigrants from accessing it. It is easier said than done. Loopholes and exceptions have weakened previous attempts to limit immigrant access to welfare. More importantly, Congress has no power to prevent the U.S.-born children of immigrants from using the same welfare programs that the children of natives do. No matter how strong the "wall around the welfare state" is built, it cannot stop immigrant parents from signing up their U.S.-born children for Medicaid, SNAP, free school lunch, etc., as long as native parents can do the same.

Only a full-scale rollback of the welfare state for both immigrants and natives would prevent immigrant families from consuming welfare dollars.

Sadly, under this administration, that is not likely. The timing of the report's release coincides with another report by the Center for Immigration Studies that reveals President Obama is asking for more than \$17,000 for every new illegal minor. Putting that into perspective, the *Washington Examiner* compares that figure to Social Security retirement benefits, on average \$14,772, noting that the amount spent on illegal Central American teens is \$2,841 more.

The report, entitled "Welcoming Unaccompanied Alien Children to the United States," examines the administration's efforts to allow hundreds of thousands of mostly male teens to enter the country.

That CIS report found that \$1.3 billion in benefits were paid to "unaccompanied children" — a cost that is more than double what was paid in 2010. And the president's budget, currently awaiting



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congressional approval, includes another \$2.1 billion for refugees, including illegal aliens from Central America.

But the report notes that most of the undocumented minors do not actually qualify as refugees. Some critics contend it may be part of the administration's backdoor approach to amnesty.

The report's author, Nayla Rush, asserts that the administration's Central American Refugee/Parole Program with the United Nations, which declares these minors to be refugees, ultimately lays the groundwork for granting legal status to their illegal parents. "Children will be able to qualify for refugee status and then be flown to the United States. As a reminder, refugees receive automatic legal status and are required to apply for a green card within their first year following arrival. They can apply for citizenship five years from the date of entry," Rush explains.

"Since parents from Central America illegally present in the United States could not benefit from the CAM program and sponsor their children, perhaps the reverse can take place with children admitted under this new version of the refugee program. Children, acquiring legal status followed by naturalization by the time they reach adulthood, could indeed sponsor their parents," wrote Rush.

According to the *Washington Examiner*, the same report further reveals the government's flagrant disregard of taxpayer dollars, as it shows that the Obama administration is even funding the travel for the illegal minors to enter the United States.



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