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CHUCK DEVORE

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CIS and the Texas Immigrant-Job Myth

There is no reason to believe that 81 percent of new jobs were filled by immigrants in Texas.

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The Texas Public Policy Foundation (TPPF) has released a detailed rejoinder to a well-publicized [study by the Center for Immigration Studies \(CIS\)](#) that made a remarkable claim: "Of jobs created in Texas since 2007, 81 percent were taken by newly arrived immigrant workers (legal and illegal)."

Put simply, CIS used faulty methodology to make its main point. It compared a *net* increase in jobs in Texas over a four-year period with a *gross* increase in employed newly arrived immigrants in Texas.

This is truly an apples-to-oranges comparison; it is as if a report claimed that Google is a larger company than Apple because its market capitalization of \$162 billion exceeds Apple's annual revenues of \$100 billion.

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In addition, CIS estimated that fully half of all newly arrived immigrants to Texas were illegally in America. While a case that these number are off can be made using Department of Homeland Security data showing that the number of illegal immigrants getting new jobs in Texas (60,000) was less than half that claimed in the CIS report (153,880), the more important issue is the flawed methodology that led to the report's most widely reported claim.

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It is true that Texas had a nation-leading net of 279,000 more jobs in the second quarter of 2011 than it did in the second quarter of 2007. But CIS's claim that immigrants filled 225,000 of these jobs is wrong. There is no way to determine — statistically or otherwise — that this is the case. The numbers are simply not comparable. Looking at the *total* number of jobs created in our dynamic and complex economy shows the fault of this claim.

Every month, about 4 million jobs turn over in the United States because of workers' leaving to take a better job, retiring, being laid off, and because of corporate restructuring, bankruptcies, etc. Texas's share of this natural churn is about 320,000 jobs every month. During the last four years, this meant that more than 15 million jobs have been filled. Additionally, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that during this time Texas created 5,627,328 new jobs while shedding 5,348,238 existing jobs. If an immigrant changed jobs four or five times during that four-year period, filled four or five of those 15 million jobs. That doesn't mean he was holding four or five jobs at once, or that every job filled by an immigrant represents a new immigrant in a new permanent job. The number of jobs filled is much larger than the number of new jobs created.

TPPF's detailed response can be seen here. We point out that trying to draw conclusions about immigration and employment in Texas in isolation from other factors is problematic at best. Texas has a strong job-creation record as compared with the nation as a whole. This record is not only affected by immigration, but also by domestic migration (781,542 Americans moved to Texas in the past decade while 1.5 million moved out of New York and 328,695 moved out of Massachusetts, artificially holding the latter states' unemployment rate down while increasing it for Texas), the effect of extended unemployment insurance on workers' willingness to accept new employment or move in search of work, and by the dynamics of business creation.

TPPF contends that Texas's record of job creation is due to low state spending and taxes, a predictable, low level of regulation, and strong property-rights protection, a sound civil-justice system, and minimal dependence on — or interference from — the federal government. These policies benefit Texans, as well as people who decide to move to Texas from other states and from other countries.

— *Chuck DeVore is a visiting senior fellow in fiscal policy at the Texas Public Policy Foundation. He served in the California legislature from 2004 to 2010, is a lieutenant colonel (retired) in the U.S. Army Reserve, and has worked in the Pentagon for the Reagan administration.*

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