“In 2003 alone the labor of undocumented workers poured $7 billion in taxes into Social Security.”

Derrick Z. Jackson

Derrick Z. Jackson is an award-winning journalist for the Boston Globe, where he has been a columnist since 1988. He was a Nieman Fellow in Journalism at Harvard University in 1984 and a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize for Commentary in 2001. In this op-ed column for the Boston Globe, Jackson argues that undocumented workers pay taxes and contribute to the American economy, even though they are often denied access to many government benefits.

AS YOU READ, CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:
1. According to the data presented in this viewpoint, in what ways do undocumented immigrants become a part of the American economy?
2. What is the difference in income between legal immigrant families and illegal immigrant families, according to Lipman?
2. What does Standard & Poor’s suggest be done with the money that illegal immigrants put into Social Security each year?

At a 2006 New York rally for legalization of immigrants, Chung-Wha Hong, the executive director of the New York Immigration Coalition, said, “We are inseparable, indivisible, and impossible to take out of America.” In Phoenix, Victor Colex, a 37-year-old fence builder who makes between $7 and $8 an hour, told the Washington Post, “We are not asking for favors. We only want to work, for our families and parents and children.” In Boston, 26-year-old Robin Martini, a legal immigrant from Guatemala, told the Globe, “We give a grain a day of ourselves to this country. We want to be part of it. We respect the laws. We pay our taxes. We want a piece of the American dream.

Should Illegal Immigrants Be Able to Apply for Legal Status?

The majority of adults in New Jersey believe that illegal immigrants who have lived and worked in the United States for at least two years should keep their jobs.

- They should be given a chance to keep their jobs and eventually apply for legal status.
- They should be deported back to their native country.

32% 65%

Source: Boston Globe.