

Debating Michigan Illegal Immigration Law

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Assignment:

- In groups, students will take on the personas of four different think tanks or lobbies, two advocating restrictionist immigration policies, two on the side of open immigration policies. The debate will center on the merits of Michigan House Bill 4305, called “Support Our Law Enforcement and Neighborhoods Act.” Groups will create a list of talking points that accurately represent the position of their role. Each point must cite evidence that supports the claim (e.g. data) and that shows this point properly represents the position of the think tank (e.g., a position paper or op-ed piece).
- One class session for guided preparation. Assign groups—if instructor knows students well enough, try to place students in groups where they will role-play a position contrary to their positions. Students should bring laptops if possible. By end of session, groups should have blocked out a position on the proposed Michigan law, and assigned group members particular tasks, including the initial debate presentation.
- One class session for debate. Alternate between restrictionist and open immigration positions. Allow 5 minutes for initial presentation. Five more for rebuttals. Students should remain in character. Depending on length of class, allow time for open floor discussion, keeping last five minutes for debriefing (Any surprises during the research for this debate? Most important thing learned in this debate? Any one change her or his mind as a result of this activity? Why or why not?)

Goals:

As result of this activity, the hope is that students

- will have greater knowledge of current immigration law, the range of positions on immigration law, and the complexity of immigration policy;
- will be more adept at finding online information, data, and commentary on immigration issues, and more cognizant of the way the same data can be used to support contrary positions (or the way ideology can frame data and logic); and
- will have practiced oral civil discourse and debate, as well as the ability to take on and comprehend positions contrary to one’s own;

Evaluation:

- Group grades assigned. Grades depend on clarity of debate presentation, coherence of argument (both in initial debate stance and response to other positions), and accurate content in terms of role playing and data used. Instructor may want to create a rubric with these three criteria.
- Activity worth 5% of final grade

Links:

House Bill 4305, “Support Our Law Enforcement and Safe Neighborhoods Act, at [http://www.legislature.mi.gov/\(S\(1jt2vhaqpvymfzbndeyqy3uw\)\)/mileg.aspx?page=getobject&objectname=2011-HB-4305](http://www.legislature.mi.gov/(S(1jt2vhaqpvymfzbndeyqy3uw))/mileg.aspx?page=getobject&objectname=2011-HB-4305)

Organizations advocating restrictionist immigration policy

- Americans for Legal Immigration PAC (ALIPAC), at <http://www.alipac.us/content/>
- Center for Immigration Studies (CIS), at <http://www.cis.org>
- Federation for Immigration Reform (FAIR), at <http://www.fairus.org>
- Heritage Foundation, at <http://www.heritage.org/issues/immigration>
- Minuteman Project, at <http://minutemanproject.com>
- NumbersUSA, at <https://www.numbersusa.com/content/>
- Progressives for Immigration Reform, at <http://www.progressivesforimmigrationreform.org>

Organizations advocating open immigration policy

- AFL-CIO, at <http://www.aflcio.org/Issues/Immigration>
- American Immigration Council, at <http://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org>
- Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc., at <http://cliniclegal.org>
- Institute for Policy Studies, at <http://www.ips-dc.org>
- Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services, at <http://lirs.org>
- Migration Information Source, at <http://www.migrationinformation.org>
- The Urban Institute, at <http://www.urban.org/immigrants/index.cfm>

Other useful national sites for data and commentary

- Grantmakers concerned with immigrants and refugees (GCIR), interactive map of county-level data on the foreign-born in the US, at <http://maps.gcir.org>
- Pew Research Center, at <http://www.pewresearch.org>
- Pew Research, Hispanic Center, at <http://www.pewhispanic.org>
- US Bureau of the Census, American Factfinder, at <http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>
- US Department of Homeland Security, Immigration Statistics, at <http://www.dhs.gov/immigration-statistics>

Other useful Michigan and local sites for data and commentary

- Bethany Christian Services, Refugee Outreach and Referral Assistance (ROAR), Grand Rapids, at <http://www.bethany.org/grandrapids/refugee-outreach-assistance-and-referral-roar>
- Bethany Christian Services, Refugee Center for Healing Torture Trauma, Grand Rapids, at <http://www.bethany.org/grandrapids/refugee-center-healing-torture-trauma>
- Farmworker Legal Services of Michigan, at <http://www.farmworkerlaw.org>
- Grand Rapids Dioceses, Immigration Legal Services, at <http://www.dioceseofgrandrapids.org/ministries/Outreach/Pages/Immigration-Legal-Services.aspx#.Ugjn6RZNs6o>
- Hispanic Center of Western Michigan, at <http://www.hispanic-center.org>
- Julian Samora Institute, Michigan State University, at <http://www.jsri.msu.edu>
- Michigan Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker Program, at http://www.michaglabor.org/index_agriculture2.jsp
- Michigan Immigrant Rights Center, at <http://michiganimmigrant.org>
- West Michigan Latino Community Coalition, at <http://westmilcc.wordpress.com/author/westmilcc/>

Some useful references on Latin American immigrants in the Midwest

- Alvarado, Rudolph Valier, and Sonya Yvette Alvarado, Mexicans and Mexican Americans in Michigan (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2003).
- Badillo, David, Latinos in Michigan (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2003).
- Fernandez, Delia, “Becoming Latino: Mexican and Puerto Rican Community Formation in Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1926-1964,” *Michigan Historical Review* 39:1 (Spring 2013): 71-100.
- Garcia, Juan R., Mexicans in the Midwest, 1900-1932 (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2004).
- Martinez, Rubén O., Ed., Latinos in the Midwest (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2011).
- Millard, Ann V., and Jorge Chapa, Apple Pie & Enchiladas: Latino Newcomers in the Rural Midwest (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001).
- Passel, Jeffrey S. and Roberto Suro, “Rise, Peak, and Decline: Trends in U.S. Immigration, 1992-2004,” Pew Hispanic Center Report (September 27, 2005), at <http://pewhispanic.org/files/reports/53.pdf> [accessed August 12, 2013].
- State of Michigan, Michigan Civil Rights Commission, “A Report on the Conditions of Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers in Michigan” (March, 2010), at <http://afop.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/07/MDCR-Migrant-Report-2010.pdf> [accessed July 20, 2013].