PERSPECTIVES ON
UNDOCUMENTED WORKERS:
BLACK AND HISPANIC VIEWPOINTS

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This paper was developed to present and examine Black and Hispanic views on the issue of immigration and undocumented workers. It was developed following interviews with Black and Hispanic leaders, as well as a review of pertinent literature. The paper describes what is known about the issue and points out what is not known. Interviews with leaders of national Black and Hispanic organizations were used to gain perspectives on the areas of agreement and disagreement between these two groups.

It is hoped that the paper will promote reasoned dialogue on this important nationally divisive issue, especially among the members of the Working Committee on the Concerns of Hispanics and Blacks. This national group was established in 1978 to explore, articulate, and advocate issues of concern to Blacks and Hispanics, and to encourage cooperation and joint action by the two largest U.S. minority groups. The Committee's founders are Mr. Carl Holman, President of the National Urban Coalition, and Mr. Raul Yzaguirre, President of the National Council of La Raza.

The material obtained for this paper through private interviews was provided with the understanding that the names and affiliations of those interviewed would be kept confidential. Any attributed quotations therefore come not from the interviews but from public statements or published documents.
I. HISTORY OF IMMIGRATION POLICY IN THE U.S.

The history of immigration policy in the United States has been shaded by the twin policies of economics and racism. Inequitable policies have been directed at a wide range of groups; for example:

While the American population had little difficulty tolerating the involuntary immigration of millions of Black persons, it was quite intolerant of the voluntary immigration of persons from Italy, Poland, and Turkey coming to participate in the land of opportunity as free individuals.¹

From the beginning of our nation, immigration policy has brought in additional workers when they were needed to aid the economy, and because of racial, ethnic, and religious prejudice has excluded immigrants whenever it was felt that the work force needed to be controlled. The first two immigration laws passed by the United States Congress were the Alien Act of 1798, which excluded potential political agitators, and an Act in 1807 that banned the importation of slaves.² There were no further federal laws in the following 70 years. During that time, laborers were imported to build the Erie Canal and pick and shovel workers were imported to build railroads. Many of those workers were refugees from the potato famine in Ireland and from other parts of Europe. Scandinavians and Northern Europeans were encouraged to homestead the farmland of the Midwest in areas where the federal government had granted huge tracts of land to the railroads to encourage westward expansion of transportation and commerce.

Chinese were imported, often against their will, as extremely cheap labor to build railroads in the West. But after the transcontinental railroad was completed in 1869, there was an increasing resentment of
the presence of the Chinese. In 1876, the Supreme Court ruled that the federal government could pre-empt all state authority in the area of immigration. In 1882, Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act which precluded Chinese immigration until 1943, when China was finally allowed a small annual quota of immigrants.³

During the middle and the late 1800's, workers were encouraged to migrate from Ireland and Northern Europe to work in the flourishing factories of Chicago and New York. Later in the century, when more workers were needed, immigration was also encouraged from Southern and Eastern Europe. At the time, this was considered to be a relaxation of racial and ethnic standards necessary in order to increase the labor supply for economic reasons. As the need for a growing industrial work force tapered off, resentment of darker-skinned Italians and Southern Europeans began to fester. In 1921, Congress passed the Quota Law which imposed the greatest restrictions against the smallest ethnic minorities then present in the United States. The Immigration Act of 1924, the next piece of legislation dealing with immigration, in effect gave a preference to Northern Europeans.⁴

Immigration from Mexico had grown rapidly from the mid-1800's to about the time immediately preceding the passage of the 1924 Act. Control of Mexican undocumented workers now became a paramount concern, and using the Immigration Act of 1924 as its legal reference, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) spent nearly $1 million extra in patrolling the U.S./Mexico border. Prior to this action, Mexican groups crossing the border did not concern the INS as much as other immigrant groups trying to come into the United States. These latter
groups included Europeans and Canadians. The effect of the extra patrols was to reduce Mexican immigration.

When unemployment skyrocketed during the Great Depression of the 1930's, the federal government acted by stopping immigration from Mexico and by deporting thousands of workers already in the U.S., including some U.S. citizens. Much of the Mexican and Mexican-American work force was deported illegally, on the basis of race and language. The start of World War II, however, saw another labor shortage in the United States, and again the federal government allowed both legal and undocumented Mexican immigrants to work here. A small-scale "bracero" program was initiated in 1942, to provide low-cost temporary agricultural labor. Immediately after the war in 1947, returning American soldiers flooded the U.S. labor market and the federal government again started deporting thousands of Mexican workers from California and Texas. In 1954, the military effort called Operation Wetback extended the massive deportation project to a number of U.S. cities. The total number of Mexicans expelled after World War II totaled nearly five million.5

The next major piece of immigration legislation, in 1951, established a full-scale "bracero" program. The program was initiated to deal with the problem of providing farmers with a stable, low-cost work force while at the same time dealing with the issue of undocumented workers. Many growers considered a "documented alien" work force as a practical, safe, and economically and politically feasible alternative to undocumented immigration. The braceros entered the country legally to work during the agricultural season; most came as single men. The number of documented Mexican braceros peaked at 445,197 in 1956 and
remained over 400,000 persons each year until 1959. In that year a steady decline began, and it continued until the end of the program in 1964.

The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 became the nation's basic U.S. immigration law. It was the product of extensive immigration study and brought together, for the first time, all the nation's laws on immigration and naturalization. It prescribed a total mechanism for dealing with immigration, detailing the conditions for admitting aliens into this country and allowing them to stay. The Act was administered and enforced by the Attorney General and the Secretary of State of the United States. Operating responsibilities, that is, the execution of the policies in the Act, rested with the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) and the Visa Office.

On October 3, 1965, another far-reaching revision of immigration policy in the United States was enacted. The Immigration and Nationality Act Amendments of 1965 repealed the national origins quota system which had been the cornerstone for numerical restrictions on immigration. The 1965 amendments rejected nationality and ethnic background as determinants of immigration policy and substituted instead a system of priorities based on (1) reunification of families and (2) skills needed in this country. However, far from diminishing the importance of the concept of numerical restrictions in U.S. immigration policy, the Act in its final form imposed an annual ceiling of 120,000 on Western Hemisphere immigration.

Further amendments were enacted in 1975 in order to fill the gaps left by the 1965 amendments. The focus had been so much on the repeal of the national origins quota system that policy-makers had not adequate-
ly considered implications of immigration policy on Western Hemisphere migration. Immigration policy up to that time hampered Western Hemisphere immigration to the benefit of Eastern Hemisphere immigration. The 1976 amendments modified the seven-point preference system already in use as well as imposing a 20,000 person per country per year limit on both hemispheres. This meant that the ceiling for the Eastern Hemisphere was to be 170,000 while the ceiling for the Western Hemisphere remained 120,000. The provision causing greatest controversy in the Immigration and Nationality Act Amendments of 1975 was the extension of the 20,000 limit to Mexico. Before this Act, immigration from all independent countries in the Western Hemisphere had been limited only by the over-all ceiling of 120,000 immigrant visas, exclusive of immediate relatives and with no per country limitation. The effect of the new quotas was to restrict immigration from the countries of Latin America, the area expected to have the greatest future population growth.6

One can gain a perspective on the number of undocumented immigrants coming into this country by citing more immigration figures. During the period 1934 to 1943, apprehensions of undocumented aliens averaged just under 12,000 per year. The number continued to rise annually, reaching a peak in 1954 when 1,089,583 aliens were apprehended. The 1970's have seen an increase in the number of apprehensions (and presumably in the number of undocumented workers trying to gain entrance into the U.S.). For instance, total apprehensions during the ten-year period 1960-1969 equaled 1,333,687. In the seven years 1970-1976, they equaled 4,579,880.7

In 1980, the Refugee Act was passed. It was designed to change procedures for determining who could enter the country as a political
refugee -- a classification used for Southeast Asian "boat people" and Cuban refugees, and generally denied Haitians, Ethiopians, and Latin Americans. Court challenges are further defining U.S. refugee policy.

More changes in immigration law and policy are likely. Major changes have been proposed by the Carter Administration. Reaction has been so varied, and the issues are so complex, that a Select Commission on Immigration and Refugee Policy was established, and is now in the process of formulating recommendations for a revamping of U.S. legislation, policies, and procedures governing immigration. Commission recommendations are expected at the beginning of 1981.
sympathetic view towards undocumented immigrants, due to cultural and linguistic ties. Some Black spokespersons are calling for the immediate deportation of undocumented immigrants as a quick-fix remedy for the chronically high unemployment rate. One Black official of a national organization admits that she is not sure whether Blacks would take menial jobs, such as picking cucumbers and harvesting lettuce, but according to her, "We’re not going to find that out until the aliens are gone."

The Congressional Black Caucus has not taken a position arguing large-scale displacement. Instead, it is urging the President to reaffirm his commitment to his "war on joblessness" proposal. Other Black citizens make a direct link between Black unemployment and undocumented Hispanic immigration. In 1979 an article in Ebony magazine claimed that undocumented workers are syphoning jobs from Blacks, especially young Black men. It further stated that many disadvantaged Blacks "would work these jobs if only they were offered to them."

Similar statements concerning displacement of Black citizens by undocumented workers have appeared in articles by well-known Black columnist William Raspberry. As he stated in the opening paragraph to a recent column on the subject, "...one small piece of the [unemployment] problem can be dealt with fairly simply: the displacement of American workers by illegal immigrants." Mr. Raspberry then goes on to commend Senator Walter Huddleston (D-Ky) for proposing "...an amendment to the Immigration and Nationality Efficiency Act of 1980 to make it unlawful for employers knowingly to hire illegal aliens. The penalty would be $1,000 per violation or two years in jail." Hispanics are very much opposed to employer sanctions since these would lead to civil right violations against Hispanic U.S.
II. UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS IN THE U.S.

A. Flow of Undocumented Workers

Undocumented workers, most of them destined to become racial and ethnic minorities in the United States, continue immigrating to the U.S. in search of work at an estimated rate of 600,000 persons per year. However, this figure is based on a "flow" concept rather than as "stock" concept. According to Dr. Jorge Bustamante, among the foremost authorities on Mexican immigration, only 9% of the undocumented workers who enter the U.S. each year settle here permanently. Many cross the border several times a year, then return to their home countries. Others come for up to several years, then return home. The Washington Post recently has carried several articles describing temporary immigrants from small towns in El Salvador who use the money earned in the U.S. to buy small farms and build decent houses for their families.

B. Job Displacement

Undocumented immigrants are the most exploited and defenseless group in the United States. Yet at the same time, undocumented immigrants are widely believed to be displacing American citizens in the labor force, specifically unemployed Black and Hispanic citizens, in substantial numbers. The public believes this displacement to be particularly severe for blue-collar and/or low-skill jobs most often serving as a labor market entry for youth and minorities. Because unemployment in the Black community is presently at crisis proportions, Blacks are extremely concerned over this possible displacement. There is also concern among Hispanics, although they generally take a more
citizens in that they would bear the differential onus of having to prove their citizenship. They would moreover give employers an excuse for discriminating against Hispanics. Others have contended that employers seem to prefer "illegal aliens" because they can be exploited more readily than black workers. 11

Some blacks argue that in certain places, such as Miami, their lack of fluency in Spanish has excluded them from jobs for which they are otherwise more qualified than their Hispanic counterparts. At least in areas where there are large concentrations of Hispanics, then, one implication is that otherwise equally skilled blacks will have to acquire Spanish language skills in order to qualify for the same jobs. Blacks contend that the U.S. Office of Education is presently concentrating more of its efforts upon making Hispanics fluent in English and Spanish than in insuring that blacks have the opportunity to acquire Spanish-language skills.

On the surface, the argument pointing to undocumented immigrants as the economic enemies of American citizens, and blacks in particular, seems to make sense. The U.S. labor force is believed to include anywhere from three to 12 million undocumented workers. 12 There is little hard evidence, however, to indicate that undocumented workers are worsening U.S. unemployment problems. The massive unemployment we are experiencing now, as in the past, is symptomatic of the cyclical recessions so endemic to capitalistic economies. 13 Just as we can expect our economy to experience periods of tremendous growth, so may we expect this growth to eventually peak and to usher in a period of hard-times.

The idea that immigrants necessarily take away jobs of natives rests on the so-called "lump of labor" theory, namely, that "there is a
limited amount of work to be done in the country, and if a stranger is allowed to nibble at the lump, there will be less of it for the natives." Many reputable economists have shown this to be a fallacy. According to the Conference Board's economist Harold Wool, for instance, the influx of young people into the labor force in the 1960's helped to upgrade the labor force position of Blacks because the young people were willing to accept, on a transitional basis, the menial, low-level, unskilled jobs formerly held by Blacks. An immigrant work force can have the same effect. This argument acquires greater significance if one expects, as has been forecast, a labor shortage in the years ahead. Respected labor economists project that from 1982 to 1987 a declining number of young workers will be entering the labor force each year. Within this context, the migrations from Mexico can be looked upon as a mixed blessing, endowing American manufacturing with some competitive strength. Indeed, management theorist Peter F. Drucker predicts that the Southwest (a region experiencing much illegal migration) "may be the only region in the developed world to show a sizeable growth in traditional manufacturing industry in the next 20 to 25 years."  

Economists assert that the notion that at any moment in time, there exist only a fixed number of jobs in an economy, is a "short-run" perception. It is a conclusion reached without giving consideration to the full interplay of factors which immigration to an economy engenders. Job opportunities in a society will expand with a rising population as immigrants become a reason for the expanding number of jobs. For instance, an influx of immigrants to an economy means a rising level of social-capital and private investment expenditures as they stimulate the demand for public and private goods. The Dutch Centraal Planbureau
recently estimated that an annual addition of 1% of the total Dutch labor force would create a further labor shortage equal to one quarter of the original shortage after one year, if the immigrants had the same family size as the Dutch.¹⁷

Far from hampering an economy, then, an immigrant labor force contributes to job creation itself. Indeed, the favorable impact that immigrants have does not stop here. Many economists have characterized the American economy as segmented, with one sector being a "secondary labor market," a sector composed of jobs which the native population shuns due to the demeaning and/or onerous character of the jobs. In effect, American workers, in leaving this sector, create a vacuum which undocumented workers, bereft of other opportunities and eager to make money, fill. In the words of Grace M. Davis, Deputy Mayor of the City of Los Angeles, "If they [the illegal aliens] pulled out now, the garment, restaurant and auto repair business would fall over."¹⁸ Without an immigrant labor force, in other words, many "marginal" labor-intensive industries would collapse, with adverse economic consequences for both domestic and foreign workers.

The fact that undocumented workers receive "sub-poverty" wages is widely recognized. In 1975, one out of every four undocumented workers earned less than $2.10 per hour; more than 65% received $2.50 per hour or less; and more than 95% earned $4.50 per hour or less.¹⁹ In terms of occupations, the largest group of undocumented workers is concentrated in farm work, with many of the remainder occupying in extremely low paying service and industrial jobs. It is estimated that more than half of all undocumented workers are now going directly to the big cities, where they generally enter the labor market at the bottom of the salary
scale in such jobs as dishwashers or busboys. The majority of these urban undocumented workers are concentrated in domestic service and in janitorial, laundry, food processing, garment or shoe factory jobs.  

The acceptance by immigrants of low-status, low-paying jobs has, in time, another beneficial effect upon the host country economy, according to economists. As long as relative wages for different types of labor can change in response to an increase in the size of the undocumented population, there will not only be no increase in the rate of unemployment of the native population, but a general occupational upgrading. This will occur because an increase in the proportion of unskilled workers in the economy (in this case the undocumented worker) means a corresponding relative decline in the proportion of skilled workers in the labor force. The relative wage of skilled workers thus increases, causing an increase in the financial return for training for these skilled jobs. Workers in the lower skill grades will thus come to view training for higher skill jobs as increasingly attractive and in time a general upgrading in the level of skills on the part of the domestic population will occur. It is in this sense that immigration permits an occupational upgrading throughout the entire population.  

The economic benefit to the United States of Mexican immigration is best demonstrated by California agriculture, the most prosperous, diverse, and specialized in the world. When Cesar Chavez began organizing the farmworkers a few years ago, his opponents complained that paying them higher wages and granting them unemployment benefits and health insurance would make it impossible for California agriculture to compete with other agricultural states which did not treat their workers as well.
Available research suggests that there is some displacement of native workers by undocumented workers, but it appears to occur narrowly, in the short-term, and not at the levels and not with the great consequences so widely circulated by the media. The consequences so widely predicted of massive distortions in the labor market due to the influx of undocumented workers (i.e., depressed wages and working conditions) seem to occur only in the simplest kinds of labor markets: those in which there are massive concentrations of low-skilled labor within a very compressed geographical area. In the words of former Immigration and Naturalization Service Commissioner Leonel Castillo:

There is some displacement but the displacement effect is limited to certain skills, certain sectors of the economy, and certain regions of the country... it should be defined very narrowly, and I think it can be.

Extensive research, moreover, has found that while Mexican undocumented workers receive low wages for low-status jobs, overall they are not paid less than U.S. workers who do comparable work. In other words, for most enterprises, illegal status per se is not a determinant of the wage level a person will receive. Clearly, then, if undocumented workers are not paid less for comparable work, one would not expect wage payment differentials to be a cause for displacement of the native population by illegals.

There is one additional reason for optimism. Many economists have noted that all industrialized economies create a certain number of low-skilled, low-wage, low-status jobs which are rejected by nationals of those countries. Only under the harshest of consequences will these jobs be taken by the native population. In the U.S., according to labor market economist Eli Ginzberg, the number of such jobs has been increas-
ing relative to "good" jobs, at least since 1950. A long-term case can be made for more foreign low-skilled labor if such is the case.

C. Costs to the Government

Along with job displacement, undocumented immigrants have also been charged with draining the U.S. social and welfare system and depriving American citizens of benefits. These accusations are not, however, of major concern to Black leaders. One of the biggest problems among Blacks is that they do not know what statistical sources can be trusted. They feel that these accusations are an attempt by "White America" to promote conflict between Blacks and Hispanics.

Indeed, the existing evidence on this issue appears to contradict the charges made against undocumented immigrants. The Domestic Council Committee on Illegal Aliens, a group formed by former President Gerald Ford, reported:

Allegations of heavy alien use of tax supported income transfer programs are common. An examination of these programs show that a majority depend on characteristics such as old age, a female head of household, or disabled status for eligibility. Present information shows that illegal aliens are unlikely to be making heavy use of such programs due to very different personal characteristics. Our tentative conclusion is that the welfare use issue is overdrawn.

A Department of Labor study presents more solid evidence. The undocumented workers interviewed in this study were far more likely to be paying taxes than they were to be receiving social services and welfare payments. Statistics from the study indicated the following:

Contributions to U.S. Economy

- 77% paid Social Security taxes
- 73% paid federal income taxes
- 44% paid hospitalization premiums
- 31% filed U.S. income tax returns
Drain on U.S. Economy

0.5% received welfare payments
1.3% received food stamps
1.4% participated in U.S. funded job training programs
3.7% had children in school
3.9% received unemployment insurance

These findings are reinforced by a recent survey in the Adams-Morgan/Mt. Pleasant area of the District of Columbia. Out of the 33 documented immigrants questioned in the survey, only four utilized the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) Program. Of the 23 undocumented people questioned, none had utilized the AFDC program. The following findings were also a result of the study:

- Four out of 42 legal residents questioned received general assistance while none of the 30 undocumented received general assistance;

- Five out of 41 legal residents questioned received emergency assistance and only two out of 28 undocumented received emergency assistance;

- Eight out of 38 legal residents received food stamps and none of the 30 undocumented received food stamps;

- Eleven out of 35 legal residents received Medicaid and none of the 30 undocumented received Medicaid;

- Four out of 42 legal residents received Social Security benefits while none of the 30 undocumented received Social Security benefits.

These facts suggest that undocumented immigration is a large financial plus for this country. According to social scientist Wayne Cornelius:

More generally, it could be argued that Mexican migrants represent something of a windfall for the United States in the sense that they are young, highly productive workers, whose health care, education, and other costs of rearing have been borne by Mexico, and whose maintenance during periods of unemployment and retirement is also normally provided by their relatives in Mexico. The significance of this windfall becomes more apparent when one considers that as of 1977 the cost of preparing a U.S.-born man or woman for integration into the U.S. labor force was about $44,000.
The only social service that has been used in any substantial manner by undocumented immigrants is emergency medical services. This was evidenced in a study which found that 44% of undocumented workers had hospital insurance paid by themselves or by their employers. 30

The fact is that the typical immigrant, whether entering the country with proper documentation or not, comes here to work. Only the most ambitious poor people of other countries come to the United States in search of work and a better life. They are striving for self-sufficiency and not hand-outs. Moreover, undocumented immigrants typically avoid applying for social service benefits for which they are eligible because they are afraid of being caught and deported. There is no evidence that a significant number of immigrants are taking money from the public treasury. Rather, they are contributing tax dollars from their earnings. Black leaders generally accept this assessment as accurate. Their concern about undocumented workers centers around the displacement issue, not use of social services.

Traditionally, undocumented workers in the United States have been tolerated only when there is the clear impression that they are serving the host country and giving more to it than they are taking out. When such workers are viewed as unneeded, e.g., during rough economic times, action to exclude them is urged. Businesses dependent upon their labor remain silent today, while the public mood favors their exclusion. Meanwhile, undocumented immigrants and their families are excluded from much of the human resources programming in our country. For instance, undocumented immigrants are legally excluded from the receipt of Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and from participation in employment and manpower training programs, the unemployment compensation program, the
AFDC program, and, in some cases, as in Texas, have even been excluded from attending public schools. Undocumented immigrants further, have no role in decisions affecting their lives since they lack the political right to vote.

D. Media Attention

The issue of undocumented workers coming in to this country has received much media attention. More often that not, the arguments have been made in a rhetorical style fraught with emotional and inflammatory language. This has typically been true in the general and White media, and also sometimes in the Black media. Casting the arguments in such a tone does little to point out the facts on this very controversial issue. The discussion of undocumented workers has focused on their alleged job displacement of American citizens and other deleterious effects. The following remarks are typical of what this media discussion has engendered:

I believe in helping foreigners by sending them aid in disasters such as earthquakes, floods, and famine, but when I see them over-running our country by the thousands, crowding us and taking jobs that should go to Americans, I object!

We feed, clothe, and educate them when many of our own go without. Those bleeding heart liberals are going to ruin this country if they don't get tough and shut down immigration until we can take care of our own. Charity begins at home!

Central to the discussion of undocumented workers is the fact that they are a powerless group at the bottom rung of American society. Inflammatory media discussion and public opposition serve to keep them there, creating, as Business Week recently put it, "a permanent, hidden underclass -- frequently illiterate, reluctant to seek medical care, defiant of authority, and strangers to any notion of civil rights."
III. POLICY TO CURB FLOW OF UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS

A. Employer Sanctions

The Carter Administration and a number of members of Congress have proposed various legislation that would apply sanctions upon employers who hire undocumented workers. In his remarks to the Congress of the United States on August 4, 1977, President Carter gave the following reason for proposing employer sanctions:

"...to limit employment opportunities of those who are competing with American workers for scarce jobs..."32

Many Black leaders, although not all, argue that employer sanctions are the only way to curb undocumented immigration and job displacement of American citizens by undocumented workers. They support the President's program, which would make unlawful the hiring and recruiting of undocumented workers, and which would be "accompanied by severe penalties and enforcement powers for violation by both employers and employees and by a national identification card" for all citizens and legal immigrants.33 They believe that employers who repeatedly hire undocumented workers should be prosecuted and fined. If undocumented workers are deported, they will make another attempt to re-enter the United States. If employer sanctions are imposed, however, it will prevent employers from hiring undocumented workers. Since undocumented workers do not know their rights with respect to minimum wage laws, pension plans, and Occupational Safety Health Administration (OSHA) requirements, employers hire them before the more knowledgeable Blacks. Many Black leaders thus contend that justice demands that since the employers profit most from the "illegal alien problem," they should pay the price.
Most Black leaders admit that employer sanctions have drawbacks, but as one said, "It's the best way we can think of" for dealing with undocumented immigration. Others, however, are adamantly opposed to employer sanctions. A case in point is Representative Walter E. Fauntroy of the District of Columbia. Congressman Fauntroy argues that "enforcement will not deal with the issue, [and that an effective policy will be a possibility only when we] understand that we are dealing with human beings, and are secure enough to deal with the root causes."\(^{34}\) Congressman Augustus Hawkins of California is also on record against employer sanctions.

The legislation proposed by the Carter Administration exempts employers from sanctions if they can demonstrate that they asked for and received some form of documentation of the job applicant's right to reside in the United States. In this way, by presenting documentation, Hispanic citizens and legal residents could relieve prospective employers from the threat of prosecution. But contrary to the Administration's argument, Hispanics contend that any type of employer sanction legislation would allow for "legitimized" discrimination in hiring. It would adversely affect all persons in this country, Hispanic or not, who speak with an accent or look foreign. It would turn employers into policemen, and it would increase the exploitation of undocumented workers since they would still come into the country in search of jobs.

The first danger to Hispanics is the possibility that only Hispanic applicants might be required to document their resident status to prospective employees. Unless the law and its implementing regulations were to require that employers demand such documentation from all applicants, regardless of race, language, or suspected national origin, it
would result in discriminatory practices against Hispanics. The second danger to Hispanics is that even if documentation were required of all applicants, employers might still discriminate by utilizing the option of requiring more extensive documentation from minorities than from other job applicants. The proposed law or its implementing regulations would therefore have to specify exactly what form of documentation would be required of every applicant. Blacks generally agree with Hispanics that having to furnish documentation is not a good idea. Having been faced with discrimination throughout their history, they realize that undergoing additional documentation checks provides avenues for further harassment.

To be equitable, the proposed employer sanctions law would have to provide for every job applicant in the United States to pass an identical test for establishing his/her right to reside and work in the United States. It is unlikely, though, that such an identical test would be instituted if an employer sanctions law were passed. There is no simple type of document possessed exclusively by all citizens and legal permanent residents of the United States that unmistakably identifies the holder and is not subject to counterfeit by others seeking false identification. Undocumented workers already possess Social Security cards, drivers licenses, counterfeit birth certificates, and other such documents. Counterfeiters who sell such document would almost certainly step-up their job if an employer sanctions law that depended on such documentation were ever adopted.

An alternative proposal has been to establish a new, "counterfeit-proof" national identity card system. But such a system has two major drawbacks. One, the estimated cost of implementing such a plan is said
to be in excess of $500 million. And two, it infringes on the personal freedom of workers. Moreover, unless every job applicant in the United States were in fact required to produce the card for inspection by prospective employers, the impact of the national identification card system would be to discriminate against minorities.

Hispanic leaders consider all proposed employer sanction laws to be either unworkable or a threat to their civil rights. Hispanic leaders recommend not a new federal law but rather an enforcement of existing laws outlawing the exploitation and abuse being experienced by undocumented workers. They believe that many of the economic incentives that employers now have to hire foreign workers would be reduced substantially with more vigorous enforcement of minimum wage, job safety and other fair labor practices. A sincere commitment to full employment would also help alleviate some of the problems that employer sanctions pretend to resolve. Some Blacks, including Representative Walter E. Fauntroy, of the District of Columbia are in complete agreement. As he puts it,

"Rather than formulating policies which are harsh and repressive and blame the victims of exploitation, I am taking a position that emphasizes penalization of exploitative employers who operate outside of our fair labor laws, deny the rights of collective bargaining, pay below the minimum wage, and who attempt to destroy the limited labor organizations we have by using defenseless and unorganizable undocumented workers."

3. INS Enforcement Efforts

The Carter Administration proposed legislation dealing with INS efforts to stop undocumented worker migration at the border. The following enforcement measures were recommended:

- An increase in and reorganization of enforcement resources at the border;
. Shifting of enforcement personnel to border areas having the highest reported rates of undocumented alien entry;

. Establishment of an Anti-Smuggling Task Force to seek ways to reduce the number and effectiveness of smuggling rings that systematically smuggle undocumented immigrants in the U.S.;

. An increase by the State Department in the issuing of visa resources abroad;

. Passage of pending legislation to improve criminal sanctions on those who knowingly use false information to obtain identity documents issued by our government, or who knowingly use fraudulent government documents to obtain legitimate government documents;

. Consultation with source countries of undocumented immigrants about cooperative border enforcement and anti-smuggling efforts.

Black leaders agree that several specific actions need to take place related to existing INS border efforts. One is an examination of INS practices which inhibit the effective execution of immigration policies and the determination of a means of correcting them. The second is an allocation of the necessary resources to effectively carry out INS purposes. A third is tighter border security. The fourth is a training program for personnel within INS, especially in its district offices.

Black leaders, agreeing with Hispanic leaders, have expressed the concern that Carter's plan to increase the number of patrol officers at the border would lead to more cases of police brutality. They contend that more officers would result in greater harassment of those persons who look and speak differently. Black leaders do not believe that this type of enforcement will help to curb the flow of undocumented immigrants.
Hispanic leaders oppose increased border enforcement because it reflects a commitment to enforcement as a solution to the problem of undocumented immigration rather than a commitment to socio-economic solutions. They also do not believe that it would help to curb the flow of undocumented immigrants. As one Hispanic leader said, "It would take nothing short of an army" to efficiently patrol the 2,000 mile U.S./ Mexican border. Hispanic leaders also agree with Blacks that an increase in patrol officers would lead to an increase in harassment.

C. Other Alternatives to Stem Illegal Immigration

Some of the other proposals that have been advanced for dealing with undocumented workers are stepped-up processing of visa applications and cooperation with source countries.

Hispanic leaders support stepped-up processing of visa applications for two major reasons. First, it would be a just measure. And second, they believe it would help to curb the flow of undocumented immigrants. Hispanic leaders agree that attempts to correct the inefficiency of INS would also help to curb the flow of undocumented immigrants somewhat, but do not feel it would make any considerable impact. As one Hispanic leader stated, "The whole immigration policy of the United States needs revamping."

Carter's proposed immigration policy also includes a provision for cooperation with source countries. In this provision, Carter has promised to explore with source countries means of providing assistance. His plans include bilateral or multilateral economic assistance, technical assistance, encouragement of private financing, and enhanced trade or population programs.
Many Black leaders support cooperation with source countries. However, they do not support direct economic assistance. Instead, they support some type of economic development that would contribute to income redistribution. They feel that the best way of accomplishing this is through natural resource development. Natural resource development seems like a practical solution because of what it has done for such countries as Brazil in boosting economies and creating jobs.

Some Black leaders feel that the oil and gas discoveries in Mexico will help in this regard. They believe that potential immigrants will then stay in Mexico and many Americans will go there in search of jobs. Their reasoning is that immigrants would rather stay in their own country if they have opportunities there. Other Black leaders, however, see the oil and gas discoveries as benefiting only the relatively skilled workers at the expense of the relatively unskilled workers. These leaders feel that the unskilled, lower class of Mexico will still come in massive numbers to America.

Hispanic leaders wholeheartedly support cooperation with source countries. The United States and Mexican economies are already intertwined, so Hispanics would support assistance such as technology transfer and loans to Mexico. To other countries, such as the Dominican Republic and Guatemala, Hispanics would support direct economic aid.

Some Hispanic leaders feel that since former United Nations Ambassador Andrew Young pushed for economic aid to African nations, there is no reason why Blacks should not agree that Hispanic leaders can do the same for Spanish-speaking nations. As one Hispanic said, "America's heart is big, and I feel that she can do substantially more than what she has been doing."
The Carter Administration's proposed immigration policy also includes a provision for adjustment of status. It provides for a two-tiered "amnesty" system in which undocumented immigrants who have resided in the United States continuously from before January 1, 1970 to the present may apply to the INS for immigrant status. Those undocumented immigrants who have resided in the United States continuously prior to January 1, 1977, would become a new immigrant class, "temporary resident immigrants."

Black leaders support adjustment to permanent resident status for those who have met the health, moral character and public charge standards of the law. They believe that January 1, 1970 is a reasonable cutoff date and gives some assurance that undocumented immigrants will not rush into this country hoping they will come within a more flexible adjustment period. Black leaders, like Hispanic leaders, find Carter's temporary resident status provision to be questionable, since there is no assurance that the undocumented immigrants will not be deported at the end of the five-year period. The temporary resident status provision does, however, remove the fear of apprehension for five years, and provides protection of the law under fair labor standards and health and safety standards for the working environment.

However, even though Black leaders support an adjustment of status policy, they do not think that it would solve the problem of undocumented immigration. They argue that some immigrants would falsify their arrival date to the U.S. in order to meet the requirements of the Administration's proposal. Black leaders consider the chances of success for an adjustment of status policy to be nil, because unless the President of the United States announces on a set date that one group of immigrants
will become permanent residents and another group will be deported, there is too much opportunity for falsification. They also believe that such a statement would be politically unfeasible.

Hispanic leaders support a liberal adjustment of status policy. Some will support any policy from unconditional adjustment of status to a two-tiered system like that proposed by Carter, but with a change of the cutoff date. Hispanic organizations support July 4, 1976, the U.S. bicentennial, as the cutoff date, rather than January 1, 1970.

Since Hispanics feel that Congress would not support an unconditional adjustment of status policy for undocumented immigrants, a compromise has to be reached. One Hispanic leader suggests the idea of a "jubilee year" policy, which would provide for a year of adjustment of status every ten years by the federal government.

D. Temporary Worker Programs

The Carter Administration's proposed immigration policy also provides for a comprehensive review of the current temporary foreign worker (H-2) certification program. The President expressed the belief that this program can be structured to meet the needs of both employees, by protecting domestic employment opportunities, and employers, by providing a needed workforce.

Black leaders perceive temporary foreign worker programs to be a source of exploitation and discrimination. As the head of one national Black organization said, "These programs are a cop-out" for employers who want to hire workers they can exploit. Black leaders believe that temporary foreign worker programs contribute to the creation of a subclass because temporary workers compose a group of people who will continue to be exploited and will never "make it" in U.S. society.
Black leaders are also worried about the impact of these programs on domestic employment. In a recent case in Virginia, unscrupulous farmers were bringing in women from Jamaica and Haiti, under the existing H-2 program, to pick apples. Blacks argued that employers were using these workers to keep from giving the jobs to them. The incident produced publicity to the effect that the H-2 program was being used to displace native Black workers with low-income workers from foreign countries.

Hispanic leaders are also generally suspicious of the temporary foreign worker program. They are afraid they will turn out to be like the "bracero" program, when many workers were actually brought in as strikebreakers. Hispanic leaders agree with Blacks that a temporary foreign worker program lends itself to abuse because many employers use it to exploit these temporary workers and to depress wages. They contend that temporary foreign worker programs contribute to the creation of a "sub-class," i.e., a stratum of society which is the poorest of the poor and with few avenues for advancement. Moreover, like Blacks, they believe employers sometimes hire foreign workers when citizens are available, because the employers have greater control over "guest workers."

The British Crown Colony of Hong Kong has established rules that grant an undocumented worker full citizenship if he escapes sophisticated detecting devices. Hong Kong, in effect, does not want the establishment of an underclass of persons with less rights than its citizens. Some Hispanics in this country legally are still in a sub-class, so they can sympathize with the undocumented workers on this issue. As one Hispanic leader said, "We are second-class citizens, but such a sub-class is even below them."
Insofar as this country is concerned, Blacks and Hispanics must work out a compromise which recognizes immigration as providing a needed work force while at the same time having provisions that the immigration will not cause the presumed massive distortions in the labor market.
IV. VIEWS OF BLACKS AND HISPANICS ON UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRATION

A. Black-Hispanic Coalition

Blacks, like Hispanics, form coalitions to increase their influence and their resources. As the largest minority group in the country, Blacks are gaining power at the municipal level and at the national level. They have done this through a period of activism, and by building strong coalitions based on familiar American political principles.

The events of the 1960's convinced Hispanics that their best interests would be served if they turned inward. Hispanics have therefore been attempting to build strong political and service organizations within their own communities. Blacks, having achieved these goals more fully, have reached out beyond their own communities to work with other groups for mutually valued purposes. Hispanics, too, have begun this process.

Although there is still tension between Blacks and Hispanics on many issues, there is some cooperation taking place. In 1978, in Washington, D.C., national leaders of Hispanic and Black organizations formed the "Working Committee on the Concerns of Hispanics and Blacks." This committee is comprised of Black and Hispanic leaders working jointly to promote understanding of each other's current national public policy objectives and to promote collaboration, cooperation and coalitions in support of jointly held goals. Membership of the Working Committee consists of the heads of many of the nation's largest Hispanic and Black organizations, including the National Urban Coalition, the National Council of La Raza, the National Urban League, the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), the NAACP, the American G.I.
Forum, ASPIRA, and several others, including women's organizations and other organizations representing Puerto Ricans, Cubans, and Chicanos.

At a meeting on February 26, 1979, the Committee agreed to eliminate unnecessary friction on the issue of undocumented workers. Hispanics explained that attempts to penalize employers who hire undocumented workers cause discrimination against Hispanic citizens and legal residents of the United States. Black Committee members agreed to issue no further statements on undocumented workers until they have first conferred with Hispanic leaders to reach a better understanding of Hispanic concerns. Since that time, joint statements have been made on several immigration issues, including the influx of Cuban refugees.

B. Perspectives on Immigration and Undocumented Workers: Summary and Analysis

Interviews with Black and Hispanic leaders identify areas of agreement as well as disagreement on immigration and undocumented workers. Areas of greatest agreement include:

- Necessity of refraining from making statements that would be detrimental to the unity of Blacks and Hispanics;
- Elimination of the violation of the human rights of undocumented workers, including the elimination of job discrimination and economic exploitation;
- Humane treatment for those undocumented immigrants who are apprehended, including more rapid processing by the INS of apprehended persons and reunification of families;
- Reunification of families (Blacks can identify with this issue because it is a humane issue and because they faced the same problem when their family members were separated during times of slavery);
- Need for stronger laws to reduce the number and effectiveness of the smuggling rings which smuggle undocumented immigrants into the United States;
. Necessity of addressing economic problems in source countries;
. Increase in the immigration quota for Mexico;
. Some version of an adjustment of status policy;
. Limitation of the H-2 Program; and
. Need for revision of immigration laws.

There is broad agreement that Black and Hispanic leaders must resist allowing areas of disagreement to divide them.

Many Black leaders feel that the proposed Carter Administration's immigration policy is an effort by "White America" to pit Blacks against Hispanics, recognizing this as one way to insure that Blacks and Hispanics do not unite and gain strength. Moreover, both Black and Hispanic leaders feel that the Carter Administration's immigration policy serves to maintain the present racial imbalance of the population through forced control mechanisms, and creates a scapegoat to be blamed for this country's economic difficulties. Black and Hispanic leaders agree that attention is hardly ever concentrated on the relevant issue: recognition that the prevailing immigration policy of the United States is unenforceable and inequitable. Instead, undocumented immigration is increasingly being perceived as a threat to the welfare of the domestic labor force. The real issue at hand is whether or not the United States should implement an immigration policy that can accomplish its stated purpose of regulating immigrant flow, encouraging reunification of families, and meeting U.S. skill needs.

In spite of this recognition of the danger of allowing the undocumented worker issue to split the two groups, there are several significant areas of disagreement, as discussed throughout this paper. They include:
. Need for action to avoid perceived displacement of American workers -- including employer sanctions;
. The question of who is a "political" refugee;
. Extent of economic aid to source countries;
. Scope of adjustment of status programs; and
. Extent and focus of immigration law revisions.

The most divisive issue remains the question of displacement, and the resulting acceptability of employer sanctions. Black leaders do not put much stock in the economic hypothesis that immigrants stimulate job opportunities for native workers. They argue that the immediate impact of the immigration of undocumented workers is to create much hardship and unemployment.

One Black leader was asked for an opinion of the hypothesis advanced by the Preliminary Report of the Domestic Council on Illegal Aliens in 1976 that immigrants, by depressing unskilled worker salaries (and thereby raising in relative terms the wages of skilled workers) upgraded the native worker force into higher skilled occupations. He decried such theories as ignoring the realities of the labor market, by not recognizing that displaced workers are displaced for long periods of time and that long-run benefits from immigration, if they occur at all, occur only in a very distant future. Moreover, employer programs to help those displaced would be hard to develop since one wouldn't know exactly which workers were being displaced by the immigrants.

Overall, Black leaders share many of the civil rights concerns of Hispanic leaders, but often disagree on the economic issues. Black leaders feel that the undocumented workers coming into this country are definitely taking jobs from unskilled Blacks. As one national Black organization official put it, "It all boils down to jobs." When His-
panics and others argue that undocumented workers are taking jobs that Americans do not want, Black leaders disagree. As one Black leader said, "That's pretty hard to tell your constituents when they are sitting there without jobs." Hispanic leaders do not argue that jobs are not at issue. However, they state that the dimensions of the problem are unknown, and believe that the help undocumented workers afford this country can, in principle, be much greater than the harm.

Another potentially divisive issue is the question of who shall receive political refugee status. The recent influx of Cubans has sharpened this concern. On the one hand, some Blacks believe that Cubans are displacing Black citizens and exacerbating an already serious employment problem in Miami. While this problem was not the direct cause for recent civil disturbances in Miami (it resulted directly from a "not guilty" decision by a jury in the case of a Black killed by four policemen), it is considered a related issue. On the other hand, Blacks believe that the political refugee status afforded Cubans should also be applied to Black refugees, particularly Haitians and Ethiopians. Hispanics generally support this view, and the courts recently agreed on the Haitian issue. Citing that his courtroom was "populated by the ghosts of individual Haitians -- including those who have been returned from the United States -- who have been beaten, tortured, and left to die in Haitian prisons," Judge James J. King of the Federal District Court in Miami, on July 3, 1980, ordered Haitians to be accorded political refugee status under the Refugee Act of 1980.36

The immigration issue may be prevented from seriously dividing Blacks and Hispanics by serious efforts at mutual support, such as joint statements in support of both fair treatment of the Cubans and similar
political refugee status for those from other countries, Caribbean, Latin American, and African.

While media articles, such as Mr. Raspberry's and those covering the Miami riots in June 1980, continue to present divisive viewpoints, there is considerable evidence -- based on interviews conducted for this study -- that both Blacks and Hispanic leaders are eager to listen to each other, and to maximize areas of agreement. In the case of the Miami riots, for example, Black leaders, despite media assertions pointing to Black-Cuban enmity know full well that the precipitating catalyst was the acquittal of four Miami policemen accused of killing a Black man by an all White jury. At least with the Black leadership, then, mutual understanding of the problems confronting two exploited peoples is possible. Similarly, because of this common bond, agreement on civil rights issues should be possible.

Differing views of the economic issue remain difficult to resolve. Blacks have fought hard for the rights and the opportunities they have attained. They empathize with their "Brown brothers and sisters," and Black leaders indicate a desire to help them acquire their full civil rights. Yet they oppose any policies or practices which they view as threatening their own hard-won gains. Thus Black/Brown consensus on undocumented worker issues remains difficult. However, increased dialogue, especially within groups such as the Working Committee on the Concerns of Hispanics and Blacks can serve to identify areas of Black/Brown agreement and minimize the divisiveness resulting from areas of disagreement.


7. Ibid.


10. Ibid, "Hiring American."


15. Businessweek Magazine, "The Economic Consequences of a New Wave, p. 83."


18. Businessweek, op. cit., p. 82.


24. Ibid, p. 204.


30. Ibid, p. 3.


34. The Honorable Walter E. Fauntroy, op. cit.

35. Ibid.

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