

# THE HOUSTONIAN

WITH THE GLOBAL CENTER FOR JOURNALISM AND DEMOCRACY

## The Two Sides of the Table

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More than one million of 11.3 million undocumented immigrants in the United States live right here in Texas and make up about 20 percent of our state's total population.

As a border state directly affected by the national dialogue on immigration reform, the topic has become highly politicized and viewpoints on whether immigration is good or bad often depends on what side of the aisle someone sits on.

Anti-immigration advocates argue that undocumented immigrants are a burden to the communities they live in, while oth-

ers who support more lenient immigration policies claim that immigrants are critical to the Texas economy. But the issues go far beyond monetary concerns, and are incredibly complex.

So-called "sanctuary" policies— meaning local law enforcement will not hand undocumented immigrants over to federal immigration officials— are one of these hotly debated issues, both at a state and national level.

Border security is another top issue, with 72 percent of Texans supporting an increase in state funding for border security, according to a recent study by the Texas Tribune in correlation with the University of Texas.

Access to education and other social services is another issue

within the larger topic of immigration. One common argument against immigrants is that they drain the social support system in our country, but in reality, immigrants do not qualify for welfare, food stamps or Medicaid.

Undocumented children however, are allowed to attend public schools, and that has caused some districts where undocumented populations are particularly high to suffer financially.

There is no simple answer to the complex question of immigration reform. The United States is a nation founded on immigration, and people around the world will continue to strive to come here for the chance at a better life.