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An estimated 49 percent of households headed by legal immigrants used one or more welfare programs in 2012, compared to 30 percent of households headed by natives.

Households headed by legal immigrants have higher use rates than native households overall and for cash programs (14 percent vs. 10 percent), food programs (36 percent vs. 22 percent), and Medicaid (39 percent vs. 23 percent). Use of housing programs is similar.

Legal immigrant households account for three-quarters of all immigrant households accessing one or more welfare programs.

Less-educated legal immigrants make extensive use of every type of welfare program, including cash, food, Medicaid, and housing.

The overwhelming majority of illegal immigrants have modest levels of education; therefore, the high use of welfare associated with less-educated legal immigrants indicates that legalization would likely increase welfare costs, particularly for cash and housing programs.

Restrictions on new legal immigrants' access to welfare have not prevented them from accessing programs at high rates because restrictions often apply to only a modest share of immigrants at any one time, some programs are not restricted, there are numerous exceptions and exemptions, and some provisions are entirely unenforced. Equally important, immigrants, including those illegally in the country, can receive welfare on behalf of their U.S.-born children.

Introduction

This report is a companion analysis to "Welfare Use by Immigrant and Native Households: An Analysis of Medicaid, Cash, Food, and Housing Programs", recently published by the Center for Immigration Studies. That report examines welfare use for all immigrant-headed households, regardless of legal status, using the Census Bureau's Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP). This analysis uses information in the survey to distinguish legal and illegal immigrants to estimate welfare use by legal status. The findings show that, relative to natives, welfare use is high for both legal and illegal immigrant households.

Legal immigrant households have higher welfare use than native households for cash, food, and Medicaid, while illegal immigrant households have higher use than natives for food and Medicaid, but lower use for cash and housing programs.

What is DHS' plan to stop this welfare use? DHS should investigate more cases of fraud to ensure benefits fraud stops by illegals.

When will the DHS be investigating fraud committed by foreign wiring companies (Remitly etc) and whether they are paying the appropriate foreign and domestic taxes?