

Editorial: However you see immigration, you can help

October 9, 2015

By the slimmest of margins, Americans believe immigrants benefit our country.

A new [Pew Research Center report](#) illustrates how U.S. and European adults feel about the net impact of immigrants upon their nations. We rank behind Germany and the United Kingdom in accommodation.



Editor Marv Knox Fifty-one percent of Americans agree immigrants “strengthen our country because of their hard work and talents.” In contrast, 41 percent believe immigrants “are a burden on our country because they take our jobs, housing and health care.”

Immigrants are seen most positively in Germany, where 66 percent of the population believe newcomers make their country stronger, and only 29 percent call them a burden. The U.K. ranked second, with a 52 percent stronger/37 percent burden response.

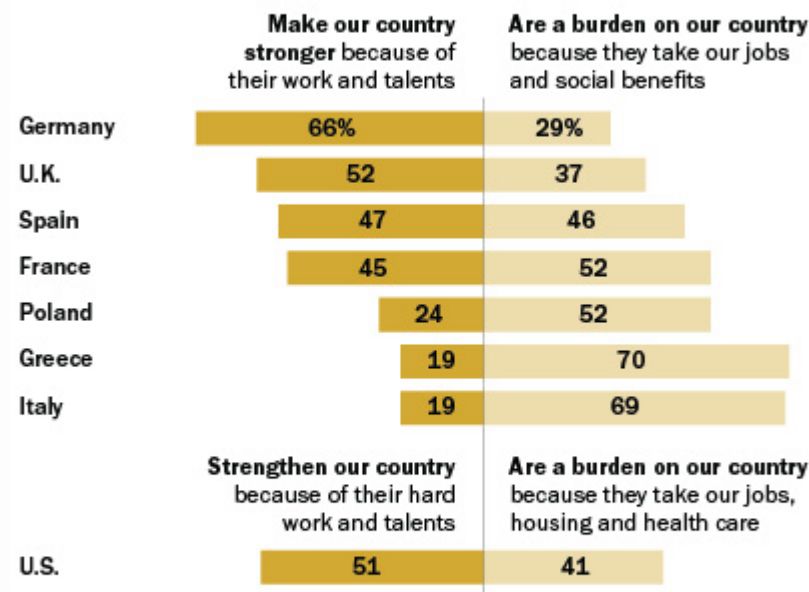
In contrast, Greece and Italy tied for the least-accommodating European nations, with only 19 percent of the Mediterranean nations’ respondents saying immigrants strengthen their countries.

Americans’ attitudes toward immigrants have changed remarkably across

the past two decades, the Pew Center notes. In 1994, only 31 percent of Americans labeled immigrants a strength, and twice as many, 63 percent, called them a burden.

Views of Immigrants in Europe and the U.S.

% who say immigrants today ...



Note: Don't know/refused and both/neither responses not shown.

Source: Pew Research Center survey of U.S. adults, May 12-18, 2015; and Spring 2014 Global Attitudes survey.

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Immigration seems destined to be political and poignant. In the past few weeks, the Syrian refugee crisis has captured international attention, with floods of humanity streaming northwestward across Europe and presidential hopeful Donald Trump claiming he would send home any who make it to our shores. Set in that context, pictures of parents seeking to protect

children and lines of hungry people grip the heart.

The United States is home to the world's largest immigrant population, the Pew Center indicates. In 2012, the latest year of record, almost 41 million U.S. residents—13 percent of the population—were foreign-born. Almost 19 million (5.9 percent) were citizens, and slightly more than 22 million (7.0 percent) were not.

Immigration will remain a political issue as long as candidates run for office. To be both fair and productive, the United States needs to reform its

immigration policies and processes. Even though people of goodwill disagree on the specifics, we can and must do better.

Meanwhile, Christians across the political spectrum have an opportunity to respond to the humanitarian crisis reflected in the plight of Syrian refugees—whether they ultimately immigrate to Europe or the United States or return home. Texas Baptists are working to relieve the situation, and we all must do our part.

The situation will grow more dire by the week, particularly as winter weather descends upon refugee camps in Lebanon, where churches sacrificially help those who are hurting. Because Texas Baptists have served alongside Lebanese Baptists, we can make a positive impact by channeling resources through their network of congregations.

Here are results of donations you can make:

- \$578 provides a family with three blankets, two mattresses, one stove and fuel vouchers for four months
- \$248 provides a family with two blankets, one mattress, one stove and fuel vouchers for one month
- \$148 provides a family with two blankets, one mattress and one heater stove
- \$68 provides a family with four blankets and one mattress.

When our Lebanese Baptist sisters and brothers deliver these supplies, they also provide an Arabic Bible and Scripture summaries, along with a message of Jesus' love.

To help the refugees, [click here](#). For more information, contact Texas Baptists' point person on this project, Steve Seaberry, by calling (214) 828-5180 or emailing steve.seaberry@texasbaptists.org.