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The United States cannot do without immigration

The number of immigrants in the United States has fallen since the beginning of 2025 (from 53.3 million to 51.9 million at the end of June, according to figures from the Pew Research Center), and the number of foreign-born workers has fallen since its peak in March 2025 by 1.5 million through to August 2025 (BLS data).

In reality, the United States cannot do without immigrants:

- Although they represent only 15.4% of the total US population, they account for a very large proportion of employment in key industries;
- They create a lot of new businesses;
- The skill level of Americans is very low;
- The fertility rate of American women is low;
- The employment rate in the United States is relatively low.

The Trump administration's anti-immigration policy, which also targets skilled people, will therefore lead to a fall in overall growth, particularly in the science and technology sectors.

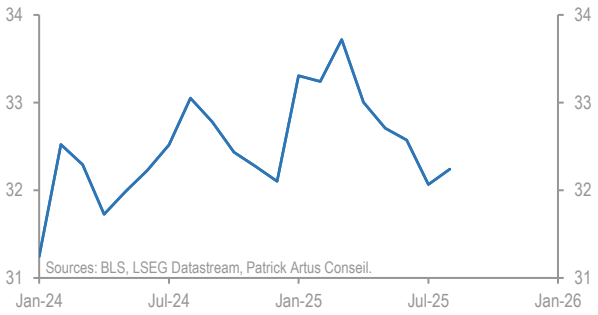
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The decline in the number of immigrants to the United States since March 2025

The number of immigrants in the United States fell from 53.3 million to 51.9 million between January and June 2025. The number of active immigrants fell by 1.5 million between March and August 2025 (Chart 1).

Chart 1
United States: Foreign-born labour force
(in millions of persons)



We know that one of the objectives of the Trump administration is to reduce the number of immigrants, by combating illegal immigration and limiting the number of visas (including the H-1B visas used by highly skilled immigrants).

It is clear that this policy will be very unfavourable to the United States.

The United States cannot do without immigration, for a number of reasons

1. The weight of immigrants in certain key industries

Immigrants account for 15.4% of the total population of the United States and occupy a significant proportion of jobs: 23% of jobs in manufacturing, 19% in transport, 22% in social services, 22% in hotels and restaurants, 27% in construction, 20% in healthcare and 21% in personal services. They also occupy a large share of the most highly qualified jobs, 23.1% of jobs in science and technology (STEM jobs, science-technology-engineering-maths), 25% in computing (data from the Pew Research Center).

2. Immigrants innovate and create companies

46% of the 500 largest companies were founded by immigrants (according to the American Immigration Council), 44% of American unicorns were founded by immigrants. Immigrants are responsible for 23% of patent applications[1].

3. The skill level of Americans is very low, as shown by the OECD's PIAAC survey (Table 1).

Table 1: Results of the OECD PIAAC survey (by decreasing score from the 2023 survey, overall score)

Country	2023
Finland	289
Japan	285
Sweden	281
Netherlands	276
Canada	267
Germany	267
England (UK)	266
France	253
United States	251
Korea	246
Spain	246
Italy	240

Source : OECD

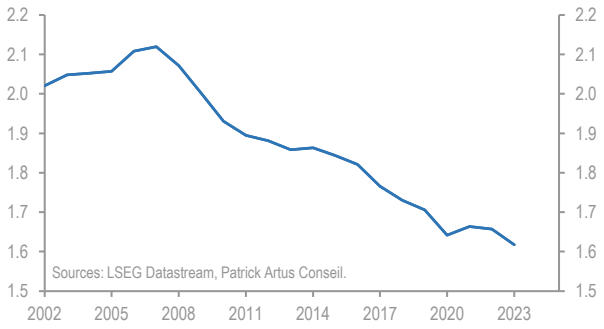
It is therefore illusory to try to replace immigrants with native-born Americans in fairly skilled jobs.

[1] Bernstein, S., Diamond, R., Jiranaphawiboon, A., McQuade, T., & Pousada, B. (2022). The contribution of high-skilled immigrants to innovation in the United States (No. w30797). National Bureau of Economic Research.

4. The fertility rate has become low in the United States

The fertility rate for American women is well below 2 (1.6 in 2024, Chart 2).

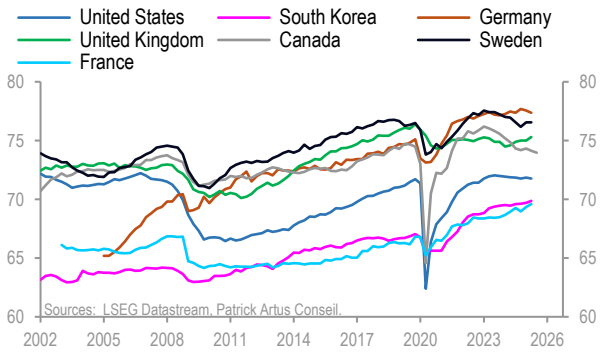
Chart 2
United States: Fertility rate (births per woman)



5. The employment rate is relatively low in the United States

If the employment rate is relatively low in the United States (Chart 3), it is because of the low skills seen above and the health problems of many Americans. According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), 28.7% of adults in the United States have some form of disability, including 13.9% with a mental disability; 30.3% of Americans are obese.

Chart 3
Employment rate of population aged 15 to 64 (as %)



Summary: the Trump administration's anti-immigration policy will have very negative effects

The low skills and health levels in the United States and the high proportion of immigrants in the workforce mean that it is impossible to replace immigrants with Americans. The Trump administration's anti-immigration policy, which also targets highly skilled people, as demonstrated by the decision to impose a $100,000 visa fee for applicants for H-1B visas, will have an impact on the science and technology sectors.

Discouraging immigration will therefore lead to a slowdown in growth, both because of recruitment difficulties and because of the decline in productivity gains as a result of the difficulties experienced by highly qualified immigrants in gaining access to the United States.

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