

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

WHITE HOUSE TOUTS ECONOMIC IMPACT OF IMMIGRATION PLAN

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November 21, 2014

The White House on Friday said its immigration plan would have a plethora of positive economic effects, including higher growth and boosting wages for all Americans, countering criticism from some economists who have argued it could create more competition for open jobs.

The White House's Council of Economic Advisers said the plan by 2024 would raise gross domestic product by at least 0.4%, expand the size of the labor force by between 147,000 and 297,000 workers, and raise average wages for U.S.-born workers by 0.3%.

The labor force change would not be seismic, the White House said, representing an increase of between 0.1% and 0.2%.

In an assertion that is likely to draw fire from opponents of President Barack Obama's executive order, the White House said the immigration plan would "have no impact on the likelihood of employment for U.S.-born workers."

There are widely different views about the economic impact of immigration changes. Many economists agree that giving legal working status to a large number of previously undocumented immigrants will help boost their wages in the near-term, but there is an unsettled argument about what happens to the wages of existing workers. A number of economists believe that if you increase the supply of labor, you will put downward pressure on wages.

Critics will likely try and poke holes in the CEA's findings, as it reflects a combination of anecdotal studies stretching back decades and concrete mathematical formulas.

In calculating future GDP changes, the CEA used at least two complex mathematical equations, showing, for example, how the GDP would be affected given a larger labor force as well as working-age population.

But other conclusions were based on past research. For example, its determination that the immigration changes will have "no net effect on the likelihood of employment of native workers in the long run" was based in part on a study of an influx of Cuban immigrants to Miami in 1980.