

Nine Out Of Ten Immigration Statements Are False

Claims regarding the impacts undocumented immigrants have on our country are common. Politicians, candidates and anti-immigrant groups routinely spout statements about how much immigrants cost states in terms of services, crime and jobs as justification for the introduction, promotion and passage of state-level immigration laws. Despite the fact there are many studies that refute most of these claims, the rhetoric continues with little challenge.

Using analyses of two news media “fact checking” web sites, the Tampa Bay Times’ “PolitiFact” and the Arizona Republic’s “AZ Fact Check,” we looked at each of the relevant statements regarding immigration and simply tallied up their ratings. PolitiFact researched a total of 203 immigration-related statements and AZ Fact Check examined 49, for a total of 252.

Each site developed separate scales for ranking the accuracy of these statements. Their method was to see whether any part of a statement is true and then rank them on a range of “False” to “True” with three levels of truthfulness in between. PolitiFact adds a “Pants on Fire” category for the worst offenders. While we understand their methodologies, we believe this permits too many false immigration statements to be deemed acceptable and that enables the debate to include half-truths with questionable or no evidence to support those claims.

We believe a more honest and simple approach to determining whether statements are “True” or “False” is required. In classifying their rankings below, we use the American courtroom standard of “telling the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth” rather than “telling the truth, mostly the truth or half of the truth.” Even without this higher standard, the large number of purely false statements should trouble every voter.

[PolitiFact](#) Fact Checks on Immigration Statements (1/18/12) N=203

Pants On Fire	FALSE	Mostly False	Half True	Mostly True	TRUE
19	56	33	41	31	23
9.4%	27.6%	16.3%	20.25%	15.3%	11.3%
Wrong 88.7%					11.3%

[Arizona Republic “AZ Fact Check”](#) on Immigration Statements (1/18/12) N=49

FALSE	Mostly False	Somewhat False Somewhat True	Mostly True	TRUE
29	4	8	4	4
59.2%	8.2%	16.3%	8.2%	8.2%
Wrong 91.8%				8.2%

Findings

Based on their research, the only conclusion one can draw is U.S. immigration policy is being driven by politicians who make false statements on the issue ***nine out of ten times***. This stunning finding raises serious questions about the factual basis of the immigration debate and the motivations of those who make or repeat false statements. Unquestionably, the truth must be the sole basis for discussing the issue and finding immigration solutions. We must hold politicians accountable for misstatements of fact. Anything less adds to the problem and makes sensible solutions less likely.

