**IMMIGRATION - READ THIS SHEET – USE KEY VOCABULARY ON BACK**

**The immigrant population in the United States grew considerably over the past 50 years.** In 2011 there were 40.4 million foreign-born people residing in the United States, whereas the immigrant population in 1960 was 9.7 million.

**Two in three immigrants living in the United States arrived before 2000.**

**The countries of origin of today’s immigrants are more diverse than they were 50 years ago.** In 1960 a full 75 percent of the foreign-born population residing in the United States came from Europe, while today only 12 percent of the immigrant population emigrated from Europe. In 2010 11.7 million foreign-born residents—29 percent of the foreign-born population—came from Mexico. About 2.2 million immigrants residing in the United States came from China; 1.8 million came from each India and the Philippines; 1.2 million immigrated from each Vietnam and El Salvador; and 1.1 million arrived from each Cuba and Korea.

**There are almost 1 million lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender, or LGBT, adult immigrants in the United States today.** The estimated 904,000 LGBT adult immigrants are more likely to be young and male compared to the overall immigrant population.

**Immigrants have a diverse set of educational backgrounds.** About 68 percent of the foreign-born population have attained a high school diploma, GED, or higher, compared to 89 percent of the native-born population. Approximately 11 percent of immigrants have a master’s degree, professional degree, or doctorate degree, compared to 10.2 percent of the native-born population.

**The growth of the undocumented immigrant population has slowed in recent years.** In 2000 there were an estimated 8.4 million undocumented persons residing in the United States. This population peaked in 2007 at 12 million, but decreased to 11.1 million by 200918 and remains stable at 11.1 million in 2011.

**People from Mexico account for a large part of the undocumented population living in the United States.** 6.8 million people, or 59 percent of the undocumented population, are from Mexico. Another 6 percent of the undocumented population is from El Salvador; 5 percent is from Guatemala; 3 percent is from Honduras; and 2 percent is from China and the Philippines.

**The majority of undocumented immigrants are well-settled in the United States.** About 63 percent of undocumented immigrants have been living in the United States for 10 years or longer.

**Hispanics accounted for more than half of the U.S. population growth in the past decade.** Hispanics accounted for 55.4 percent of U.S. population growth from 2000 to 2011, while Asian Americans accounted for 15.8 percent of the population growth.

**By 2041 there will be no clear racial or ethnic majority in the United States.** By 2041 Latinos are expected to make up 30 percent of the U.S. population, and the Asian American population will grow to 8 percent of the total U.S. population.

**Asylum**

A form of relief for which nationals of other countries can apply if they have suffered persecution in their home countries or if they have a well-founded fear of future persecution on account of certain protected characteristics. Persecution on account of sexual orientation, transgender identity and HIV-positive status have been found to be grounds for asylum.

**Deportation/Removal**

Removal, formerly called deportation, is a legal proceeding through which immigration officials seek to remove a foreign national from the United States for violating an immigration law or other U.S. law. These proceedings generally take place in Immigration Court before an Immigration Judge.

**Green Card**

This is the informal term for “an alien registration card” or Form I-551. It is proof that its holder has legal permanent resident status.

**Immigrant**

This is a technical legal term which means a foreign national who has been granted permission to remain in the United States permanently, that is a “legal permanent resident” or “green card holder” and as such is distinguished from a “non-immigrant” who comes to the United States on a temporary visa. The term “immigrant” is often used more broadly to mean any person who is not a U.S. citizen.

**Naturalization**

The process by which a foreign national applies for and obtains U.S. citizenship. Only legal permanent residents may apply to naturalize, and generally only after they have held their “green card” for five years (spouses of U.S. citizens may apply earlier.)

**Refugee**

For refugee status, an applicant applies outside the United States and must meet the same standard of persecution as an asylum applicant. As a practical matter, it is much more difficult to win refugee status based on being LGBT or HIV positive than to win asylum.

**Undocumented**

The term used to describe foreign nationals who are present in the U.S. without lawful status. The term can refer to those who entered the U.S. without inspection (by crossing the border), those who overstayed their allotted time here, or those who violated the terms of their legal status. With very limited exceptions (notably asylum and immediate relatives of U.S. citizen petitions) a person who is not in lawful status in the U.S. cannot change from being in the U.S. unlawfully to being here lawfully.

**Visa**

A visa is a legal document that permits its holder to seek entry into the United States on either a temporary or a permanent basis. Legally, a visa merely permits the foreign national to board transportation to the U.S. Permission to enter the country may be granted or denied by immigration officials at the port of entry.