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COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Changes in Nebraska's and Iowa's Counties With Large Meatpacking Plant Workforces



**Resources, Community, and
Economic Development Division**

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The Honorable Robert Kerrey
The Honorable Tom Harkin
United States Senate

Meatpacking plants in the United States, which are now often located in rural areas, are experiencing changes in the composition of their workforces. Increasingly, workers are coming from outside the area where the plants are located—from locations with high unemployment, and from foreign countries; some of these workers are illegal aliens. Concerned about the impact of these workforce changes on communities in Nebraska and Iowa, you asked us to address the following questions: (1) What population changes have occurred in communities with large meatpacking plants? (2) What changes have occurred in school enrollments, health care costs, economic conditions, and crime rates? (3) What are the housing conditions of plant workers and their families? (4) Is there evidence that meatpacking companies have hired illegal aliens?

To answer these questions, we analyzed information on Nebraska's and Iowa's counties that had at least 250 or more workers employed in meatpacking plants. (App. I lists these counties.) For each question, the amount of reliable county-level data varied. Also, the number of counties with large meatpacking workforces has increased since the 1980s. Specifically, for population changes, we examined data from the 1980 and 1990 censuses for 16 counties. For changes in school enrollments, health care costs, and economic conditions, we analyzed data for 23 counties. For crime, sufficient data were available for reporting on 19 counties. We also interviewed and obtained information from various federal, state, county, and city officials as well as meatpacking company officials.

It should be recognized that while large meatpacking plants are major employers in the counties for which we present data, many factors besides the activities associated with these plants may have affected changes in these counties, such as the opening and closing of other businesses and changes in the economy in general.

Results in Brief

From 1980 to 1990, 5 of the 16 counties with large meatpacking workforces in Iowa and Nebraska gained population. Minority populations (American Indians or Alaskan Natives, Asians or Pacific Islanders, African-Americans, and Hispanics) as a percentage of the total population

grew in all 16 counties. Despite this growth, as of 1990, the proportion of minority populations in 11 of these counties remained smaller than the statewide proportions, which were 7.5 percent for Nebraska and 4.1 percent for Iowa.

The following changes occurred in school enrollment, Medicaid use (an indication of public health care costs), economic conditions, and serious crime¹ for the Nebraska and Iowa counties with large meatpacking workforces that we examined:

- School enrollments in 15 of the 23 counties with large meatpacking workforces increased more rapidly than statewide enrollments between 1987 and 1997. Furthermore, these counties experienced a large increase in the number of students with limited proficiency in English.
- In 13 of the 23 of counties with large meatpacking workforces, the increase in the number of Medicaid recipients per 1,000 in population exceeded the statewide increase of 54 percent in Nebraska and 39 percent in Iowa between 1990 and 1996.
- In 18 of the 23 counties with large meatpacking workforces, there were improvements in at least one of two indicators of economic well-being—per capita incomes or taxable retail sales—from 1990 to 1995. In many cases these improvements exceeded statewide gains.
- The level of serious crime increased from 1986 to 1995 in 14 of the 19 counties with large meatpacking workforces for which crime data were available. Despite these increases, crime in 11 of the 19 counties was below statewide levels.

While information on housing conditions is limited, officials of the nine Nebraska and Iowa communities we visited said that the physical condition of housing occupied by newly employed meatpacking plant workers is generally adequate. Nevertheless, the affordability of housing is a concern, especially for newly employed workers, and overcrowding has occurred among some workers and their families.

The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) has often found illegal aliens employed at meatpacking plants. The Service's District Director for Nebraska and Iowa estimated that up to 25 percent of the workers in meatpacking plants in Nebraska and Iowa were illegal aliens. The efforts that meatpacking companies have made to avoid hiring illegal aliens have been hampered, according to Service officials, primarily because of the

¹Serious crimes are specifically defined by the Federal Bureau of Investigation for the purpose of assessing changes in crime levels and include murder, forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, motor vehicle and larceny theft, and arson.

proliferation of forged documents and limited methods to ensure that those seeking employment are eligible to work in the United States.

Background

The meatpacking industry employed about 123,000 production workers and had sales of about \$51 billion nationwide in 1995, according to data reported by the American Meat Institute. In 1996, meatpacking plants in Nebraska and Iowa slaughtered about 23 percent of the cattle and 35 percent of the hogs slaughtered nationwide. About 36,000 workers were employed in meatpacking plants in Nebraska and Iowa in 1996, according to data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Large meatpacking plants contribute significantly to the economies of the communities where they are located through, among other things, their large payrolls. These plants are large employers, employing 250 to 2,500 or more production workers. Production workers in meatpacking plants earned an average of about \$415 per week in 1996, or about \$9.82 per hour, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Entry-level workers have been paid about \$6.15 to \$8.20 per hour in recent years, depending upon the company and the plant's location.

The work in meatpacking plants is often hard and can be hazardous. The use of knives, hooks, and saws in hot and cold areas on wet floors presents the risk of cuts, lacerations, and slips; and the work presents the risk of repetitive stress injuries. Since the late 1980s, the industry has worked with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration to reduce the incidence of injuries. According to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, about 22.7 of every 100 full-time meatpacking plant workers were injured during 1995.

Changes in Population

From 1980 to 1990—the period of the last decennial census—5 of the 16 counties with large meatpacking workforces in Iowa and Nebraska increased in population, while the remainder decreased. More specifically:

- In Nebraska, four of the seven counties with large meatpacking workforces experienced increases in population that exceeded the statewide increase of 0.5 percent. The population in each of the remaining three counties declined, ranging from 3.2 to 7.6 percent.
- In Iowa, where the population decreased 4.7 percent statewide, only one of the nine counties with large meatpacking workforces gained population, increasing by 7.9 percent. Four other counties lost population

but lost less than the statewide decrease of 4.7 percent. In the remaining four counties, population losses ranged from 7.8 to 11.4 percent.

Appendix II contains additional data on the overall population changes for the Nebraska and Iowa counties with large meatpacking workforces, including data from the 1980 and 1990 censuses and updated estimates from the Bureau of Census for 1996.

From 1980 to 1990, minority populations, as a percentage of their respective county populations, increased in all 16 counties with large meatpacking workforces (7 in Nebraska and 9 in Iowa). In 10 of the 16 counties, these increases were greater than the statewide increases. However, as of 1990, the proportion of minority populations in most of the counties was smaller than it was in the states overall. Specifically:

- In Nebraska, the percentage increase in the minority population in six of the seven counties with large meatpacking workforces exceeded the statewide increase of 25.2 percent. By 1990, the percentage of the minorities in two of the seven counties exceeded the statewide minority representation of 7.5 percent. In the remaining five counties, minority representation ranged from 1.5 to 6.0 percent of the population.
- In Iowa, the percentage increase in the minority population in three of the nine counties with large meatpacking workforces exceeded the statewide increase of 24.8 percent. By 1990, the minority populations in three of the nine counties exceeded the statewide representation of 4.1 percent. In the remaining six counties, the minority representation ranged from 1.5 to 3.0 percent of the population.

Appendix II contains additional data on the changes in minority populations for the Nebraska and Iowa counties with large meatpacking workforces, including data from the 1980 and 1990 censuses and updated estimates from the Bureau of the Census for 1996.

Officials in the communities we contacted linked the population and demographic changes in their communities to changes in meatpacking plants' workforces. Among other things, these officials noted that meatpacking plants increasingly rely on minority and immigrant employees to fill their workforces. Meatpacking company officials acknowledged the changes in their workforces, and both local officials and meatpacking company officials noted that, sometimes, not enough local area residents are available to fill plants' job openings and that at other times, not enough local area residents are willing to fill job openings

at starting pay levels. Meatpacking plants have hired increasing numbers of minority and immigrant workers from high unemployment areas, such as portions of Texas, California, North Carolina, and East Coast areas, and from Mexico, Central America, Asia, Africa, and Eastern Europe.

Industry data illustrate that, in at least some cases, the changes in the makeup of a plant's workforce can be dramatic. For example, from 1990 to 1996, the proportion of minority workers in one plant increased from 18 to 66 percent. These changes were so striking in two communities we visited that the communities requested and received special census updates—one in 1993 and the other in 1996—in an effort to gain a better understanding of the changes that their communities were experiencing due to the opening of a meatpacking plant in one community in 1990 and a plant's expansion in the other. The census updates showed large population increases and other demographic changes for both communities. For example, the population in one community grew by 29 percent from 1990, when the plant opened, to 1993. This 3-year gain significantly exceeded the 6.2-percent population decrease for the preceding 10-year period. The community's demographics also changed. In particular, minority populations increased from 370 to 2,213, from 1990 to 1993, or from 6 to 26 percent of the population. This increase was more than 10 times the increase during the decade prior to the plant's opening.

The turnover among meatpacking plant workers may affect changes in the population and demographics, according to the community officials with whom we spoke. The employees who leave the plants may stay in the area while the companies replace workers in the workforce. Data on the workforce's turnover at four large meatpacking plants in Nebraska and Iowa provide a perspective on the potential impact that a meatpacking workforce can have on a community. Specifically, the annual turnover at these plants ranged from 18 to 83 percent of the workforce. One company vice president said that turnover rates of 100 percent per year have occurred. Such high turnover rates have required the hiring of as many as 500 or more workers in a single year at large plants. Some community officials told us that they have observed immigrant workers and families moving into and out of their communities. These workers are briefly employed at the meatpacking plants, often for just days or a few months. However, these officials could not estimate the size of this transient population.

Changes in School Enrollment, Number of Medicaid Recipients, Economic Conditions, and Crime Rates

The following summarizes information on the changes in school enrollments, the number of Medicaid recipients, the economic conditions, and the crime rates in the Nebraska and Iowa counties with large meatpacking workforces.

Changes in School Enrollments

During the school years from 1987 to 1997, 15 of the 23 Nebraska and Iowa counties with large meatpacking workforces experienced increases in public school enrollments that were higher than those occurring statewide. More specifically:

- In Nebraska, 8 of the 10 counties with large meatpacking workforces had increases in student enrollments that were more than the statewide increase of 9.1 percent. These increases ranged from 11.8 to 22.1 percent. The changes in student enrollments in the remaining two counties ranged from an increase of 0.1 to 1.9 percent.
- In Iowa, 7 of the 13 counties with large meatpacking workforces had increases in student enrollments that were more than the statewide increase of 3.5 percent. These increases ranged from 5.2 to 23.6 percent. Student enrollments in the remaining six counties decreased from 4.4 to 26.9 percent.

During the same period, the counties with large meatpacking workforces in these states also experienced increases in the number of students with limited proficiency in English.

- In the 10 Nebraska counties with large meatpacking workforces, the number of students with limited English proficiency jumped from a total of 227 in 1987 to about 4,600 in 1997. In 1997, Nebraska's counties with large meatpacking workforces had a disproportionately high number of the state's total enrollment of students with limited proficiency in English. More specifically, while these counties had only about 42 percent of the state's total enrollment of students, they had about 74 percent of the state's enrollment of students with limited English proficiency. Furthermore, the percentage of students having limited English proficiency significantly exceeded the statewide average of 2.1 percent of the total student enrollment in 5 of the 10 counties, ranging from 6.7 to 18 percent.

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- In the 13 Iowa counties, the number of students with limited English proficiency increased from a total of 1,341 in 1987 to 4,464 in 1997. In 1997, Iowa's counties with large meatpacking workforces had a disproportionately high number of the state's total enrollment of students with limited proficiency in English. More specifically, while these counties had only about 33 percent of the state's total enrollment of students, they had about 67 percent of the state's enrollment of students with limited English proficiency. Furthermore, the percentage of students with limited English proficiency significantly exceeded the statewide average of 1.3 percent of the total school enrollment in 5 of the 13 counties, ranging from 3.0 to 10.5 percent.

Additional information on school enrollments and students with limited English proficiency in the Nebraska and Iowa counties with large meatpacking workforces is shown in appendix III.

School officials in six communities we visited noted that the increases in the number of students with limited English proficiency required the school systems to make significant adjustments. Historically, these systems had not had the educational infrastructure in place to accommodate these students. Among other things, the school systems needed to make considerable expenditures to find teachers qualified for providing intensive education in the English language, to develop classes, and to provide the necessary classrooms. In some cases, the educational process was further complicated by the fact that a portion of the students with limited proficiency in speaking English also had poor skills in their own primary languages or were behind their age group in other basic aspects of their formal education. While the school administrators we spoke with have not quantified the added costs associated with addressing these needs, they believe they are considerable.

Finally, even after establishing additional programs, some school officials pointed out that with the high turnover of these students, they sometimes did not remain in school long enough to gain the full benefit of special instruction. Information from one school district shows, for example, that 139 students with limited English speaking ability—5.9 percent of the total enrollment—were newly enrolled in the community's school system during 1996. Also, 75 students with limited English speaking ability—3.2 percent of the total enrollment—withdrawed from school during that year.

Nebraska and Iowa have received federal funding that helps fund language training programs and other types of assistance for the children of migrant workers. Under the Department of Education's grant program for migrants, school districts receive funds to establish or improve programs of education for children whose parents work in qualifying agricultural jobs, including meatpacking plant jobs. School officials said that the meatpacking companies have cooperated in their efforts to identify students that may qualify for this assistance, mostly by providing time for workers to be interviewed by school officials to identify the needs of their children. For example, according to the state education office's data, in 1996 about 6,180 students from cities in Nebraska with large meatpacking workforces qualified for these grants. For 1998, Nebraska received federal grants totaling about \$3.6 million for about 12,000 students, and Iowa received about \$608,000 in federal grants for about 2,140 students.²

State officials identified two other sources of funds that may assist in educating the children of immigrants. First, emergency immigrant education grants are available for school districts that have at least 500 students, or 3 percent of the district's enrollment, who are foreign born and have been in the country for less than 3 years. Under this program, Nebraska and Iowa received about \$333,000 and \$250,000, respectively, for the 1998 school year, according to these officials. In addition, these officials said that school districts compete directly for bilingual education funds made available by the Department of Education under title VII of the Improving America's Schools Act to assist in paying for bilingual education programs. The state education officials said that because the school districts receive the grants directly, they did not have data on the amounts of grants that had been received.

While grateful for the federal grant funds, several school administrators pointed out that the Department of Education's grant funds for English as a second language do not cover the full cost of the teachers' salaries, that the grant funds can be used only to supplement ongoing programs, and that a portion of the students need more time to learn English than is covered by the grant program.

Use of Medicaid

Like their states as a whole, each of the 23 counties with large meatpacking workforces in Nebraska and Iowa experienced an increase in

²Also for 1998, school districts in Iowa had an additional \$4.8 million authorized for use in English as a second language programs. These additional funds were to be generated from both state aid and increases in special local property taxes.

the number of Medicaid recipients per 1,000 in population for 1996 compared with the number of recipients in 1990. Specifically:

- In Nebraska, 6 of the 10 counties with large meatpacking workforces experienced increases in the number of Medicaid recipients per 1,000 population that exceeded the statewide increase of 54 percent. These increases ranged from 62 to 176 percent. In the other four counties, the increases ranged from 40 to 51 percent.
- In Iowa, 7 of the 13 counties with large meatpacking workforces experienced increases in the number of Medicaid recipients per 1,000 population that exceeded the statewide increase of 39 percent. These increases ranged from 41 to 74 percent. In the other six counties, the increases ranged from 24 to 39 percent.

Appendix IV shows the increases in Medicaid use in the Nebraska and Iowa counties with large meatpacking workforces.

Hospital administrators and state and local social services officials attribute some part of the increase in Medicaid patients to the increase in employees in meatpacking plants. These officials told us that some meatpacking plant workers and their children may obtain Medicaid before they become eligible for the health insurance offered by the meatpacking companies. The companies' health insurance is not offered in some cases for up to 6 months. In addition, the workers and their children may be eligible for Medicaid after they leave a meatpacking plant job.

Three hospital administrators in the communities we visited said that their hospitals had increases in unpaid medical bills and that a portion of the increase was attributable to meatpacking plant workers who (1) did not qualify for Medicaid, (2) were not yet eligible for health insurance offered by their companies, or (3) had not obtained company health insurance. For example, the administrator at one hospital told us that although he did not have specific information relating the increase in unpaid bills to meatpacking plant workers, he believed that a significant portion of the increase was attributable to these workers. Financial information from this hospital showed that from 1990 to 1996, the amount of uncollectible bills increased from about 4 to about 6 percent of total revenues.

Overall, hospital administrators in the communities we visited said that they could not estimate the increases in medical costs associated with meatpacking plant employees and their families. However, they noted several changes that had been made and were still being made to ensure

that quality care is provided for these individuals and other immigrants. These adjustments include ensuring that foreign language interpreters are available, building immigrants' trust in local health care providers and their practices, developing an understanding of the health care practices of other cultures, and providing educational information on health care.

Changes in Economic Conditions

From 1990 to 1995, many of the 23 counties with large meatpacking workforces in Nebraska and Iowa experienced improvements in their economic circumstances, according to two measures of economic well being—per capita incomes and retail sales (adjusted for inflation). Overall, per capita incomes increased in 18 of the 23 counties with large meatpacking workforces and per capita taxable retail sales increased in 13 of the 23 counties. In Nebraska, 6 of the 10 counties had increases that exceeded the statewide increases in at least one of these measures. In Iowa, 9 of the 13 counties had increases that exceeded the statewide increases in at least one of these measures.

Another perspective on economic well-being can be obtained by ranking all the counties of each state using per capita income and total personal income and then examining how the rankings change over time. On the basis of this analysis, 19 of the 23 counties with large meatpacking workforces improved their rankings during the 1985 to 1995 period. Specifically:

- In Nebraska, 9 of the 10 counties had increases in either per capita income or total personal income that improved their comparative rank among the counties of the state. For example, Madison County had the 40th highest per capita income among Nebraska's 93 counties in 1985 and improved its rank to 16th highest by 1995.
- In Iowa, 10 of the 13 counties had increases in either per capita income or total personal income that improved their comparative rank among the counties of the state. For example, Woodbury County had the 30th highest per capita income among Iowa's 99 counties in 1985 and improved its rank to 11th highest by 1995.

Additional data on changes in income and retail sales can be found in appendix V.

While we did not determine the extent to which meatpacking companies contributed to local economies, officials in one small community where a plant was newly opened in 1990 noted significant economic benefits

because workers spent their pay with local merchants, thus increasing the business opportunities within the city as well as city tax revenues. At another city, the officials said that the officers of the company that owned the local meatpacking plant had made important contributions to the city. In particular, the company assisted the city in recovering from a flood by providing the city with power generators for temporary use at the company's cost. Despite such benefits, mayors and city managers in several communities questioned whether the companies were paying sufficient taxes, given the financial impacts of the workforce changes on their communities.

Changes in Crime Rates

According to data collected by the states and submitted to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) for its Uniform Crime Reporting Program,³ 14 of 19 counties with large meatpacking workforces experienced an increase in serious crimes between 1986 and 1995. (Of the 19 counties that reported sufficient data for our analysis, 10 were in Nebraska and 9 were in Iowa. Four counties did not report sufficient data for analysis.) The states use statistics collected on the serious crimes of murder, forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, and motor vehicle and larceny theft to calculate the rate of these crimes per 1,000 in population statewide and for each county.⁴ To analyze the changes in serious crime among counties with large meatpacking workforces, we compared the average crime rate of each county for 1986 and 1987 with the average crime rate for 1994 and 1995.⁵ Using this method, we found the following:

- The level of serious crime rose in 9 of the 10 Nebraska counties, and the percentage increase in each of these counties was greater than the statewide average increase for the periods examined. In addition, for the 1994-95 period, 4 of the 10 counties had average crime rates that met or exceeded the statewide average of 44.7 crimes per 1,000 in population. In the remaining six counties, the overall crime rates were less than the statewide average and ranged from 6.7 to 41.9 per 1,000 in population for the same period.

³Reporting under the Uniform Crime Reporting Program is based on offenses known to the police to have occurred; these offenses are reported by the municipality or county in which they occurred.

⁴Nebraska has also included arson in calculating crime rates; Iowa has not.

⁵Rather than compare crime rates for a single year at the beginning and end of the 1986-95 period, we compared 2-year average crime rates at the beginning and end of this period. On the basis of a suggestion from an FBI official responsible for uniform crime reporting, we used this technique to minimize the distortion that would occur if there were an unusually high or low crime rate in a single year.

- The level of serious crime increased in five of the nine Iowa counties for which data were available, while the statewide average crime rate decreased for the periods reviewed. In addition, for the 1994-95 period, four of the nine counties had average crime rates that exceeded the statewide average of 37.4 crimes per 1,000 in population. In the remaining five counties, the overall crime rates were less than the statewide average and ranged from 12.7 to 33.5 per 1,000 in population.

Among the Nebraska counties with large meatpacking workforces, the serious crimes of larceny, motor vehicle theft, and felony assault increased the most. For example, the rate of larcenies increased from 32.9 per 1,000 in population in 1986 to 39.0 per 1,000 in population in 1995; motor vehicle thefts increased from 2.5 per 1,000 in population in 1986 to 6.5 per 1,000 in population in 1995; and felony assaults increased from 3.1 per 1,000 in population in 1986 to 4.7 per 1,000 in population in 1995.⁶ Among the Iowa counties with large meatpacking workforces, the rate of felony assaults and motor vehicle thefts increased, while other types of serious crime either remained about the same or decreased. Felony assaults increased from 2.8 per 1,000 in population in 1986 to 3.9 per 1,000 in population in 1995, and motor vehicle thefts increased from 2.4 per 1,000 in population in 1986 to 3.8 per 1,000 in population in 1995.⁷

Additional data on the changes in crime for these counties can be found in appendix VI.

Other crimes, such as simple assaults and drug abuse violations, are not included in the statistics used to determine crime rates. However, the police chiefs in the communities we visited noted that increases in other such crimes have further taxed law enforcement resources. For example, in one county we visited, arrests for simple assaults rose from 23 in 1986 to 118 in 1995, while arrests for drug abuse violations increased from 16 to 98. During the same period, in another county we visited, the number of arrests for simple assaults rose from 18 to 278, while the arrests for drug abuse violations increased from 12 to 81. For the same period, in the 10 Nebraska counties with large meatpacking workforces, arrests for simple assaults and drug abuse violations rose from 1,256 to 3,869 and from 1,358 to 4,254, respectively. For the nine Iowa counties with large meatpacking workforces, arrests for simple assaults and drug abuse violations rose

⁶The actual increases from 1986 to 1995 were as follows: larcenies—20,976 to 26,019; motor vehicle thefts—1,601 to 4,356; and felony assaults—1,976 to 3,163.

⁷The actual increases from 1986 to 1995 were as follows: felony assaults—1,910 to 2,781 and motor vehicle thefts—1,655 to 2,677.

from 1,489 to 3,989 and from 490 to 3,776, respectively, during this same 10-year period. In Nebraska, simple assaults and drug abuse violations increased faster in 9 and 8 of the 10 counties, respectively, than occurred statewide. In Iowa, simple assaults and drug abuse violations increased faster in six and three of nine counties, respectively, than occurred statewide.⁸

Law enforcement officers attributed portions of the increases in crime to meatpacking plant workers; however, statistics on individuals who commit crimes have not been tracked by place of employment. In the communities we visited, law enforcement officers identified a number of actions they had taken over the last several years or were taking to better carry out their responsibilities. These actions included expanding the police forces (in part, using federal grant resources for community policing, etc.), initiating language training for police officers, hiring translators to assist in interviews, and hiring bilingual police officers. The police chiefs we talked to said that some additional police officers would be helpful in addressing their expanding caseloads. More importantly, they emphasized that bilingual officers were badly needed because these officers are critical to establishing links with the minority communities. Yet, they said bilingual officers have been very difficult to recruit and retain because officers with this skill are in great demand and can obtain higher pay from some jurisdictions.

Finally, several officers we spoke with expressed frustration about their attempts to work with INS in order to deal with suspected illegal aliens. In particular, they said that they had difficulties in even contacting INS for assistance. For example, some police chiefs said that INS phone lines are so busy that they are often unable to contact the agency. In addition, some police chiefs noted that INS has not assisted in removing suspected illegal aliens from local jails unless there are more than a few in custody or unless they have committed a crime. The INS District Director responsible for Nebraska and Iowa said that INS has worked on upgrading its phone system and agreed that, at times, it does not have the resources to assist

⁸Statewide, in Nebraska, arrests for simple assaults rose from 3,327 in 1986 to 9,549 in 1995, and drug abuse violations increased from 2,288 in 1986 to 6,954 in 1995. In Iowa, arrests for simple assaults rose from 4,848 in 1986 to 8,775 in 1995, and drug abuse violations increased from 2,409 in 1986 to 7,715 in 1995.

local law enforcement unless more than a few suspected illegal aliens are in custody for questioning.^{9,10}

Housing Conditions of Meatpacking Plant Workers

Data on the physical condition and availability of housing in the nine Nebraska and Iowa communities we visited were not available. However, the officials in communities we visited said that physical housing conditions for newly arriving workers in meatpacking plants are generally adequate and that residential housing areas are generally clean and well kept. These workers often occupy rental trailers or apartments that are in reasonably good condition, although these officials were aware of isolated instances where the condition of rental trailers or apartments was not good. Community officials also noted that some workers and families who have been in the communities for several years have purchased single-family homes. During our visits to communities, we did not observe any evidence of physical housing conditions that seemed to be contrary to the overall assessment of these officials.

While community officials characterized the physical housing conditions of the meatpacking plant workers as generally adequate, they expressed some concerns about the effect of increasing populations in their local areas on the affordability of housing and overcrowding. The officials in most of the communities we visited noted that there were often cases in which more than one family lived in a small rental unit. These officials suggested that with the low incomes of new meatpacking plant workers, two or more families were living in the same trailer, apartment, or house to make the housing costs more affordable. In addition, the officials expressed concern that because of the increases in population in their local areas, fewer housing units were available and that rents, which generally had been low, had started to increase. In one community, for example, apartments rented for about \$430 per month, and two-bedroom trailers rented for about \$405 per month in 1997. In 1990, the same types of apartments rented for only about \$330 per month, and trailers rented for only \$315 per month. A community housing official also said that because the demand for rental housing is high, there is now little difference between the rental rates for new and old trailers as well as for new and old apartments.

⁹We testified on a related problem involving inadequate INS staffing. For our testimony, see [Criminal Aliens: INS Efforts to Identify and Remove Imprisoned Aliens Need to Be Improved \(GAO/T-GGD-97-154, July 15, 1997\)](#).

¹⁰INS conducted a project in Anaheim, California, during 1996-97 to demonstrate the feasibility of identifying and removing illegal aliens in local prisons prior to their arraignment on criminal charges. P.L. 105-141 of December 5, 1997, requires the Attorney General to establish a program in local prisons along these lines.

Illegal Aliens in the Workforce

INS has often found illegal aliens employed at meatpacking plants and has designated this industry, along with 14 others, as a priority concern in its efforts to deter the employment of illegal aliens in the United States. INS conducts several activities aimed at ensuring the employment of eligible individuals and at identifying and removing illegal aliens from the workforce. These activities include, among other things, training industry personnel in employment eligibility verification procedures; visiting plants to verify that employers are following appropriate procedures such as completing I-9 forms;¹¹ checking employees' identification demonstrating eligibility for employment, and arresting and removing those not eligible for employment.

In operations to identify illegal aliens at seven Nebraska and Iowa meatpacking plants in 1996 and 1997, INS found that 909, or about 23 percent, of the workers in these plants had questionable identification documents, which indicated that they may be illegal aliens. During these operations, INS apprehended 513 illegal aliens, or about 13 percent of the workforces. The INS District Director for Nebraska and Iowa said that more illegal aliens would have been apprehended if they had reported for work when INS was at the plant and was ready to interview them. The District Director estimated that as many as 25 percent of the workers in meatpacking plants in Nebraska and Iowa were illegal aliens.

The employment of illegal aliens has raised concerns among the public and law enforcement officials that the industry intentionally hires illegal aliens. However, INS officials and the three U.S. Attorneys in Nebraska and Iowa told us that evidence has not been developed to prove that meatpacking companies are intentionally employing illegal aliens. Company officials said that despite their efforts to ensure that they hire only eligible workers, illegal aliens have gained jobs by presenting forged identification documents that the companies have not detected. According to a 1996 report on proposed immigration legislation by the House Committee on the Judiciary, the problem of document fraud is pervasive.¹²

According to the Department of Justice's Office of Special Counsel for Immigration-Related Unfair Employment Practices, employers are required to accept identification documents presented by job applicants if

¹¹The Immigration and Nationality Act (sec. 274A) requires all newly hired employees to present identity and work eligibility documents and to complete a Form I-9 attesting to the accuracy of the information. Employers must review the documents and certify on Form I-9 that the documents appear to be genuine and that they relate to the individual.

¹²House Report 104-469 (Mar. 4, 1996).

the documents are not obvious forgeries—that is, if they appear to be genuine and relate to the individual. The INS Director of Worksite Enforcement said that the availability of forged identification documents and the legal limitations on checking these documents have made the hiring of illegal aliens unavoidable. For example, the selective application of the Immigration Reform and Control Act's provisions for verifying job applicants' work eligibility is considered discriminatory.¹³ Once in the workforce, illegal aliens generally cannot be removed unless an INS official determines that an individual's employment documentation is inadequate.

Under the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 and the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996, INS and the Social Security Administration are testing systems designed to assist employers in verifying the employment eligibility of newly hired employees and the validity of these employees' Social Security registrations.¹⁴ These pilot systems will test different approaches to electronically match information provided by newly hired employees against INS' and the Social Security Administration's databases. According to company and INS officials, meatpacking companies are cooperating with INS in developing and applying these systems. Employers may not use these systems to prescreen prospective employees or to check their existing workforce. Also, these pilot projects were not designed to check the complete range of identification that a prospective employee may present—such as the validity of state drivers' licenses. Since these are pilot projects and it is not mandatory for employers to adopt them, the degree to which these initiatives will affect the number of unauthorized workers is unknown, and in any case, the effect is expected to be gradual.

See appendix VII for a listing of our reports addressing concerns about illegal aliens.

Agency Comments

We provided INS with the sections of our draft report concerning INS' activities for review and comment. Subsequently, we met with INS officials, including the Director, Worksite Enforcement, Office of Field Operations, and the Director, Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements Program,

¹³We reported on discrimination in hiring under the act in *Immigration Reform: Employer Sanctions and the Question of Discrimination* (GAO/GGD-90-62, Mar. 29, 1990).

¹⁴We reported on the status of INS' demonstration projects to help employers verify the work eligibility of newly hired noncitizen workers. See *H-2A Agricultural Guestworker Program: Changes Could Improve Services to Employers and Better Protect Workers* (GAO/HEHS-98-20, Dec. 31, 1997) and *Immigration and Naturalization Service: Employment Verification Pilot Project* (GAO/GGD-97-136R, July 17, 1997).

Office of Management. The INS officials agreed with the presentation of the facts in the draft. As they suggested, we clarified our description of the employment verification pilot programs. In addition, INS officials said that meatpacking industry officials have been enthusiastic in their participation in INS' employment verification pilot programs. However, as noted in our report, the INS employment verification pilot programs have limitations in their capability to check documents, and the INS has often found illegal aliens in meatpacking plant workforces.

We also provided appropriate Nebraska and Iowa state agencies with sections of the report and relevant data on school enrollments, Medicaid, and crime for their review.

Officials of the Nebraska and Iowa Departments of Education agreed with the sections of the draft report that they reviewed. They commented that in addition to the federal grants for migrants identified in our draft, the U.S. Department of Education provides two other sources of funds for educating the children of immigrants. We incorporated this information in our report.

Nebraska and Iowa Medicaid officials agreed with the section of the draft report they reviewed. They also noted that the dependents of meatpacking plant workers were much more likely to use Medicaid than the workers themselves. The Nebraska Medical Director, Department of Health and Human Services, pointed out that more than half of the Medicaid recipients were children and that a significant portion of the Medicaid payments were for care of the elderly. The Bureau Chief, Division of Medical Services, Iowa Department of Human Services, commented that the department would not conclude that meatpacking plant workers and their dependents were the primary cause of increased Medicaid enrollments, since the department did not have specific data on their impact, although he agreed that this group was one of several that have affected enrollment in Medicaid.

Regarding crime, Nebraska and Iowa state officials agreed with our analysis and presentation of data, with two exceptions. First, on the basis of comments from the Iowa Department of Public Safety, we made adjustments to the crime statistics presented for the state of Iowa to make the statewide data more comparable with the county data, and we added crime data for Woodbury County. Second, the Executive Director of the Nebraska Crime Commission expressed doubt that the crime rate for Dakota County had decreased by 33 percent because local officials are

concerned about increasing crime in this county. The crime rate is based on certain types of serious crimes (as identified earlier in this report) that counties reported to Nebraska state offices under the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting Program. We recognize that in Dakota County, there have been increases among types of crimes that are not used in determining the crime rate. For example, Dakota County reported that arrests for simple assaults rose from 23 in 1986 to 118 in 1995, drug abuse violations increased from 16 to 98, and arrests for driving under the influence increased from 164 to 405. None of these crimes is included in determining the crime rate under the Uniform Crime Reporting Program.

Scope and Methodology

To examine changes in the Nebraska and Iowa counties with large meatpacking plant workforces, we interviewed and obtained information from officials in nine Nebraska and Iowa cities with large meatpacking workforces and obtained and analyzed data on population, school enrollments, health care, personal income, taxable retail sales, and crime from federal and state agencies. To review the hiring of illegal aliens, we interviewed and obtained information from five major meatpacking companies, INS, and the three U.S. Attorneys in Nebraska and Iowa. We performed our review from April 1997 through February 1998 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Appendix I provides details on our objectives, scope, and methodology.

As arranged with your offices, unless you publicly announce its contents earlier, we plan no further distribution of this report until 15 days from the date of this letter. At that time, we will make copies available to appropriate congressional committees; the Commissioner, INS; meatpacking companies; and other interested parties. We will also make copies available to others on request.

Please call me at (202) 512-5138 if you or your staff have any questions. Major contributors to this report are listed in appendix VIII.



Robert A. Robinson
Director, Food and
Agriculture Issues

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Abbreviations

GAO	General Accounting Office
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
INS	Immigration and Naturalization Service

Objectives, Scope, and Methodology

As a basis for examining changes in Nebraska's and Iowa's counties with major meatpacking operations, we limited the number of counties that we examined to those meeting the following two criteria. First, the counties had to have 250 to 500 or more meatpacking plant workers as of 1995. These counties were identified through data obtained from the Department of Commerce's Bureau of the Census for 1989 (for our analysis of changes in population during the 1980s) and 1995 (the latest data available). Second, the counties had to have a meatpacking plant that was among the 50 largest meatpacking plants nationally (in terms of processing capacity) in one of three categories—steers and heifers, cows and bulls, or hogs. This information was obtained from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Packers and Stockyards Administration. The counties are shown in table I.1.

Appendix I
Objectives, Scope, and Methodology

Table I.1: Location of Large Meatpacking Plants in Nebraska and Iowa

State and county	City	Company owning a large plant in county	Slaughter category
Nebraska			
Buffalo	Gibbon	Gibbon Packing	Cows and bulls
Colfax ^a	Schuyler	Excel	Steers and heifers
Cuming	West Point	IBP	Steers and heifers
Dakota ^a	Dakota City/ South Sioux City	IBP	Steers and heifers
Dawson ^a	Lexington	IBP	Steers and heifers
Dodge ^a	Fremont	Hormel Foods	Hogs
Douglas ^b	Omaha	Monfort	Cows and bulls
Hall ^a	Grand Island	Monfort	Steers and heifers
Madison ^a	Madison	IBP	Hogs
Madison ^a	Norfolk	Beef America	Steers and heifers
Saline ^a	Crete	Farmland Foods	Cows and bulls
Iowa			
Black Hawk ^a	Waterloo	IBP	Hogs
Buena Vista ^a	Storm Lake	IBP	Hogs
Crawford ^a	Denison	Farmland Foods	Hogs
Dallas ^b	Perry	IBP	Hogs
Dubuque ^a	Dubuque	Farmland Foods	Hogs
Louisa ^a	Columbus Junction	IBP	Hogs
Marshall ^a	Marshalltown	Monfort	Hogs
Polk ^a	Des Moines	Iowa Packing	Hogs
Pottawattamie ^a	Council Bluffs	IBP	Hogs
Sioux	Hospers	Packerland Packing	Steers and heifers
Sioux	Sioux Center	Sioux-Preme Packing	Hogs
Tama	Tama	IBP	Cows and bulls
Wapello ^a	Ottumwa	Excel	Hogs
Woodbury ^a	Sioux City	Verschoor Meats	Hogs

^aCounty with 1,000 or more meatpacking plant workers.

^bCounty with 500 to 999 meatpacking plant workers.

Source: 1997 data on the location, companies and meatpacking plant slaughter category from the USDA's Packers and Stockyards Administration and 1995 data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census on employment in meatpacking.

To identify the changes in counties' populations, we analyzed data from the 1980 and 1990 censuses and the Bureau of the Census's estimates of population up to 1996. The Bureau advises that its 1996 breakouts of the estimated county-level population by race and Hispanic origin are produced by a method that is in the developmental stage and, therefore, should be used with caution. We used these breakouts in developing the 1996 estimates of minorities by county that are presented in table II.2. We also examined the Bureau's census updates for Perry, Iowa, and Lexington, Nebraska.

To identify changes in school enrollments, we analyzed data from state education offices in Nebraska and Iowa. These data were compiled from data provided by the school systems of each state. To identify changes in Medicaid use, we analyzed Medicaid data provided by Nebraska's and Iowa's state department of social services. To identify changes in crime, we analyzed data reported by the states to the Federal Bureau of Investigation under the national Uniform Crime Reporting Program. To provide an indication of changes in economic well-being, we analyzed personal income data from the Department of Commerce's Bureau of Economic Analysis and data from Nebraska and Iowa state offices on taxable retail sales. We did not verify the accuracy of the data or the methodologies used to develop the data. Also, since little data were available on the physical condition of existing housing, we developed limited information on the basis of interviews with community officials and tours of residential housing areas of the communities we visited.

In addition to our analysis of various federal and state databases, we selected cities for visits on the basis of the locations of large plants, the sizes of the cities, and consultations with the congressional requesters of this report. In Nebraska, we visited Lexington, in Dawson County; Schuyler, in Colfax County; Norfolk, in Madison County; and Dakota City and South Sioux City, in Dakota County. In Iowa, we visited Perry, in Dallas County; Tama, in Tama County; Waterloo, in Black Hawk County; and Ottumwa, in Wapello County. During our visits, we generally spoke with mayors, city administrators and managers, police chiefs, school administrators, and hospital administrators. In addition, we contacted officials in Hastings, Nebraska, and Postville, Iowa, to discuss the impacts of the local meatpacking plant workforces.

To address the hiring of illegal aliens, we interviewed and obtained information from officials of five of the largest meatpacking companies—BeefAmerica, Excel, Farmland Foods, IBP, and

Monfort—about their hiring practices and changing labor forces. These companies operate a total of 20 large meatpacking plants in Nebraska and Iowa. We also interviewed and obtained information from the Department of Justice’s Immigration and Naturalization Service both in Washington, D.C., and Omaha, Nebraska; the Office of Special Council for Immigration-Related Unfair Employment Practices; and the three U.S. Attorneys in Nebraska and Iowa.

We also interviewed and obtained information from officials of the American Meat Institute; the Wage and Hour Division of the Department of Labor’s Occupational Safety and Health Administration and the Department’s Bureau of Labor Statistics; USDA’s Packers and Stockyards Administration and Economic Research Service; and the National Academy of Science’s National Research Council. We also considered our previously reported information on the hiring of workers under the requirements of the Immigration Reform and Control Act.

We performed our review from April 1997 through February 1998 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.

Changes in Population

Table II.1: Changes in Population for Seven Counties in Nebraska and Nine Counties in Iowa, 1980 and 1990

State and county	Total population			Minorities			
	1980	1990	Percent change 1980-90	1980	1990	Percent of total 1980	Percent of total 1990
Nebraska							
Colfax	9,890	9,139	-7.6	99	261	1.0	2.9
Dakota	16,573	16,742	1.0	759	1,746	4.6	10.4
Dodge	35,847	34,500	-3.8	397	521	1.1	1.5
Douglas	397,038	416,444	4.9	52,769	63,070	13.3	15.1
Hall	47,690	48,925	2.6	1,712	2,939	3.6	6.0
Madison	31,382	32,655	4.1	448	1,131	1.4	3.5
Saline	13,131	12,715	-3.2	179	229	1.4	1.8
Statewide	1,569,825	1,578,385	0.5	94,449	118,290	6.0	7.5
Iowa							
Buena Vista	20,774	19,965	-3.9	187	602	0.9	3.0
Crawford	18,935	16,775	-11.4	253	276	1.3	1.6
Dubuque	93,745	86,403	-7.8	1,090	1,326	1.2	1.5
Louisa	12,055	11,592	-3.8	189	557	1.6	4.8
Marshall	41,652	38,276	-8.1	913	968	2.2	2.5
Polk	303,170	327,140	7.9	23,027	27,671	7.6	8.5
Pottawattamie	86,561	82,628	-4.5	2,142	2,480	2.5	3.0
Wapello	40,241	35,687	-11.3	645	757	1.6	2.1
Woodbury	100,884	98,276	-2.6	3,848	7,333	3.8	7.5
Statewide	2,913,808	2,776,755	-4.7	90,466	112,915	3.1	4.1

Source: GAO analysis of data from the U.S. Bureau of Census.

**Appendix II
Changes in Population**

Table II.2: Estimated Changes in Population for 10 Counties in Nebraska and 13 Counties in Iowa, 1990-96

State and county	Total population			Minorities ^a			
	1990	Estimated 1996	Percent change 1990-96	1990	Estimated 1996	Percent of total 1990	Percent of total 1996
Nebraska							
Buffalo	37,447	40,037	6.9	1,441	2,315	3.8	5.8
Colfax	9,139	10,368	13.4	261	440	2.9	4.2
Cuming	10,117	10,128	0.1	53	77	0.5	0.8
Dakota	16,742	18,258	9.1	1,746	2,745	10.4	15.0
Dawson	19,940	23,126	16.0	774	1,393	3.9	6.0
Dodge	34,500	35,022	1.5	521	751	1.5	2.1
Douglas	416,444	438,835	5.4	63,070	77,527	15.1	17.7
Hall	48,925	51,485	5.2	2,939	4,697	6.0	9.1
Madison	32,655	34,702	6.3	1,131	1,671	3.5	4.8
Saline	12,715	12,988	2.1	229	307	1.8	2.4
Statewide	1,578,385	1,652,093	4.7	118,290	157,369	7.5	9.5
Iowa							
Black Hawk	123,798	122,806	-0.8	10,697	11,816	8.6	9.6
Buena Vista	19,965	19,862	-0.5	602	761	3.0	3.8
Crawford	16,775	16,503	-1.6	276	314	1.6	1.9
Dallas	29,755	33,900	13.9	349	533	1.2	1.6
Dubuque	86,403	88,201	2.1	1,326	1,693	1.5	1.9
Louisa	11,592	12,017	3.7	557	792	4.8	6.6
Marshall	38,276	38,868	1.5	968	1,222	2.5	3.1
Polk	327,140	354,150	8.3	27,671	35,932	8.5	10.1
Pottawattamie	82,628	84,939	2.8	2,480	3,384	3.0	4.0
Sioux	29,903	31,191	4.3	339	475	1.1	1.5
Tama	17,419	17,678	1.5	1,031	1,115	5.9	6.3
Wapello	35,687	35,766	0.2	757	897	2.1	2.5
Woodbury	98,276	102,580	4.4	7,333	9,238	7.5	9.0
Statewide	2,776,755	2,851,792	2.7	112,915	142,601	4.1	5.0

^aThe Bureau of the Census advises that the breakouts of the 1996 county level estimates of population by race and Hispanic origin are produced by a method that is in the developmental stage and should be used with caution.

Source: GAO analysis of data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census.

Changes in Student Enrollments and Limited English Proficiency Students

Table III.1: Changes in Student Enrollments and Limited English Proficiency Students for Public Schools in 10 Counties in Nebraska, School Years 1986-87 and 1996-97

County	Year	Enrollment						
		Asian	Hispanic	American Indian/Alaska Native	Black	Total Minorities	White	Total
Buffalo	1986/87	26	200	11	26	263	6,086	6,349
	1996/97	60	405	25	31	521	6,637	7,158
	% change	130.8%	102.5%	127.3%	19.2%	98.1%	9.1%	12.7%
Colfax	1986/87	1	12	2	0	15	1,766	1,781
	1996/97	3	353	2	0	358	1,817	2,175
	% change	200.0%	2,841.7%	0.0%	0.0%	2,286.7%	2.9%	22.1%
Cuming	1986/87	1	3	3	1	8	1,684	1,692
	1996/97	11	41	26	8	86	1,608	1,694
	% change	1,000.0%	1,266.7%	766.7%	700.0%	975.0%	-4.5%	0.1%
Dakota	1986/87	93	86	58	9	246	2,758	3,004
	1996/97	136	661	89	31	917	2,509	3,426
	% change	46.2%	668.6%	53.4%	244.4%	272.8%	-9.0%	14.0%
Dawson	1986/87	16	137	2	6	161	4,148	4,309
	1996/97	48	1,185	22	7	1,262	3,854	5,116
	% change	200.0%	765.0%	1,000.0%	16.7%	683.9%	-7.1%	18.7%
Dodge	1986/87	38	31	25	15	109	6,158	6,267
	1996/97	40	100	21	34	195	6,191	6,386
	% change	5.3%	222.6%	-16.0%	126.7%	78.9%	0.5%	1.9%
Douglas	1986/87	729	1,523	597	11,346	14,195	53,593	67,788
	1996/97	1,123	3,946	764	13,757	19,590	56,215	75,805
	% change	54.0%	159.1%	28.0%	21.2%	38.0%	4.9%	11.8%
Hall	1986/87	211	338	48	34	631	8,492	9,123
	1996/97	223	1,144	45	70	1,482	8,934	10,416
	% change	5.7%	238.5%	-6.3%	105.9%	134.9%	5.2%	14.2%
Madison	1986/87	16	21	47	4	88	5,455	5,543
	1996/97	25	635	139	84	883	5,838	6,721
	%change	56.3%	2,923.8%	195.7%	2,000.0%	903.4%	7.0%	21.3%
Saline	1986/87	9	9	1	4	23	2,381	2,404
	1996/97	47	74	7	20	148	2,540	2,688
	% change	422.2%	722.2%	600.0%	400.0%	543.5%	6.7%	11.8%
Statewide	1986/87	2,300	5,814	2,757	13,459	24,330	242,274	266,604
	1996/97	3,792	14,194	4,144	17,343	39,473	251,417	290,890
	% change	64.9%	144.1%	50.3%	28.9%	62.2%	3.8%	9.1%

Appendix III
Changes in Student Enrollments and Limited
English Proficiency Students

Limited English Proficiency	Percent of Enrollment			Limited English Proficiency
	Asian/ Hispanic	Total Minorities	White	
0	3.6	4.1	95.9	0.0
98	6.5	7.3	92.7	1.4
	82.5%	75.7%	-3.3%	
1	0.7	0.8	99.2	0.1
195	16.4	16.5	83.5	9.0
19,400.0%	2,142.4%	1,854.3%	-15.8%	1,5867.6%
0	0.2	0.5	99.5	0.0
46	3.1	5.1	94.9	2.7
	1,198.5%	973.7%	-4.6%	
76	6.0	8.2	91.8	2.5
616	23.3	26.8	73.2	18.0
710.5%	290.4%	226.8%	-20.2%	610.7
5	3.6	3.7	96.3	0.1
749	24.1	24.7	75.3	14.6
14,880.0%	578.8%	560.2%	-21.7%	1,2517.0%
1	1.1	1.7	98.3	0.0
50	2.2	3.1	96.9	0.8
4,900.0%	99.1%	75.6%	-1.3%	4,806.8%
138	3.3	20.9	79.1	0.2
1,619	6.7	25.8	74.2	2.1
1,073.2%	101.3%	23.4%	-6.2%	949.1%
5	6.0	6.9	93.1	0.1
702	13.1	14.2	85.8	6.7
13,940.0%	118.1%	105.7%	-7.9%	1,2197.1%
0	0.7	1.6	98.4	0.0
489	9.8	13.1	86.9	7.3
	1,371.1%	727.5%	-11.7%	
1	0.7	1.0	99.0	0.0
41	4.5	5.5	94.5	1.5
4,000.0%	501.2%	475.5%	-4.6%	3,566.8%
507	3.0	9.1	90.9	0.2
6,212	6.2	13.6	86.4	2.1
1,125.2%	103.2%	48.7%	-4.9%	1,023.0%

Source: GAO analysis of data from the Nebraska Department of Education.

**Appendix III
Changes in Student Enrollments and Limited
English Proficiency Students**

Table III.2: Changes in Student Enrollments and Limited English Proficiency Students for Public Schools in 13 Counties in Iowa, School Years 1986-87 and 1996-97

County	Year	Enrollment						
		Asian	Hispanic	American Indian/ Alaska Native	Black	Total Minorities	White	Total
Black Hawk	1986/87	247	86	34	2,242	2,609	16,507	19,116
	1996/97	308	239	52	2,945	3,544	14,739	18,283
	% change	24.7%	177.9%	52.9%	31.4%	35.8%	-10.7%	-4.4%
Buena Vista	1986/87	156	10	0	11	177	3,045	3,222
	1996/97	218	335	2	31	586	3,257	3,843
	% change	39.7%	3,250.0%		181.8%	231.1%	7.0%	19.3%
Crawford	1986/87	34	20	1	6	61	3,525	3,586
	1996/97	29	54	2	11	96	2,525	2,621
	% change	-14.7%	170.0%	100.0%	83.3%	57.4%	-28.4%	-26.9%
Dallas	1986/87	34	18	3	23	78	6,196	6,274
	1996/97	58	246	8	61	373	7,384	7,757
	% change	70.6%	1,266.7%	166.7%	165.2%	378.2%	19.2%	23.6%
Dubuque	1986/87	163	48	38	136	385	12,854	13,239
	1996/97	112	58	37	202	409	12,111	12,520
	% change	-31.3%	20.8%	-2.6%	48.5%	6.2%	-5.8%	-5.4%
Louisa	1986/87	7	86	0	4	97	2,742	2,839
	1996/97	13	439	7	4	463	2,524	2,987
	% change	85.7%	410.5%		0.0%	377.3%	-8.0%	5.2%
Marshall	1986/87	103	42	11	61	217	6,760	6,977
	1996/97	99	439	29	88	655	5,874	6,529
	% change	-3.9%	945.2%	163.6%	44.3%	201.8%	-13.1%	-6.4%
Polk	1986/87	1,535	732	95	3,735	6,097	45,189	51,286
	1996/97	2,132	1,967	280	4,839	9,218	49,487	58,705
	% change	38.9%	168.7%	194.7%	29.6%	51.2%	9.5%	14.5%
Pottawattamie	1986/87	51	201	54	108	414	15,583	15,997
	1996/97	106	387	84	166	743	16,207	16,950
	% change	107.8%	92.5%	55.6%	53.7%	79.5%	4.0%	6.0%
Sioux	1986/87	39	5	6	4	54	3,698	3,752
	1996/97	44	67	18	17	146	4,280	4,426
	% change	12.8%	1,240.0%	200.0%	325.0%	170.4%	15.7%	18.0%
Tama	1986/87	25	28	194	0	247	3,179	3,426
	1996/97	17	125	200	19	361	2,630	2,991
	% change	-32.0%	346.4%	3.1%		46.2%	-17.3%	-12.7%

**Appendix III
Changes in Student Enrollments and Limited
English Proficiency Students**

Limited English Proficiency	Percent of Enrollment			Limited English Proficiency
	Asian/ Hispanic	Total Minorities	White	
161	1.7	13.6	86.4	0.8
93	3.0	19.4	80.6	0.5
-42.2%	71.7%	42.0%	-6.6%	-39.6%
45	5.2	5.5	94.5	1.4
405	14.4	15.2	84.8	10.5
800.0%	179.3%	177.6%	-10.3%	654.6%
10	1.5	1.7	98.3	0.3
1	3.2	3.7	96.3	0.0
-90.0%	110.3%	115.3%	-2.0%	-86.3%
12	0.8	1.2	98.8	0.2
92	3.9	4.8	95.2	1.2
666.7%	372.8%	286.8%	-3.6%	520.1%
20	1.6	2.9	97.1	0.2
41	1.4	3.3	96.7	0.3
105.0%	-14.8%	12.3%	-0.4%	116.8%
28	3.3	3.4	96.6	1.0
220	15.1	15.5	84.5	7.4
685.7%	361.9%	353.7%	-12.5%	646.8%
69	2.1	3.1	96.9	1.0
249	8.2	10.0	90.0	3.8
260.9%	296.5%	222.6%	-7.1%	285.6%
711	4.4	11.9	88.1	1.4
1,751	7.0	15.7	84.3	3.0
146.3%	58.0%	32.1%	-4.3%	115.1%
0	1.6	2.6	97.4	0.0
53	2.9	4.4	95.6	0.3
	84.6%	69.4%	-1.8%	
16	1.2	1.4	98.6	0.4
22	2.5	3.3	96.7	0.5
37.5%	113.9%	129.2%	-1.9%	16.6%
2	1.5	7.2	92.8	0.1
68	4.7	12.1	87.9	2.3
3,300.0%	206.9%	67.4%	-5.2%	3794.5%

(continued)

Appendix III
Changes in Student Enrollments and Limited
English Proficiency Students

Enrollment								
County	Year	Asian	Hispanic	American Indian/ Alaska Native	Black	Total Minorities	White	Total
Wapello	1986/87	42	7	2	77	128	6,781	6,909
	1996/97	90	63	17	82	252	6,267	6,519
	% change	114.3%	800.0%	750.0%	6.5%	96.9%	-7.6%	-5.6%
Woodbury	1986/87	303	196	435	417	1,351	15,869	17,220
	1996/97	610	1,557	616	642	3,425	15,137	18,562
	% change	101.3%	694.4%	41.6%	54.0%	153.5%	-4.6%	7.8%
Statewide	1986/87	5,750	4,191	1,231	12,200	23,372	457,912	481,284
	1996/97	7,911	11,618	2,239	16,965	38,733	459,166	497,899
	% change	37.6%	177.2%	81.9%	39.1%	65.7%	0.3%	3.5%

Appendix III
Changes in Student Enrollments and Limited
English Proficiency Students

Limited English Proficiency	Percent of Enrollment			Limited English Proficiency
	Asian/ Hispanic	Total Minorities	White	
24	0.7	1.9	98.1	0.3
9	2.3	3.9	96.1	0.1
-62.5%	230.9%	108.7%	-2.1%	-60.3%
243	2.9	7.8	92.2	1.4
1,460	11.7	18.5	81.5	7.9
500.8%	302.9%	135.2%	-11.5%	457.4%
2,905	2.1	4.9	95.1	0.6
6,663	3.9	7.8	92.2	1.3
129.4%	89.9%	60.2%	-3.1%	121.7%

Source: GAO analysis of data from the Iowa Department of Education.

Changes in Medicaid

Table IV.1: Increases in Medicaid Use Among 10 Counties in Nebraska, 1990 and 1996

County	Recipients per 1,000 population		Percent increase
	1990	1996	
Buffalo	73.9	111.3	51
Colfax	37.4	68.2	82
Cuming	36.7	101.1	176
Dakota	92.1	157.1	71
Dawson	90.4	171.2	89
Dodge	81.0	113.8	40
Douglas	94.6	137.0	45
Hall	107.7	151.0	40
Madison	75.5	122.0	62
Saline	44.8	83.4	86
Statewide	76.0	117.4	54

Source: GAO's analysis of data from Nebraska Medicaid and U.S. Bureau of the Census.

Table IV.2: Increases in Medicaid Use Among 13 Counties in Iowa, 1990 and 1996

County	Recipients per 1,000 population		Percent increase
	1990	1996	
Black Hawk	129.5	160.2	24
Buena Vista	71.3	116.5	63
Crawford	107.9	177.4	64
Dallas	73.2	98.9	35
Dubuque	75.2	98.8	31
Louisa	95.7	166.5	74
Marshall	91.2	143.9	58
Polk	91.4	126.9	39
Pottawattamie	115.0	162.2	41
Sioux	46.3	70.9	53
Tama	84.0	122.1	45
Wapello	155.3	212.2	37
Woodbury	119.3	152.4	28
Statewide	92.4	128.2	39

Source: GAO's analysis of data from Iowa Medicaid and U.S. Bureau of the Census.

Changes in Income and Taxable Retail Sales

Table V.1: Changes in Per Capita Income and Per Capita Taxable Retail Sales for 10 Counties in Nebraska, 1990 and 1995

County	Per capita income ^a			Per capita taxable sales ^a		
	1990	1995	Percent change	1990	1995	Percent change
Buffalo	\$17,938	\$19,951	11.2	\$8,843	\$9,345	5.7
Colfax	21,174	20,032	-5.4	4,665	3,239	-30.6
Cuming	28,035	27,308	-2.6	5,977	5,399	-9.7
Dakota	17,027	18,615	9.3	6,148	6,106	-0.7
Dawson	20,873	19,787	-5.2	7,984	6,726	-15.8
Dodge	18,849	20,774	10.2	7,801	7,723	-1.0
Douglas	24,332	27,472	12.9	10,871	11,795	8.5
Hall	19,439	20,786	6.9	10,407	11,436	9.9
Madison	19,354	20,919	8.1	9,665	10,142	4.9
Saline	18,995	18,674	-1.7	5,248	4,626	-11.9
Statewide	21,145	22,342	5.7	7,566	7,833	3.5

^aIn 1997 dollars.

Source: GAO's analysis of data from the Bureau of Economic Analysis, U.S. Department of Commerce, and the Nebraska Department of Revenue.

Table V.2: Changes in Per Capita Income and Per Capita Taxable Retail Sales for 13 Counties in Iowa, 1990 and 1995

County	Per capita income ^a			Per capita taxable sales ^a		
	1990	1995	Percent change	1990	1995	Percent change
Black Hawk	\$19,433	\$21,522	10.8	\$8,464	\$9,280	9.6
Buena Vista	19,211	20,265	5.5	6,977	6,916	-0.9
Crawford	17,775	19,424	9.3	5,291	5,668	7.1
Dallas	21,523	23,959	11.3	4,172	4,011	-3.9
Dubuque	20,117	22,043	9.6	8,065	9,200	14.1
Louisa	18,548	17,763	-4.2	2,677	2,316	-13.5
Marshall	21,235	22,365	5.3	7,651	8,239	7.7
Polk	24,953	27,218	9.1	13,849	14,579	5.3
Pottawattamie	18,334	19,953	8.8	6,515	7,111	9.1
Sioux	18,536	19,231	3.8	5,267	5,758	9.3
Tama	19,117	19,979	4.5	4,405	4,336	-1.6
Wapello	18,158	19,009	4.7	7,242	7,340	1.4
Woodbury	19,778	22,304	12.8	8,979	9,655	7.5
Statewide	20,339	21,770	7.0	7,661	8,134	6.2

^aIn 1997 dollars.

Source: GAO's analysis of data from the Bureau of Economic Analysis, U.S. Department of Commerce, and the Iowa Department of Revenue and Finance.

Appendix V
Changes in Income and Taxable Retail Sales

Table V.3: Ten Counties in Nebraska Ranked by Per Capita Income and Personal Income, 1985 and 1995

County	Rank by per capita income		Rank by personal income	
	1985	1995	1985	1995
Buffalo	67	34	7	5
Colfax	26	31	31	28
Cuming	22	2	28	20
Dakota	65	52	19	17
Dawson	49	35	14	14
Dodge	27	19	6	6
Douglas	10	1	1	1
Hall	44	18	4	4
Madison	40	16	9	8
Saline	41	51	22	25

Note: Nebraska has 93 counties.

Source: GAO's analysis of data from the Bureau of Economic Analysis, U.S. Department of Commerce.

Table V.4: Thirteen Counties in Iowa Ranked by Per Capita Income and Personal Income, 1985 and 1995

County	Rank by per capita income		Rank by personal income	
	1985	1995	1985	1995
Black Hawk	55	24	4	4
Buena Vista	29	40	31	30
Crawford	83	55	51	50
Dallas	11	4	20	17
Dubuque	43	13	7	7
Louisa	70	78	79	76
Marshall	12	9	14	14
Polk	1	1	1	1
Pottawattamie	34	43	8	8
Sioux	48	57	22	22
Tama	46	22	40	40
Wapello	76	65	18	20
Woodbury	30	11	5	6

Note: Iowa has 99 counties.

Source: GAO's analysis of data from the Bureau of Economic Analysis, U.S. Department of Commerce.

Changes in Serious Crime

Table VI.1: Changes in the Rates of Serious Crime Per 1,000 Population for 10 Counties in Nebraska, 1986-87 and 1994-95

County	Crimes committed during 1986-87		Crimes committed during 1994-95		Change in crime rate ^a	
	Average number	Average rate	Average number	Average rate	Actual	Percent
Dakota	868	50.5	598	33.8	-16.7	-33.1
Douglas	25,160	61.2	29,784	68.7	7.5	12.3
Dodge	1,152	32.6	1,335	38.2	5.6	17.2
Cuming	63	5.6	68	6.7	1.1	19.6
Hall	2,819	57.4	3,554	70.0	12.6	22.0
Buffalo	1,353	36.3	1,755	44.8	8.5	23.4
Madison	1,048	32.7	1,419	41.9	9.2	28.1
Saline	239	18.4	320	24.8	6.4	34.8
Colfax	126	13.3	208	21.4	8.1	60.9
Dawson	487	22.7	996	44.7	22.0	96.9
Statewide	61,758	42.6	73,297	44.7	2.1	4.9

Note: The crime rate is the number of crimes per 1,000 population.

^aThese columns are based on comparing crimes reported in 1986-87 with those reported in 1994-95.

Source: GAO's analysis of Nebraska crime data provided to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).

Appendix VI
Changes in Serious Crime

Table VI.2: Changes in the Rates of Serious Crime Per 1,000 Population for Nine Counties in Iowa, 1986-87 and 1994-95

County	Crimes committed during 1986-87		Crimes committed during 1994-95		Change in crime rate ^a	
	Average number	Average rate	Average number	Average rate	Actual	Percent
Crawford	503	26.9	211	12.7	-14.2	-52.8
Polk	27,336	88.4	20,969	60.9	-27.5	-31.1
Louisa	326	27.3	286	24.6	-2.7	-9.9
Wapello	1337	35	1,208	33.5	-1.5	-4.3
Marshall	1,444	35.7	1,457	38.2	2.5	7.0
Woodbury	7,159	72.7	7,797	79.3	6.6	9.1
Black Hawk	6,093	46.7	6,885	55	8.3	17.8
Tama	307	16.4	344 ^e	19.7 ^e	3.3	20.1
Buena Vista	466	22.8	600	29.7	6.9	30.3
Sioux	262	8.6	^b	^b	^d	^d
Dallas	847	28.9	877 ^c	27.2 ^c	^d	^d
Dubuque	3,494	38.7	2,111 ^c	23.8 ^c	^d	^d
Pottawattamie	4,926	56.8	^b	^b	^d	^d
Statewide	117,785	41.4	86,626	37.4	-4	-9.7%

Note: The crime rate is the number of crimes per 1,000 population.

^aThese columns are based on comparing crimes reported in 1986-87 with those reported in 1994-95.

^bData on crime were either incomplete or not reported.

^cThese figures represent the actual data reported for 1 year.

^dThe change in crime was not determined, since complete data were not reported for the 2-year period.

^eThe average number of crimes and the average crime rate for Tama County based on 1993-94 data, since data for 1995 were not available.

Source: GAO's analysis of Iowa crime data provided to the FBI.

GAO Reports Addressing Concerns About Illegal Aliens Residing in the United States

Public concerns about controls over immigration and the problems that illegal aliens pose have focused, in part, on illegal immigrants' involvement in criminal activity and their use of public services, such as education and health services. Most illegal aliens in the United States are from Mexico and Central American countries, according to the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), which estimated that about 5 million illegal aliens resided in the United States in October 1996 and that the net annual increase of such persons was 275,000. About 83 percent of illegal aliens reside in seven states: Arizona, California, Florida, Illinois, New Jersey, New York, and Texas. We have issued a variety of reports and congressional testimonies on concerns about illegal aliens, including the following:

H-2A Agricultural Guestworker Program: Changes Could Improve Services to Employers and Better Protect Workers ([GAO/HEHS-98-20](#), Dec. 31, 1997).

Illegal Immigration: Southwest Border Strategy Results Inconclusive; More Evaluation Needed ([GAO/GGD-98-91](#), Dec. 11, 1997).

Illegal Aliens: Extent of Welfare Benefits Received on Behalf of U.S. Citizen Children ([GAO/HEHS-98-30](#), Nov. 19, 1997).

Immigration and Naturalization Service: Employment Verification Pilot Project ([GAO/GGD-97-136R](#), July 17, 1997).

Criminal Aliens: INS' Efforts to Identify and Remove Imprisoned Aliens Need to Be Improved ([GAO/T-GGD-97-154](#), July 15, 1997).

Illegal Aliens: National Net Cost Estimates Vary Widely ([GAO/HEHS-95-133](#), July 25, 1995).

INS: Update of Management Problems and Program Issues ([GAO/T-GGD-95-82](#), Feb. 8, 1995).

Welfare Reform: Implications of Proposals on Legal Immigrants' Benefits ([GAO/HEHS-95-58](#), Feb. 2, 1995).

Illegal Aliens: Assessing Estimates of Financial Burden on California ([GAO/HEHS-95-22](#), Nov. 28, 1994).

Benefits for Illegal Aliens: Some Program Costs Increasing, but Total Costs Unknown ([GAO/T-HRD-93-33](#), Sept. 29, 1993).

Appendix VII
GAO Reports Addressing Concerns About
Illegal Aliens Residing in the United States

Immigration Enforcement: Problems in Controlling the Flow of Illegal Aliens ([GAO/T-GGD-93-39](#), June 30, 1993).

Immigration and the Labor Market: Nonimmigrant Alien Workers in the United States ([GAO/PEMD-92-17](#), Apr. 28, 1992).

Trauma Care Reimbursement: Poor Understanding of Losses and Coverage for Undocumented Aliens ([GAO/PEMD-93-1](#), Oct. 15, 1992).

Immigration Reform: Employer Sanctions and the Question of Discrimination ([GAO/GGD-90-62](#), Mar. 29, 1990).

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