

POLITIFACT

Immigrants’ link to higher rents overstated



Houston Chronicle file photo

Experts have cautioned against blaming housing price increases on immigrants rather than a lack of new construction.

Trump said costs went up by 50% under Biden; Fed economists found that the effect was far smaller

By Carsten Oyer
POLITIFACT

The claim: With affordability in the spotlight, President Donald Trump and his administration have sought to tie rising housing costs to illegal immigration under his predecessor, President Joe Biden.

On July 8, a reporter on Air Force One asked Trump what lessons could be learned from a March working paper by Federal Reserve economists about the effects of unauthorized immigration on U.S. labor and housing.

The president responded, “What’s happening is housing costs are going down because — and rental costs are going down — because we’re getting so many illegals out of the country. But Joe Biden raised the cost of housing by 40 and 50% — the cost of (a) rental — because they were housing illegal aliens in all of those empty units.”

PolitiFact ruling: Mostly false. The statement has an element of truth: A federal data analysis found that unauthorized immigration



Associated Press file photo

President Donald Trump said last month on Air Force One that housing and rental costs are declining “because we’re getting so many illegals out of the country.”

from 2021 to 2024 during Biden’s tenure accounted for a small portion of rental housing price increases. However, Trump exaggerated the effect of illegal immigration on rental housing prices.

The study said it drove prices up 4.3%, not 10 times that.

We found no evidence that the Biden administration housed immigrants in the United States illegally in vacant homes.

Discussion

The working paper attributed 4.3 percentage points of the 22.6% overall increase in rental housing prices to unauthorized immigration from 2021 to 2024, which was during Biden’s tenure.

We also found no evidence that the Biden administration housed immigrants in the U.S. illegally in empty homes. PolitiFact rated False a similar 2024 claim from a Trump-aligned campaign ad.



ABOUT POLITIFACT

PolitiFact is a fact-checking project to help you sort out fact from fiction in politics. Truth-O-Meter ratings are determined by a panel of three editors. The burden of proof is on the speaker, and PolitiFact rates statements based on the information known at the time the statement is made.

When contacted for comment, the White House referred us to the working paper and a New York Post article about it.

From 2021 to 2024, 1.6 million immigrants per year entered the U.S. illegally, **PolitiFact continues on A6**

Council looks at amount city pays

Beaumont leaders discuss how spending compares to state, industry averages

By Tessa Noble
STAFF WRITER

Beaumont City Council members questioned how the city compares with state and industry averages as they discussed landfill fees, public safety spending and employee pay.

During the July 15 budget workshop, council members discussed whether Beaumont’s fees, pay and spending levels were in line with comparable cities and industry standards, with some advocating adjustments to meet statewide benchmarks.

Landfill fees

The city landfill charges commercial businesses a tipping fee to dispose of waste. The city charges separate tipping fees for compacted and uncompacted waste. Compacted waste has been compressed before arriving at the landfill, while uncompacted waste has not.

The city charges \$7.10 per compacted cubic yard and \$6.31 per uncompacted cubic yard. City Manager Chris Boone said those rates are well below state averages for tipping fees. The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality reported that in 2024, the average fee was \$15.93

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Hurricane season now entering busy stretch

By Justin Ballard
NEWSROOM METEOROLOGIST

Texas is entering the part of hurricane season that matters most.

Tropical Storm Arthur formed near the Texas coast in June. Tropical Storm Bertha followed in late July, making landfall near the Texas-Louisiana border almost exactly when the Atlantic typically produces its second named storm.

Now, as August begins, Texas enters the two months when hurricanes have historically been most likely to strike its coastline. August and September have produced more hurricanes — including most major hurricanes — than any other time of year.

The reason isn’t simply that more storms form. It’s that the Atlantic itself becomes a much larger breeding ground for tropical development.

Hurricane continues on A5

Texas schools weigh conservative-backed alternative to ACT, SAT

By Lily Kepner
and Samantha Ketterer
STAFF WRITERS

Eleven years ago, high school teacher Jeremy Tate set out to create a standardized test for students centered on ethics, virtue and tradition.

The Classic Learning Test he created has been championed by conservatives as an alternative to the ACT and SAT exams, the two dominant tests used in college admissions. Tate describes the ACT and SAT as utilitarian, and some conservatives have labeled the College Board, which offers the SAT, as too progressive.

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, the state’s top authority for higher education, said Thursday that it will look into adding the CLT to state statute, following the results of an independent study at Texas A&M University that vetted the

CLT for admissions — and raised concerns about its ability to predict student success in Texas.

Adding the test to law would allow some students to use the CLT to qualify for automatic admissions in circumstances where their transcripts aren’t enough, affecting a relatively small number of students, while affirming the merits of the test for broader use.

Several public universities contacted by Hearst Newspapers — including Texas A&M University and the University of Houston — do not currently accept the test or have active plans to use it for admissions. But the coordinating board’s announcement and the mixed-results study could push more schools to accept it.

“The decisions of Texas policymakers carry significant weight nationwide,” Michael Torres, director of legislative

strategy at the CLT, wrote in a statement. “And we expect the momentum we’ve seen over the last two years to accelerate.”

Twenty-two private Texas universities — mostly small, Christian institutions — currently accept the CLT for admissions, while West Texas A&M University is the only public university to use the exam, according to CLT. The Texas Education Agency also added the CLT to a narrow list of accepted standardized tests including the SAT and ACT in April.

The test is still growing in popularity, with about 200,000 tests administered last year, compared to 2 million SAT exams and 1.4 million ACT exams. Torres said the CLT’s goal is to expand across Texas, and that the organization has spoken to nearly every public university in the state.

“It is our goal that every student in the state who would like



Melissa Phillip/Houston Chronicle

The University of Houston is one of several public universities contacted by Hearst Newspapers that do not currently accept the Classic Learning Test or have active plans to use it for admissions.

to choose to take the CLT and use their CLT score has an equal opportunity to do so,” Torres said. “The SAT and ACT have **Test continues on A6**

