

Key Bridge and the vital role of immigrants in U.S. I READER COMMENTARY



Wenceslao Contreras Ortiz shows a digital image of his nephew Alejandro Hernandez Fuentes, a victim of the Francis Scott Key Bridge collapse, in Xalapa, Mexico, Friday, March 29, 2024. Hernández Fuentes left Xalapa 15 years ago to join his mother and sister in the United States. (AP Photo/Felix Marquez)



By Patricia Ford Roegner MSW,RN,FAAN
April 13, 2024 at 8:09 a.m.

The horror of the Francis Scott Key Bridge collapse had personal impact having lived within two hours of there most of my life and crossing that bridge many times.

The poignancy of who died in the disaster also struck home — six immigrants from Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, and Mexico doing roadwork in the middle of the

night. Fathers, brothers, friends, hardworking family men doing work that most of us native-born Americans would not take on.

Latino workers make up a third of our construction industry according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The fellow immigrants of those lost March 26 likely will do much of the work replacing the bridge. They join the immigrant workers who picked up the pieces after Hurricane Katrina and other disasters, along with doing much of the construction on office buildings, shopping centers and homes nationwide ([“How Key Bridge tragedy ties into immigration, DEI debates,”](#) April 2).

As a nurse, I know that immigrants especially those for whom English is a second language, also fill key positions in my profession, providing long-term care for older and disabled individuals. A recent study published in the Journal of Health Affairs found that immigrants account for over 18% of health care workers and over 23% of formal and informal long-term care. More than 27% of direct care workers and over 30% of nursing home housekeepers and maintenance workers are immigrants.

Amid the clamor from some quarters to slash immigration — especially from Latin American and African countries — keep this in mind: With shortages of health care and direct care workers growing, curtailing immigration would be a disaster for the industry and everyone it serves.







[arrow_back_ios_new](#)

[arrow_forward_ios](#)

Of course, immigrants play vital roles in dozens of other aspects of American life. The National Basketball Association reports that over 21% of its players are immigrants while the share of foreign-born players in Major League Baseball is 28%.



[Top](#)

Stories01:00







Baltimore Symphony Orchestra to play freeconcert at Fort McHenry dedicated to Key Bridge tragedy and recovery



Most serious baseball fans know the name Shohei Ohtani; he's a Japanese baseball star who was welcomed to America with open arms. But how many of them can name even one of the foreign-born workers who died on the Key Bridge?

And how many ever stop to think that at some point — maybe 50 years ago, maybe 100, maybe 200 — someone from our family tree was part of that generation's immigrant community, very likely doing the work that native-born Americans of that day refused to do?

— Pat Ford-Roegner, Glen Mills, Pennsylvania

Add your voice: Respond to this piece or other Sun content by [submitting your own letter](#).

Ask Amy: No-nonsense advice for better living delivered to your inbox every morning.

SIGN UP

By signing up, you agree to our [Terms of Use](#), [Privacy Policy](#), and to receive emails from The Baltimore Sun.

•

•

○

Disney BundleDisney+|

[Sponsored](#)

Subscribe

○

MD: Building Muscle After 60 Comes Down To This 1

Thingprimenutritionsecrets.com|

[Sponsored](#)

○

Buying Nvidia? Wall Street Legend Issues Urgent A.I. Stock

WarningChaikin Analytics|

[Sponsored](#)

•

○

MD: Building Muscle After 60 Comes Down To This 1

Thingprimenutritionsecrets.com|

[Sponsored](#)

○

Stunner In Her 60s Says She Swears By This Chuck Norris 2 Min Routine[Roundhouse Provisions|](#)

[Sponsored](#)
Learn More



Chuck Norris Says Do This Daily For More Energy (Even If You're 80)[americareadysupply|](#)

[Sponsored](#)
Learn More



America has a new type of money making some rich—should you get it?[Investing Outlook|](#)

[Sponsored](#)



Look For Any High School Yearbook, It's Free[Classmates|](#)

[Sponsored](#)



Disney+[Disney+ | Hulu | ESPN+|](#)

[Sponsored](#)
Sign up



New York Gov Will Cover The Cost To Install Solar If You Live In These Zip Codes[SunValue|](#)

[Sponsored](#)
Learn More



Experience The Marvels[Disney+|](#)

[Sponsored](#)
Sign up



Locate Almost Anyone By Entering Their Name (This Is Addicting!)[TruthFinder|](#)

[Sponsored](#)
Search Now



The New 87¢ Generic Viagra Will Leave You Speechless. Take A Look![Public Health Forum by Friday Plans|](#)

[Sponsored](#)



•
•
MORE IN OPINION

- [Error! Filename not specified.](#)
- [Trump's bad character deserves to be spotlighted | READER COMMENTARY](#)
- [Error! Filename not specified.](#)
- [Lowering juvenile crime starts by lifting families | READER COMMENTARY](#)
- [Error! Filename not specified.](#)
- [Lori has mismanaged archdiocese and should go | READER COMMENTARY](#)
- [Error! Filename not specified.](#)
- [USPS has a serious check theft problem | READER COMMENTARY](#)
- [2024](#)
- [April](#)
- [13](#)

- **TRIBUNE PUBLISHING**

- [Capital Gazette](#)
- [Studio 1847](#)

- **COMPANY INFO**

- [About Us](#)
- [Contact](#)
- [Mary J. Corey Internships](#)
- [Photo Reprints](#)
- [Archives](#)
- [Privacy Policy](#)
- [En Espanol](#)
- [Tag Disclosures](#)
- [Sitemap](#)

- **ADVERTISING**

- Classified
- Public Notices
- The Sun Store

-

- Subscriber Terms and Conditions
 - Terms of Service
 - Cookie Policy
 - Cookie Preferences
 - California Notice at Collection
 - CA Notice of Financial Incentive
 - Do Not Sell/Share My Personal Information
- Copyright © 2024 Baltimore Sun

Close

[Skip to content](#)

52°F

Friday, May 10th 2024

Baltimore Sun eNewspaper

[Home Page](#)

Close Menu

- **Subscriber Services**
 - **Manage Subscription**
 - **EZ Pay**
 - **Vacation Stop**
- **eNewspaper**
 - **Daily Sun**
 - **Evening Edition**
 - **Carroll County Times**
 - **Capital Gazette**
 - **The Aegis**
 - **Howard County Times**
- **Advertise with Us**
 - **Advertise**
 - **Classified**
 - **Homes**
 - **Jobs**
 - **Special Sections**
- **News**
 - **News**

- Latest
- Crime and Public Safety
- Education
- Elections
- Environment
- Health
- Lottery
- Marijuana
- Nation
- Politics
- Sun Investigates
- World
- Carroll County Times
 - Carroll County Times
 - eNewspaper
 - Education
 - High School Sports
 - News
 - Opinion
 - Obituaries
 - Submit News
- The Aegis
 - The Aegis
 - eNewspaper
 - Aegis Opinion
 - Aegis Sports
 - Harford Magazine
- Local News
 - Local News
 - Maryland
 - Anne Arundel County
 - Baltimore City
 - Baltimore County
 - Carroll County Times
 - Harford County – The Aegis
 - Howard County
 - Eastern Shore
- Sports
 - Sports
 - Baltimore Orioles
 - Baltimore Ravens
 - High School Sports
 - College Sports
 - Terps
 - Horse Racing
- Business
 - Business
 - Autos
 - Best Reviews

- [Real Estate](#)
- [Top Workplaces](#)
- [Opinion](#)
 - [Opinion](#)
 - [Editorials](#)
 - [Opinion Columnists](#)
 - [Dan Rodricks](#)
 - [Op-Ed](#)
 - [Readers Respond](#)
 - [Submit Letter to the Editor](#)
 - [Submit Op-Ed](#)
- [News Obituaries](#)
 - [News Obituaries](#)
 - [Death Notices](#)
 - [How to submit a death notice](#)
- [Things To Do](#)
 - [Things To Do](#)
 - [Arts](#)
 - [Entertainment](#)
 - [Events](#)
 - [Food and Drink](#)
 - [Home and Garden](#)
 - [Horoscopes](#)
 - [Fun and Games](#)
 - [Movies](#)
 - [Music](#)
- [Branded Content](#)
 - [Paid Partner Content](#)
 - [Advertising by Ascend](#)
 - [Paid Content by Brandpoint](#)

Close Menu

[Sign up for email newsletters](#)

Error! Filename not specified.

-
-

[Sign up for email newsletters](#)

[OPINION](#)

Key Bridge and the vital role of immigrants in U.S. I READER COMMENTARY



Wenceslao Contreras Ortiz shows a digital image of his nephew Alejandro Hernandez Fuentes, a victim of the Francis Scott Key Bridge collapse, in Xalapa, Mexico, Friday, March 29, 2024. Hernández Fuentes left Xalapa 15 years ago to join his mother and sister in the United States. (AP Photo/Felix Marquez)



By [READER COMMENTARY](#)

April 13, 2024 at 8:09 a.m.

The horror of the Francis Scott Key Bridge collapse had personal impact having lived within two hours of there most of my life and crossing that bridge many times.

The poignancy of who died in the disaster also struck home — six immigrants from Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, and Mexico doing roadwork in the middle of the

night. Fathers, brothers, friends, hardworking family men doing work that most of us native-born Americans would not take on.

Latino workers make up a third of our construction industry according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The fellow immigrants of those lost March 26 likely will do much of the work replacing the bridge. They join the immigrant workers who picked up the pieces after Hurricane Katrina and other disasters, along with doing much of the construction on office buildings, shopping centers and homes nationwide ([“How Key Bridge tragedy ties into immigration, DEI debates,”](#) April 2).

As a nurse, I know that immigrants especially those for whom English is a second language, also fill key positions in my profession, providing long-term care for older and disabled individuals. A recent study published in the Journal of Health Affairs found that immigrants account for over 18% of health care workers and over 23% of formal and informal long-term care. More than 27% of direct care workers and over 30% of nursing home housekeepers and maintenance workers are immigrants.

Amid the clamor from some quarters to slash immigration — especially from Latin American and African countries — keep this in mind: With shortages of health care and direct care workers growing, curtailing immigration would be a disaster for the industry and everyone it serves.

Top Videos - Check Out the Royal Navy's VR Bridge Simulator









[arrow_back_ios_new](#)

[arrow_forward_ios](#)

Of course, immigrants play vital roles in dozens of other aspects of American life. The National Basketball Association reports that over 21% of its players are immigrants while the share of foreign-born players in Major League Baseball is 28%.



[Top](#)

Stories01:00







Baltimore Symphony Orchestra to play freeconcert at Fort McHenry dedicated to Key Bridge tragedy and recovery



Most serious baseball fans know the name Shohei Ohtani; he's a Japanese baseball star who was welcomed to America with open arms. But how many of them can name even one of the foreign-born workers who died on the Key Bridge?

And how many ever stop to think that at some point — maybe 50 years ago, maybe 100, maybe 200 — someone from our family tree was part of that generation's immigrant community, very likely doing the work that native-born Americans of that day refused to do?

— Pat Ford-Roegner, Glen Mills, Pennsylvania

Add your voice: Respond to this piece or other Sun content by [submitting your own letter](#).

Ask Amy: No-nonsense advice for better living delivered to your inbox every morning.

SIGN UP

By signing up, you agree to our [Terms of Use](#), [Privacy Policy](#), and to receive emails from The Baltimore Sun.

•

•

○

Disney BundleDisney+|

[Sponsored](#)

Subscribe

○

MD: Building Muscle After 60 Comes Down To This 1

Thingprimenutritionsecrets.com|

[Sponsored](#)

○

Buying Nvidia? Wall Street Legend Issues Urgent A.I. Stock

WarningChaikin Analytics|

[Sponsored](#)

•

○

MD: Building Muscle After 60 Comes Down To This 1

Thingprimenutritionsecrets.com|

[Sponsored](#)

○

Stunner In Her 60s Says She Swears By This Chuck Norris 2 Min Routine[Roundhouse Provisions|](#)

[Sponsored](#)
Learn More

•

○

Chuck Norris Says Do This Daily For More Energy (Even If You're 80)[americareadysupply|](#)

[Sponsored](#)
Learn More

○

America has a new type of money making some rich—should you get it?[Investing Outlook|](#)

[Sponsored](#)

○

Look For Any High School Yearbook, It's Free[Classmates|](#)

[Sponsored](#)

•

○

Disney+[Disney+ | Hulu | ESPN+|](#)

[Sponsored](#)
Sign up

○

New York Gov Will Cover The Cost To Install Solar If You Live In These Zip Codes[SunValue|](#)

[Sponsored](#)
Learn More

•

○

Experience The Marvels[Disney+|](#)

[Sponsored](#)
Sign up

○

Locate Almost Anyone By Entering Their Name (This Is Addicting!)[TruthFinder|](#)

[Sponsored](#)
Search Now

○

The New 87¢ Generic Viagra Will Leave You Speechless. Take A Look![Public Health Forum by Friday Plans|](#)

[Sponsored](#)

•
•
•

•
•
MORE IN OPINION

- [Error! Filename not specified.](#)

[Trump's bad character deserves to be spotlighted | READER COMMENTARY](#)
- [Error! Filename not specified.](#)

[Lowering juvenile crime starts by lifting families | READER COMMENTARY](#)
- [Error! Filename not specified.](#)

[Lori has mismanaged archdiocese and should go | READER COMMENTARY](#)
- [Error! Filename not specified.](#)

[USPS has a serious check theft problem | READER COMMENTARY](#)
- [2024](#)
- [April](#)
- [13](#)

- **TRIBUNE PUBLISHING**

- [Capital Gazette](#)
- [Studio 1847](#)

- **COMPANY INFO**

- [About Us](#)
- [Contact](#)
- [Mary J. Corey Internships](#)
- [Photo Reprints](#)
- [Archives](#)
- [Privacy Policy](#)
- [En Espanol](#)
- [Tag Disclosures](#)
- [Sitemap](#)

- **ADVERTISING**

- Classified
- Public Notices
- The Sun Store

-

- Subscriber Terms and Conditions
 - Terms of Service
 - Cookie Policy
 - Cookie Preferences
 - California Notice at Collection
 - CA Notice of Financial Incentive
 - Do Not Sell/Share My Personal Information
- Copyright © 2024 Baltimore Sun

Close