

House of Representatives  
State of Tennessee



## Press Release

*For Immediate Release*

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### **Rep. Debra Maggart Questions Legitimacy of Comptroller's Report on Immigration**

#### *Discrepancies in Comptroller's August 2007 Report Revealed*

(NASHVILLE, Tenn., Friday, November 9, 2007) – **Rep. Debra Maggart (R-Hendersonville)** offered a review of the Comptroller's August 2007 report entitled "Immigration Issues in Tennessee." Due to the bias shown in the Comptroller's report, F.A.I.R. (Federation for American Immigration Reform) issued a report that evaluates the cost of illegal immigrants in Tennessee and provided data where the Comptroller was reluctant to reveal any.

The two reports agree on the total population of illegal immigrants in Tennessee but differ drastically on the cost to the taxpayers. The Comptroller's report and F.A.I.R.'s report both show the over 277% increase in immigrant population from 1990 to 2005. Using their math, that would put the total immigrant population at roughly 312,779 statewide and over 100,000 of those are here illegally.

The main place that the two reports differ is the total cost of illegal immigrants on Tennesseans, with F.A.I.R. putting that cost at \$285 million per year. This adds up to \$122 per native-born household in TN. The Comptroller's report states that "Many economists agree that immigrant workers are beneficial to national and state economic growth..."

Rep. Maggart said, "Notice that this does not say illegal immigrants. This is just speaking of immigrants as a whole, legal and illegal. Tennesseans are smart enough to know that illegal immigrants are using up their tax dollars."

The TN Comptroller's report cites the Texas Comptroller's report and tries to convince Tennesseans that "unauthorized aliens generated more taxes and other revenue than the state spends on them" even though they also say, "state-specific data on unauthorized aliens is limited." F.A.I.R. does provide specific data on those tax collections from illegal immigrants. Using the same criteria that the Comptroller's report uses, F.A.I.R. estimates that illegal immigrants contribute \$69 million in tax dollars every year. Compare that to the \$285 million that they cost and there is a \$216 million tax burden on the TN taxpayers.

Maggart concluded by saying, "The report also says, 'Complete and accurate information appears to be missing from many discussions on these issues.' Apparently it was referring to itself."

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