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Recent editorials from New Jersey newspapers

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Monday's (Dec. 29) Gloucester County Times of Woodbury on immigrants who work in New Jersey:

Immigrants make New Jersey run, according to a study released last week by Rutgers' prestigious Eagleton Institute.

In a report researched and written with Rutgers colleagues, economics Professor Ira Gang carefully delineates the economic contribution of New Jersey's sizable contingent of foreign-born workers to state business and industry. Gang concludes that immigrants are "a key part of our economy" in New Jersey.

Contrary to popular perception, the report points out that New Jersey's 1.7 million foreign-born residents are better educated and more gainfully employed than their American-born neighbors. Immigrants comprise 40 percent of residents with advanced degrees and 28 percent of the work force, the study found, though they represent only 21 percent of the population.

Immigrants are especially important in health care, one of the state's largest industries, where 40 percent of the state's trained physicians, nursing aides and attendants are foreign-born.

In total, New Jersey immigrants pay enough taxes to cover their use of state and local services, and they are less likely than the general population to be incarcerated or rely on government support programs.

The report did reveal some truth in what many non-immigrants assume, however that immigrants are also over-represented among people without specialized skills or education.

Thus, New Jersey immigrants tend to be clustered at both ends of a wide spectrum. There are many explanations for this phenomenon, but the essential message of the report is this: In formulating immigration policy, state and federal officials must not adopt a one-size-fits-all model.

The Eagleton report comes as a panel created by Gov. Jon Corzine last year prepares to release its recommendations for "better integration" of immigrants into the larger community. Clearly, the report suggests, most of the state's legal immigrants are already well integrated.

The issue yet to be addressed _ one given coverage in the Times on too many occasions _ is what to do about immigrants who are not well integrated as productive members of society, many of them in New Jersey illegally.

Sadly, on the day the Eagleton report was released, several illegal aliens were convicted of plotting to kill American soldiers at Fort Dix; meanwhile, the illegal-alien landscaper who is charged with nearly killing Wawa clerk Christina Applegate five years ago in a Franklinville drunk-driving spree remains at large.

On the Net: <http://www.nj.com/gloucester/>

Friday's (Dec. 26) Record of Bergen County on federal regulation of investments:

