

# Immigrants create jobs, contribute to American society

Ming Wang | Opinion Published 5:00 p.m. CT Dec. 18, 2017

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We are a nation of immigrants of the past and present.

Immigrants contribute significantly to the American economy. Based on a report from New American Economy, in 2016, 40.2 percent of Fortune 500 companies have been founded by immigrants or their children. These firms generate \$4.8 trillion in revenue.

Immigrants make up 20.6 percent of all entrepreneurs in this country, despite representing only 13.2 percent of the overall U.S. population. They also account for 21.9 percent of all business owners in 50 of the largest U.S. metropolitan areas.

On average, each new immigrant creates 1.2 additional jobs. In the case of Wang Vision 3D Cataract & LASIK Center, one immigrant, myself, has actually created 26 full-time jobs.

I came to this country at age 21 with only \$50, having survived China's Cultural Revolution in which 20 million youth were deported to the poorest parts of the country, where they were condemned to a lifetime of poverty and hard labor. I feel so blessed to have been able to come to America and have had the opportunity to study and become a doctor.

I believe that while all of us who are immigrants have benefited from the many wonderful things that America has provided for us, including freedom and the chance to realize the American dream, we do have the obligation to pay back, to contribute to our adopted country America. Immigrants have done just that.

In addition to contributing to the American economy as entrepreneurs, immigrants can also help by taking advantage of each of our own unique ethnic and cultural backgrounds and connections with the people of the countries of our birth, and helping this country by bringing in foreign investments to create jobs here.

Fifteen years ago, I joined Aier Eye Hospital — a nascent eye-care group in China — and helped introduce many technologies to China and improved the quality of eye care. For example, in 2002, I performed the first bladeless all-laser LASIK procedure in Tennessee, and that was a first in a population of 6 million. In 2005, I introduced that same technology to China, and performed the first such surgery in a population of 1.4 billion.

Aier has now become the world's largest eye-care group, with more than 300 locations on three continents, providing eye care for over 2 billion people worldwide.

To help the American economy, we can reverse the loss of jobs to countries like China by bringing in investments from China and creating jobs here. Earlier this year I helped Aier start Aier-USA — its U.S. extension — and became its CEO. The company has already invested \$50 million as an initial start-up fund. Aier-USA's headquarters is located here in Nashville, and we will build eye centers throughout Tennessee and the U.S.

As an immigrant, I cannot think of a better way to give back and help keep my adopted country America strong.

*Dr. Ming Wang, MD, PhD, is the director of Wang Vision 3D Cataract & LASIK Center, CEO of Aier-USA, president of the Tennessee Chinese Chamber of Commerce and co-founder of the Tennessee Immigrant and Minority Business Group.*

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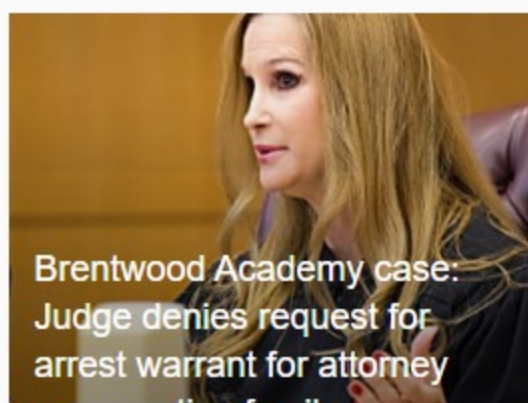


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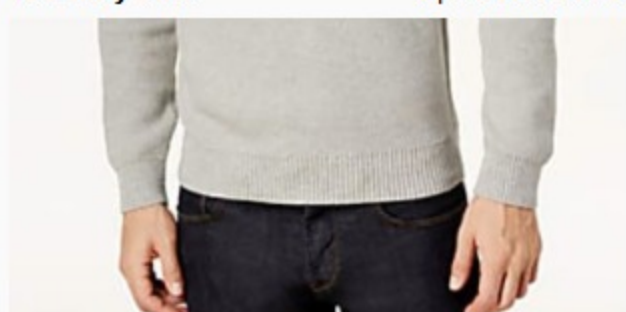


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