

Public Policy Roundtable

“Immigrants on the Move: The Changing Landscape of Immigration in California and the U.S.”

Dr. Ali Modarres, Associate Director, Edmund G. “Pat” Brown Institute

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Dr. Ali Modarres, Associate Director of the Pat Brown Institute, delivered a summary of the most recent immigration trends in his presentation titled “Immigrants on the Move: The Changing Landscape of Immigration in California and the U.S.” Dr. Modarres reviewed the critical periods and policies of U.S. immigration history that have continued to influence the migrant flow today. He pointed to the absence of an integration component within the United States’ “front-heavy” immigration policy as one of the major immigration challenges today. He presented data showing that recent immigrants have less economic opportunity than immigrants who arrived in earlier periods. The shifting settlement pattern of immigrants in the U.S. to “non-traditional” immigrant destinations also indicates that opportunities have declined in some places (e.g., California) and increased in others (e.g., Georgia). Dr. Modarres argued that though the ant-immigrant sentiment in the U.S. is not new, the dwindling economic opportunities are. A proactive integration agenda, he said, is necessary to achieve higher worker returns and greater economic integration. Efforts to improve immigrant integration, concluded Dr. Modarres, must be initiated from several key stakeholders including the federal government, unions, community based organizations, and philanthropic foundations.