

CHAPTER 20
SECTION 5

Section Summary
AMERICANS LOOK TO THE FUTURE

READING CHECK

What was affirmative action meant to do?

VOCABULARY STRATEGY

Find the word *discrimination* in the underlined sentence. Use context clues to help you figure out the meaning of *discrimination*.

READING SKILL

Identify Supporting Details
 What did President Bush propose as a way to fix Social Security?

As the twenty-first century dawned, American society looked very different than it had a hundred years before. The **Immigration Act of 1990** had increased quotas and eased restrictions, making way for the greatest number of immigrants in the country’s history. The largest group of immigrants is Latinos. The second-largest group is Asians.

Some people say immigrants make the American economy stronger. Others say they take jobs from native-born Americans. Opponents often dislike **bilingual education**, in which students are taught in English and in their native languages. Much of the debate concerns illegal immigration. The **Immigration and Control Act of 1986** penalizes businesses that hire illegal immigrants, but it has not stopped illegal immigration.

American demographics have changed, with many people moving from the Midwest and Northeast to the Sunbelt. The American family changed as well. Divorces and single-parent households are now more common than just 40 years ago.

Affirmative action was created in the 1960s to help minorities and women overcome past discrimination. It gives them preference in school admissions and job applications. Today, such programs are being challenged and in some cases, ended. Even so, women and African Americans continue to make social and political gains. Women are protected against unfair treatment in the workplace. The 1994 **Violence Against Women Act** increased federal resources to apprehend and prosecute men for violent acts against women.

Changing demographics are predicted to put a financial strain on the Social Security system. President Bush proposed **privatizing** Social Security. This change would allow younger workers to invest in individual retirement accounts. Opponents defeated his proposal and the debate continues.

Review Questions

1. What law led to the greatest number of immigrants in United States history?

2. How have American demographics changed in recent decades?
