



The Right Should Support Comprehensive Immigration Reform

By: Benjamin Brophy – April 3, 2013

Following the president's re-election, there was an army of Monday morning quarterbacks pronouncing death upon the GOP if it did not move to the left on several issues. One of those issues was immigration reform. There is some sense to this: 58% of independent voters are in favor of reform according to a recent poll.

Conservatives should not compromise on issues solely for the sake of popularity.

However, they should be in favor of immigration reform because it pro-free market. The Cato Institute does the heavy lifting for me on policy. First, let's dispel the myth that immigrants are taking your job. This line of thinking assumes that there are a limited number of jobs to get, which is a faulty basis and flies in the face of free-market economics. If that assumption were true and new labor simply increases unemployment, then unemployment should increase as the population grows. However, we've seen the opposite. Again, from the Cato Institute:

From 1948 to 2012, the size of the U.S. labor force went from 60 million to 156 million—a two-and-a-half-fold increase. Over the same time, the number of people employed in the U.S. labor market has increased from 58 million to 148 million. There would be about 90 million fewer employed Americans today than there are if new workers entering the labor market actually prevented older workers from getting jobs.

Another charge leveled at immigrants is that they are simply going to collect social-welfare benefits intended for Americans. Again, the data just does not support that position. Low-income non-citizen immigrants are generally less likely to receive public benefits than those who are born in the U.S.

Further, the number of illegal immigrants in the U.S. was estimated to be 11.5 million in 2011. We simply do not have the resources and wherewithal to track each and every one of these people down, especially when resources are needed for more real domestic threats. Instead, let's find a way to turn them into taxpayers and contributors to our nation.

Why would we want to turn away people who want to come here and dream of creating a better life for their families? Generally, immigrants are tightly knit groups with strong senses of community and family. They are tailor-made to be conservatives, and the Right should embrace them.