

Cato answers critics of immigration reform

Posted by Garrett Quinn, Less is More

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The five most unfounded criticisms of immigration reform are addressed in a new paper from the Cato Institute's Stuart Anderson.

Immigration reform will harm taxpayers.
Newly legalized immigrants will burden the welfare rolls.
Another 'amnesty' will beget more amnesties.
Legalizing or admitting more unskilled workers will undermine U.S. culture and the English language.
"Letting in more temporary visa holders and legalizing current illegal immigrants will increase the unemployment rate."

Anderson notes that the supporters of reform on the left and right came to their positions from very different motivations.

Supporters of reform on the left have focused most of their efforts on legalizing the status of those already in the country illegally, viewing it as immoral that so many people—10 million or more—live “in the shadows” in America. Supporters on the right and in the business community have focused much more on the economic and policy benefits of establishing a good “future flow” of foreign-born workers, believing the best way to reduce illegal entry is to provide legal paths to work in the United States by expanding temporary visas.

In President Obama's speech today he could have taken some lines from Anderson's report, particularly the ones where he criticizes increased border enforcement as not effective. Anderson notes that the economic models show a liberalization of immigration policy would be much more beneficial for the United States than increased border enforcement to the tune of \$260 billion annually.

Now, will we see serious adult minded discussion about immigration reform beyond the "We gotta close the borders and keep them out" talk? Only if Republicans realize that not only are the enforcement policies they clamor for not realizing their goal but they are counterproductive, too.

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