



Democrats Claim ‘American Workers First’ As GOP Bill Outsources Food-Industry Jobs

Neil Munro

October 24, 2017

Pro-amnesty Democratic legislators were able to champion American workers Tuesday morning because GOP leaders were pushing an outsourcing bill which would allow food-industry companies to hire a million minimum-wage foreign workers.

“This bill is simply a bill to allow a slave labor system to undercut American workers,” said New York Democrat Rep. Jerry Nadler, who attended the Tuesday morning markup meeting to vote on the outsourcing bill. If Americans don’t want to take farm jobs at the low wages offered by farm companies, “maybe they should be paid \$25 an hour,” said amnesty-advocate Nadler, adding “Let the free market work!”

“We should protect [American] workers,” said amnesty advocate Rep. Luis Gutierrez. “That is not putting Americans first –we should always do that,” said the Chicago Democrat, who backed the 2013 “Gang of Eight” amnesty-and-cheap-labor legislation.

The bill will invite another wave of illegal immigrants, predicted Democratic California Democratic Rep. Zoe Lofgren, another amnesty advocate. “They can come [into the United States] courtesy of the Congress, and then they can disappear into the woodwork.... this is an invitation to create an avalanche of undocumented immigration.”

The GOP-sponsored bill “it is absurd, and I can’t believe that this bill will actually receive the support of those who decry unauthorized immigration,” she added, as she called for legislation that would amnesty 11 million illegal immigrants.

“My head is spinning,” responded Idaho GOP Rep. Labrador, one of the few GOP committee members who attended the morning hearing. Labrador chairs the subcommittee on immigration and border security, and opposes an amnesty, but is retiring to run for governor. He is also a member of an immigration task force created by House Speaker Paul Ryan, a long-standing advocate of guest-worker programs.

The inverted politics were noted by the Cato Institute, which favors allowing companies to hire foreign workers for U.S. jobs.



Few GOP legislators openly defended the industry-written bill, which may be approved in a Wednesday morning hearing.

However, California GOP Rep. Darrell Issa argued that the bill would legalize the illegal migrants who populate much of California’s agriculture industry, adding “virtually all the agriculture workers in California are undocumented.”

The H-2C legislation would allow companies to import hundreds of thousands of “H-2C” foreign guest-workers each year, for 18 months or 36 months. The program would start at 450,000 workers per year, and could rise 10 percent whenever food-industry recruiters reach the annual H-2C cap.

Issa said food-pickers in California are being paid \$20 an hour and proposed an amendment to allow the annual H-2C cap to be raised by 15 percent a year.

The imported workers would be paid a minimum wage of \$8.34 an hour — regardless of prevailing local wages — and the farm companies could deduct normal business costs from their wages. Those costs would include the costs of uniforms, lawyers’ fees, tools, safety equipment, health insurance and the cost of transporting the foreign workers into the United States. The bill changes the legal definition of farm work to include people in the food processing industry and even in the logging industry, where Americans can earn \$20 to \$32 an hour. The bill also assigns 40,000 of the H-2C workers to the meat-processing industry, which needs a steady supply of replacement workers to take positions on the dangerous, high-speed slaughterhouse production lines. The industry wants the H-2C workers to help offset President

Trump's recent decision to reduce the supply of new refugees. Many refugees are shunted into the slaughterhouse industry by the taxpayer-funded refugee-processing agencies.

In his opening statement, committee chairman Rep. Robert Goodlatte defended the bill by saying that farm-industry employers are suffering from foreign competition. The Virginia representative said that international market forces set prices in the industry and American employers "find themselves at a competitive disadvantage."

U.S. food-industry companies have relied on cheap-labor for decades and now find themselves without adequate high-tech labor-saving machinery as they face more overseas competition. The foreign food-companies are a growing threat because they have learned to combine modern management techniques with labor-saving machinery and very cheap labor in Mexico, Chile, and in many other fertile countries.

For example, a farm in Chile has bought 64 cow-milking robots from a European factory, making it the largest robot dairy in the world. In contrast, the largest order by a U.S. dairy was for 24 robot-milkers, mostly because the federal government allows dairy farms to hire cheap foreign workers to milk cows.

President Trump's pro-American policies, however, are nudging up wages and are pressuring U.S. farm companies to invest in labor-saving devices, including this celery-picking machine. Most GOP legislators on the committee stayed out of the hearing as Democrats lined up to slam the business-backed cheap-labor outsourcing bill.

"This bill will destroy American jobs ... [it] will force U.S. workers to endure pay cuts of more than 50 percent to keep their jobs," said Florida Democratic Rep. Ted Deutch.

"This is a gift to corporate America to rip off American workers," said Tennessee Democratic Rep. Steven Cohen. "We'll win in 2018."

"This bill is an insult and affront to American workers," said Maryland Democratic Rep. Jamie Raskin. "Breitbart is attacking it, everybody knows what is going on here ... This is the 'Grapes of Wrath' on steroids."

"We've seen slave labor over the decades in this country — we don't need more of it," said Nadler.

"We're looking at the potential of millions of guest workers coming in ... [for] food processing, manufacturing, shellfish processing and forestry related activities," said Lofgren. The bill would trump state-level work rules, including California's work and overtime rules, she said.

The bill would "flood the country with cheap labor," said Democrat Rep. Pramila Jayapal, another amnesty advocate. "That is why Breitbart — not a source I always quote — also agrees this is a bad bill on every level," said the Washington state Democrat.

The morning hearing ended at 12.45 A.M. without a vote, but Goodlatte has reserved time on Wednesday for another meeting and a vote on the H-2C bill.

Four million Americans turn 18 each year and begin looking for good jobs in the free market. But the federal government inflates the supply of new labor by annually accepting 1 million new legal immigrants, by providing almost 2 million work-permits to foreigners, by providing work-visas to roughly 500,000 temporary workers and doing little to block the employment of roughly 8 million illegal immigrants.

The Washington-imposed economic policy of mass-immigration floods the market with foreign labor, spikes profits and Wall Street values by cutting salaries for manual and skilled labor offered by blue-collar and white-collar employees. It also drives up real estate prices, widens wealth-gaps, reduces high-tech investment, increases state and local tax burdens, hurts kids' schools and college education, pushes Americans away from high-tech careers, and sidelines at least 5 million marginalized Americans and their families, including many who are now struggling with opioid addictions.

The cheap-labor policy has also reduced investment and job creation in many interior states because the coastal cities have a surplus of imported labor. For example, almost 27 percent of zip codes in Missouri had fewer jobs or businesses in 2015 than in 2000, according to a new report by the Economic Innovation Group. In Kansas, almost 29 percent of zip codes had fewer jobs and businesses in 2015 compared to 2000, which was a two-decade period of massive cheap-labor immigration.

Americans tell pollsters that they strongly oppose amnesties and cheap-labor immigration, even as most Americans also want to favor legal immigrants, and many sympathize with illegals. Because of the successful cheap-labor strategy, wages for men have remained flat since 1973, and a growing percentage of the nation's annual income is shifting to investors and away from employees.