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## Defining Chain Migration and Visa Lottery

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During his first State of the Union address Tuesday night, President Donald Trump spoke directly to the American people — and bypassed the media — in laying out where the country is and what the future holds. While the president rattled off an impressive array of first-year accomplishments, one of the most anticipated topics was his immigration plan.

The president outlined four “pillars” of his proposal: 1) a path to citizenship for 1.8 million illegal immigrants; 2) securing the border; 3) ending the visa lottery; and 4) ending chain migration. While most Americans understand the concept of a pathway to citizenship (a.k.a. amnesty) and securing the border, two of the president’s pillars are more elusive: chain migration and the visa lottery.

Even those who are well informed about immigration have a hard time getting their minds around the term chain migration. Of course, Democrats like Senators Dick Durbin and Kirsten Gillibrand now claim that the term is racist and hurtful (because of the word “chain” or something), but the reality is that the term simply polls poorly. More on that in a moment. In any case, the Democrats’ phony “racism” charge reveals just how little they care about solving the problem. (Especially given how much they’ve used the term before.)

Chain migration allows green card holders or legal residents to sponsor family members for immigration. CBS News adds that it’s “the most common legal form of immigration to the United States. According to the Department of Homeland Security, 238,087 immigrants were categorized as a ‘family-sponsored preference’ in 2016 and 566,706 came as ‘immediate relatives of U.S. citizens’ (spouses, children, or parents). Between 60 and 70 percent of all lawful permanent immigration to the United States in the past decade has family-based roots.”

Despite what many Americans believe, the president isn’t seeking an end to family-based immigration altogether. Instead, he wants to limit it to immediate family members. As the president stated during his address, “This vital reform is necessary, not just for our economy, but for our security and for the future of America.”

Another of the misconstrued pillars in the president’s plan is the visa lottery. What’s not to like about a lottery? The problem is, this lottery opens the door to just about anyone, including those without skills, a solid work ethic, or a strong desire to contribute to the American community. Not to mention that some of them have proven to be a flat-out threat to public safety.

The president explained, “It’s time to begin moving towards a merit-based immigration system, one that admits people who are skilled, who want to work, who will contribute to our society, and who will love and respect our country.”

Who could argue against such a reasonable proposition? Well, just about every grim-faced Democrat who’d rather flood the country with millions of future Big Government voters than look out for what’s best for our nation’s economy, culture and national security.

Remember, this is the party that refused to applaud when the president announced during the State of the Union address that we have the lowest black and Hispanic unemployment in our country’s history. This is the party that was offered amnesty for nearly two million illegal aliens in exchange for a wall and a little border security — and cynically turned it down.

One of the reasons why Americans are so confused about the immigration debate is the language that’s carefully crafted by people like Chuck Schumer and Nancy Pelosi to make sure most people don’t get what’s really going behind closed doors on Capitol Hill. In the deceptive lexicon of the Left, illegal aliens become “undocumented workers” and “Dreamers,” amnesty becomes a “pathway to citizenship,” and chain migration becomes “family reunification.”

Graham Hillard at National Review touches upon the importance of language in the immigration debate when he writes, “Like other issues that lie uneasily in the borderlands of politics and morality, the immigration debate invites a particularly noxious sort of deception, as partisans weaponize the media’s habit of picking one phrase and sticking with it. ... In this instance, the Left wants the words ‘family reunification’ precisely because they appear to refer to a happy state of affairs that cannot be opposed by any decent human being.”

Given the American people’s generally unfavorable view of chain migration, it’ll be interesting to see how long it takes the mainstream media to side with its friends on the Left and adopt the sweeter-sounding, more poll-friendly “family reunification” euphemism.

One of the key concerns among some conservatives is whether Trump’s pillars will actually reduce immigration over the long term. After all, they argue, if we allow nearly two million illegal immigrants to become citizens, won’t the door open up to even more of the same? Republicans have fallen into this trap before.

Yet as the Washington Free Beacon notes, a report by Cato Institute scholars David Bier and Stuart Anderson found “that the administration’s plan, if implemented, would eventually reduce the number of legal immigrants by 490,000 people annually, down from just over 1.1 million to approximately 600,000, a 44 percent reduction.”

The Beacon adds, “Bier and Anderson then expect a phase-out period of between 10 and 50 years for the remaining family-sponsored immigration categories, as the backlogs for those applicants are cleared. All of this adds up, they argue, to an estimated 22 million people who would otherwise immigrate being denied entry into the United States over the next 50 years.”

These findings might ease the concerns of wary conservatives who want decisive action that will stop rewarding illegal immigrants for breaking the law. Of course, the final plan will need to go

through the legislative process, so conservatives might want to give the president the benefit of the doubt until they see what if anything lands on his desk.

One thing is clear: As we head toward another possible government shutdown, President Trump and the Republicans have the upper hand. One could argue that their position is even stronger than it was last month when the GOP forced Chuck Schumer and the Democrats to retreat.

This time, thanks to the president's address to the nation, Americans know what he's offering on immigration and they largely support what he's saying. If nothing else, they see Trump as a leader willing to find a real solution to a problem that has divided the country for decades.