



Comprehensive Immigration Reform Subterfuge

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A couple of politically tone-deaf GOP congressmen, Sen. Ron Johnson (R-WI) and Rep. Ken Buck (R-CO), have introduced the State-Sponsored Visa Pilot Program Act of 2017, a proposal aimed at allowing individual states to set up their own guest-worker programs. “My concept of border security includes a robust guest-worker program,” Johnson declared. “It’s going to be a whole lot easier to secure the border when you’re not having to clamp down on people coming here to seek the opportunities that America provides.”

While the federal government would still control the issuance of visas, states would be granted the discretion to admit guest workers for as long as three years, after which their visas could be renewed.

Johnson’s proposal allows each state to issue visas to as many as 5,000 workers, *and* draw from additional pool of 250,000 visas based on the state’s population relative to its percentage of the nation’s total population. The House version reduces those numbers to 2,500 and 125,000, respectively.

In addition, states could increase their caps by 10% in any year where 97% of their sponsored guest workers comply with their visa requirements and stay out of the black market. Any year a state missed that target would engender a 50% cap reduction. A state missing its target for four years would be suspended from the program for five years.

To make the proposal more palatable, participating workers would be barred from accessing welfare state benefits, such as ObamaCare or the Earned Income Tax Credit, and granting citizenship or permanent resident status to these workers would be prohibited. Workers would be able to change jobs, ostensibly as protection against possible abuse, but would be required to seek other employment only in the state that issued the visa, unless states formed “compacts” allowing workers multi-state employment access. Violators would lose their status and be subject to deportation.

Unsurprisingly, champions of “comprehensive immigration reform” are extolling the proposal’s virtues. Columnist Shikha Dalmia hails the “great upside” of an approach that would “sidestep the messy politics in Washington that have long made sensible immigration reform well nigh impossible.” The libertarian Cato Institute’s David Bier applauds an approach in accordance “with America’s long tradition of federalism in almost every other policy area,” one that “has the potential to increase support for immigration across the country, allowing America to set aside harmful protectionism and move closer to an economically competitive system.”

At what price? We begin with the American Left’s dream of unassailable power, underscored by the reality that the 500,000 guest workers who could enter the country on renewable three-year

visas — *per year* — would be allowed to bring with them their spouses and children who would *not* be counted as part of the cap. Under Johnson’s proposal, this would allow more than a million people to enter the country annually — a country in which more than half of illegal aliens overstayed their visas rather than crossed the border.

Enter birthright citizenship. “As the law stands now, the hypothetical American-born child of state-based guest workers would be granted immediate U.S. citizenship and access to federal benefits,” National Review’s Fred Bauer explains. “At the age of 21, a U.S. citizen can sponsor his or her parents to become permanent residents and, eventually, citizens.”

As the Center for Immigration Studies (CIS) notes, those citizens would overwhelmingly support Democrats. “The enormous flow of legal immigrants into the country — 29.5 million from 1980 to 2012 — has remade and continues to remake the nation’s electorate in favor of the Democratic Party,” a 2015 CIS report stated. A follow-up study by the University of Maryland’s James G. Gimpel confirmed that assessment, revealing, “Each one percentage-point increase in the immigrant share of a large county’s population reduces the Republican share of the two-party vote by nearly 0.6 percentage points, on average.”

Add incrementalism to the mix. As Bauer warns, it wouldn’t be long before Democrats would demand that “guest workers and their families have access to at least some federal benefits, health care likely chief among them,” even as they would smear Republicans as cold-hearted and anti-immigrant for resisting.

Bauer further notes the horrendous “optics” ripe for leftist exploitation, including “tenements swollen with guest workers and their beleaguered families . . . and tearful U.S. citizens waving goodbye to their guest-worker parents, who have to leave the country because they’ve lost their jobs.” He also worries about the diminishment of civic health attached to a “large class of residents who are viewed purely as economic resources with no stake in American society.”

If that sounds familiar, it’s because America abided a similar arrangement once before — it was called slavery.

Hot Air columnist Jazz Shaw focuses on security, warning that though the H-1B visa program is exploited by large companies to replace American workers with cheaper foreign counterparts, it’s also “one of the only ways to find out if someone is no longer complying with the rules or is in an overstay situation.” This proposal would engender “a red carpet invitation to abuse the visa system and disappear into the crowd.”

Regardless, Johnson remains wedded to the prevailing — and demonstrably false — assertions driving ideas like this. “We have a shortage of workers in all different areas of the economy,” he insists. “We need to recognize that a one-size-fits-all federal model for visas or guest workers doesn’t work.”

No, we need to recognize that, as is so often the case, government is determined to fix a problem on the wrong end. If there is a shortage of high-skill American workers in certain fields, it makes far more sense to reform a failing educational system that churns out Americans ill-equipped to compete in the 21st century economy.

As for the “jobs Americans refuse to do,” the notion that government would simultaneously underwrite millions of able-bodied dependents who refuse to work (or believe that certain work

is “beneath them”) *and* the additional economic costs that attend themselves to accommodating millions of guest workers and their families is utterly absurd.

Last week, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) revealed 17% of the American labor force is foreign born. For the 25 million workers added to that work force between 1996 and 2016, the percentage rises to nearly 50%.

What percentage of foreign workers constitutes critical mass? One that adversely affects not only the economic future of millions of Americans but the nation’s societal and cultural ethos as well?

“I had thought that the current agenda for any sort of ‘immigration reform’ was pretty clear following the last election cycle,” Shaw writes. “There would be no discussions of amnesty or any other priorities of liberals and open borders advocates until the border was secure and progress was being made on getting at least the worst offending criminal illegal aliens out of the country. Apparently I was mistaken.”

Once again, the public’s foremost immigration concerns, as in national security and the Rule of Law, are being ignored by Republicans still pushing “comprehensive immigration reform” — by any subterfuge necessary.

They would like to pretend the 2016 election never happened. But it did. And they ignore its mandate at their own peril.