

THE NEWS & OBSERVER

Fall of unions, not immigrants, doomed blue-collar workers

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Regarding the March 9 column "Why Trump is just a symptom": Just like Donald Trump, columnist J. Peder Zane is all too ready to blame "those foreigners." His target: immigrants, "As they have lost jobs, often to cheap foreign labor, blue-collar voters have watched ... tens of millions of often unskilled immigrants ... compete with them at home."

It takes just a minute to find alternative viewpoints, such as a September 2010 article by the extremely conservative Cato Institute titled "Let's not Blame Immigration for High Unemployment Rates." A summary statement: "The fallacy that drives most discussions of the impact of immigrants on natives is that only a fixed number of jobs exist, which would mean any newcomer must take away jobs from natives."

If Zane were to move beyond conservative analysis, he would find many liberal researchers agree. The more liberal Immigration Policy Center opined, in 2013, "there is no statistically significant relationship between the unemployment rate and the presence of recent immigrants."

Too bad Zane spoiled a decently focused column – the current hardships of blue-collar America – with an "easy target."

To start, he might rethink his disdain for unions and unions' impacts on blue-collar welfare, given the almost perfect correlation between union decline, blue-collar wage stagnation and rising inequality.