



Trump's new immigration act will never see the light of day

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It's nearly five months until Christmas...but that didn't stop the Grinch from showing up last week in Washington, D.C. to steal most immigrants' chances to become Americans. President Donald Trump - considerably less lovable than the real Grinch - unleashed on America and the rest of the world his proposed Reforming American Immigration for a Strong Economy (RAISE) Act.

Like nearly every other legislative or executive action of substance favoured by the Trump White House...the RAISE Act more closely resembles the ramblings of a drunken, flag-waving group of angry white Americans than it does a well-conceived immigration plan.

The initial draft comes from the narrow if not fertile minds of President Trump, Senators Tom Cotton (R-AR) and David Perdue (R-GA)...a threesome known more for bullying than intelligent policies. The RAISE Act would replace the current H-1B Visa - a flexible temporary work status for foreign national employees working in America - with a points-based system that basically rewards highly qualified English-speaking foreign nationals. Also, RAISE would slash the number of immigrants who seek permanent residence - so-called green card holders - by 50 percent over the next decade.

Of course, if you're an immigrant who invests \$1.8 Million in a business that you work in for three years...you're very welcome in the United States. Like I said, this cockamamie point system is based on merit...and I use the that term in the loosest sense. For example, fork over the \$1.8 Million and you get 12 points...enough to guarantee entry unless you have a prominent ISIS tattoo.

If you're thinking the point system is - almost predictably - goofy...here's further proof. Have a high-paying job offer...specifically three times the median household income of the state you're moving to and you get 13 points...another guaranteed green card. Note, your single salary has to be three times that of the median HOUSEHOLD income. On average...that's going to be in the neighbourhood of \$175,000 a year for three years. That's a pretty nice neighbourhood.

But if you want to pull the immigration equivalent of winning the NBA slam-dunk championship, you really should be aged 26 to 31, have a science, technology, engineering or mathematics Ph.D. from a U.S. university, have a Nobel Prize and an Olympic medal in an individual athletic event...and invest the \$1.8 Million. Hell, factor in the ability to speak English and you're somewhere north of 65 points.

Earn that many points and you'll probably get to shake Trump's hand...in which case being an athlete will come in handy...and he'll like recognize you at a rally with a comment like, "There's my (fill-in-the-blank racial or ethnic group)!"

I called the point system, indeed, the entire RAISE Act, cockamamie earlier. That's not because I'm a Democrat...have an above-average education...or know that Trump is simply pandering to an ever-shrinking base...all of which are true. But this thinly-veiled racist act will never see the light of day. Neither the House nor the Senate will support it in numbers enough to make it law of the land.

Even Republicans don't have enough lipstick for this pig! In a well-reasoned analysis last week, the Cato Institute, a libertarian think tank, concluded:

"The Cotton-Perdue bill would not create a skills-based immigration system as President Trump has said he wants, it will not increase American wages, and it is not a credible bargaining chip in any future negotiations in Congress. Interestingly, the current U.S. immigration system is gradually selecting a higher proportion of skilled immigrants over time without Congressional reform."

Of course, President Trump said:

"This legislation will not only restore our competitive edge in the 21st century, but it will restore the sacred bonds of trust between America and its citizens. This legislation demonstrates our compassion for struggling American families who deserve an immigration system that puts their needs first and that puts America first."

So, we can choose to believe the voice of reason...in this case the learned experts at the Cato Institute...or a man whose penchant for lying is so great that I'm guessing his pants are tailored from tropical-weight asbestos.

Daniel Dale of the Toronto Star's Washington Bureau said last week that President Trump averages 2.4 false claims a day...approaching 500 since becoming president. Mr. Dale - charitably - calls Trump's lies false claims...reasoning that some might not be intentional...or he's simply ignorant of the facts.

While Trump is certainly ignorant beyond any previous U.S. president...he is clearly a coldly calculating politician intent on dividing Americans. I call what's not the truth exactly what they are...lies.

And have no fear...the words on the base of the State of Liberty will never be erased by this demagogue. Long after President Trump is gone...these words will still ring true:
"Give me your tired, your poor, Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, The wretched

refuse of your teeming shore, Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me, I lift my lamp
beside the golden door!"

Only 36 percent of America favours this president just six and a half months into his term. Every
time Trump loses...America wins.