



## Studies Challenge Trump On Immigrants And Welfare

Jordan Smith

August 4, 2017

President Donald Trump and his senior adviser Stephen Miller declared their support Aug. 2 for a Senate bill that would restrict legal immigration to the U.S.

In doing so, Trump and Miller said immigrants were coming to the U.S. to claim welfare and that it was costing too much, Vox reported.

The Reforming American Immigration for a Strong Economy Act would give preferential treatment to highly skilled immigrants who can speak English.

"They're not going to come in and just immediately go and collect welfare," Trump said, Vox reported.

The RAISE Act stressed the immigrants who would be accepted should be able to "stand on their own two feet, and pay taxes, and not receive welfare."

But research from the Cato Institute shows that poor immigrants are the least likely to claim welfare. The research found that low-income immigrant households use less welfare than low-income American households.

Poor black and Latino immigrants, the study said, "massively underconsume" welfare.

Miller urged support for the new law.

"Every year we issue a million green cards to foreign nationals from all the countries of the world, but we do so without regard to ... whether they can pay their own way or be reliant on welfare," he said.

U.S. immigration regulations indicate that this is untrue, as all prospective immigrants, even those seeking a tourist visa, must provide details of their income and assets.

Anyone deemed by immigration officials as likely to become a public charge, someone who is chiefly dependent upon welfare, will not be granted a green card.

For families wishing to bring relatives to the U.S., they must also submit information on their income and assets to immigration officials, who will reject the application if they have insufficient resources to keep the family out of poverty.

Welfare reform passed in 1996 made noncitizens ineligible for a number of federal welfare programs, including food stamps, Medicaid, Supplementary Security Income and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.

But advocates of the RAISE Act say new immigrants still have many ways of obtaining welfare, such as through their U.S.-born children who can be eligible for food stamps, even if their parents are not.

"Under the current system, you get welfare through your household," a White House spokesman told The Washington Post. "The new legislation will expand the five-year welfare prohibition to the households of all immigrants coming in on the points system, and not just to the immigrant themselves [as is current law]. That keeps them from immediately going on welfare."

The impact of the reform may be overstated, noted The Washington Post. Approximately 14 percent of legal immigrants come in on the points system. Others, including refugees and asylum seekers, would still be eligible for welfare.