

# 71Republic

## Conservatives and Immigration: A Need for Change

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January 23, 2019

There is no doubt that one of the most polarizing topics in American political discourse is immigration. Even before the ascension of the chant “Build the Wall,” the topic of the southern border had been at the center of heated debate. Now, with the government shutdown over a five billion dollar payment on a border wall, Republicans are not only in a battle with Democrats but also with their own colleagues.

### The Border Wall Bill

With a majority in December, Republican leadership obtained the 213 votes in the House to pass a spending bill that would fund the wall. Eight members of the GOP voted against the bill. However, any negotiations will now stall as Nancy Pelosi has taken back the gavel in the House. For most members, it was simply a party vote to keep the government open; for eight, it was a vote against unnecessary and archaic protections when border apprehensions are at a low point.

In fact, to date, the Obama Administration deported more illegal aliens than Trump has. For center-right folks like me, I know that the media has made this a huge issue, and for good reason; Trump hasn’t helped either, at all. Of the eight members who voted against the bill, five were moderates and four are minorities. There is no secret that the GOP needs to market itself better to immigrants, suburban women, college-educated folks, and moderates. This vote shows exactly that; it also shows how they are failing.

### Conservatives and Immigration

To be clear, not only is there an issue with the party, but also with those who support comprehensive immigration reform within it. Statistically, immigration is a net benefit to society. The majority of people coming here want a better life and add to our labor markets. Hispanic conservatives know this, as many older Hispanic immigrants are more conservative than the younger generation.

When some conservatives use immigrants to create the illusion of chaos, they must apply those same rules to native-born Americans. For instance, one Cato Institute study found that illegal aliens are 47% less likely to be incarcerated than native-born Americans. Does that mean we need to be wary of our neighbors born in Iowa, Nebraska, or even California? No, but the same standards need to apply across the board. Blaming immigrants from the southern border (which, in 2016, the majority came from) will only make political enemies.

A Need for Change

Regarding border-states, the number of Hispanic Americans continues to grow. About 40% of Hispanic Americans 25 and older have gone to college. In Arizona, Hispanics make up 44% of all students and the dropout rate has dropped significantly. I state these facts not in a pompous fashion, but as a warning call to the party of Reagan, Bush, & Trump. If the GOP continues to ignore the growth of Hispanic Americans as a growing section of the United States' economy, education system, labor force, and ultimately voting base, they will face many perils.

The 2018 midterm season showed us a few things. One of those was that Texas, a Republican stronghold, almost lost its status to an unabashed progressive who may run for president. Moreover, if the trend of bad immigration messaging continues, the GOP can say goodbye to any hopes of retaining Texas' 38 electoral votes. Quite possibly, they may be also dismissing the future of their party.