



## **Stop blaming the migrant workers and demand reform**

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People work harder than ever for wages that barely cover basic necessities. Stanley Racine's Jan. 10 letter condemns "mass, unskilled immigration" for "enormously harmful impacts on wages and working conditions of native-born citizens," but not the businesses who hire immigrants to cut payroll and increase profits.

It's tempting to fixate on who is to blame, instead of asking the what and how questions. It's easy to scapegoat classes of people for social and financial crises, whether immigrants or welfare recipients. But what kind of laws and mentality allow CEO compensation to balloon 1,000 percent from 1978-2017, versus "the painfully slow 11.2 percent growth" (EPI.org) for typical workers?

The Center for Immigration Studies group Mr. Racine cites, part of Colcom Foundation's network including Federation for American Immigration Reform and NumbersUSA, is "criticized by think tanks including the Cato Institute for shoddy research...promoting anti-immigration agendas regardless of facts" (InsidePhilanthropy.com). Our immigration system needs reform, but Colcom and CIS spend millions lobbying government, while our economic problems outstrip their counterproductive theories.

Some reasons for stagnant wages (Forbes, July 2018): "decline of unions...workers' diminished bargaining power; outsourcing, easy flow of money and information across borders forcing workers in wealthy countries to compete with those in poorer ones; concentrated market power, reducing competition; [more] noncompete clauses in worker contracts..." Some of these, along with cheap migrant labor, are strategies pursued by businesses owners prioritizing profits / stock price over employees' living wages.

We can reject this mindset by choosing businesses offering decent pay and benefits, like Costco, Kaiser Permanente, Verizon, FedEx, Starbucks, and GM. We can demand campaign finance and lobbying reform, changes in tax codes taking higher proportions from workers' paychecks than stockholders' investments. We can take these actions now; unlike the easy way of blaming migrant workers, they create lasting good for everyone.