



Trump's draconian immigration policies will only hurt the American economy

John Gula

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President Trump has made a global issue out of the so-called illegal immigrants living in our country.

The question is what exactly do immigrants — legal or otherwise — contribute to our society and culture? The answer: A great deal, probably more than most people realize. In fact, if not for these immigrants, American civilization as we know it — including industries ranging from agriculture and hospitality to medicine, the law, education and high technology — would probably collapse.

First, let's dispense with the false notion that Trump's wrath is aimed only at Mexicans. We have immigrants in our country who hail from many nations: Central and South America, Europe, Asia, Southern Asia, Africa, Haiti, various Muslim nations — every corner of the world. The issues involved for each new immigrant vary depending on the countries from which they come, as do the consequences should they be deported — not just for them, but for all of us.

For example, Trump recently sent chills down the spines of Silicon Valley civic and business leaders when he signed an order calling for a revision of the H-1B visa program, under which the government admits some 85,000 foreign workers per year, many of whom are from India and are in high-tech fields. Companies like Google and Microsoft rely heavily on highly-skilled H-1B workers, and do so, reports *The New York Times*, because they often can't find qualified American workers.

The consequences of Trump's policy will also have far-reaching impacts on our future. Take the case of so-called "Dreamers," young people brought to our nation as children, and who have been protected until now by the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. Deportations of Dreamers have soared under Trump, according to a recent report in the *Los Angeles Times*. Many of these youngsters have worked hard in our education system, and represent the doctors, lawyers and scientists of tomorrow.

Unbeknownst to many is that the economic power of Latinos in Southern California (including many recent immigrants) is tremendous. According to the *Pasadena Star-News*, in 2015 Latino household spending totaled \$60.1 billion. About 28 percent of Latino-owned businesses in Los

Angeles County are engaged in professional and business services. And, like the rest of us, these folks pay taxes, including sales taxes, among others.

Let's also dispel another myth: According to a new Cato Institute report recently covered by the *Star-News*, illegal immigrants are much less prone to committing crime than are native-born Americans.

But it doesn't stop there. Take the world of processed food; the easy-to-make ham, steak, and processed meats that you enjoy? These meats have probably come from slaughterhouses in Iowa. There cattle and pigs are slaughtered, butchered and the various cuts are made. Who does this unpleasant and extremely hard work? Immigrants, many from Mexico and probably some of them "illegals." Very few "regular" Americans are willing to do this work, especially at the low wages that are paid. So, enjoy your meats this year, courtesy of immigrants.

For more on food, drive up to Oxnard, Ventura, and then up the Central and Salinas valleys. There you will see thousands of people doing the back-breaking and often dangerous work of planting, cultivating, and harvesting the vegetables and fruits for which California is so famous. Who are the people doing this work? Again, enjoy your lettuce, strawberries, oranges, lemons, avocados and artichokes, all courtesy of immigrants.

Many California growers are presently freaking out because they can't find the farm labor they need, due in part to Trump's policies, according to the *LA Times*. It seems "regular" Americans don't want to do this type of work, even with raises and perks. The *LA Times* has reported that about 90 percent of agricultural workers in California are foreign born, and more than half are undocumented. Of course, many of these desperate growers voted for Trump. Hope they're happy now.

These immigrants also know how to do other stuff quite well. Go to any restaurant and see who is doing the actual cooking — Latinos, many of them immigrants. Lets not stop at food. When it comes to construction, house repair, renovation work, yard work? That's right, Latino immigrants.

Those guys who are willing to scale trees and do the hard and dangerous work of trimming trees, reducing the danger of downed power lines? At the risk of repeating myself, Latino immigrants. How about gardeners and the armies of men who mow lawns, trim bushes and other vegetation? Again, Latino immigrants. They work hard, yet make very little. How many white guys do you see mowing lawns and caring for other people's yards? Not many, but many of them voted for Trump! Rank hypocrites.

Have I mentioned child care? As a former resident of Altadena, I can't tell you how many times I have seen Latinas pushing baby strollers and otherwise taking care of other people's kids while they're at work. Again, I'm sure they get paid a pittance. But they do the job, and apparently people are happy with their services.

Trump would have many of these people deported, which is reason enough to believe he's either crazy, heartless or both. Personally, I stand with Gov. Jerry Brown, who has repeatedly said our diversity only strengthens our country.

Here's an idea: Let's instead deport Donald Trump to his favorite country — Russia.