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## The claims of anti-immigrant hysterics are disproved - again

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No matter what facts one presents to anti-immigrant activists and xenophobic politicians, they insist that immigration is “out of control” and that immigrants take jobs away from Americans and suppress native-born Americans’ wages. Study after study reminds us that we don’t have a finite number of jobs and that new immigrants don’t replace native-born workers, but rather, they complement them.

Anti-immigrant gadflies cling to a few studies that suggest immigrants can put a mild downward pressure on earnings for native workers with a high school education or less; that, they say, justifies mass deportation and/or severe cuts in immigration including high-skill workers. Even that conclusion has been largely disputed. (“Simple modeling and regression analysis applied to the last four decades of U.S. labor market history show that immigrants are not responsible for the stagnating or declining wages of non-college workers, either nationally or in regions with high immigration. In fact, immigrants may be responsible for preventing an even further relative decline in wages by education group.”)

Now, a new report from the Federal Reserve confirms that all those immigrants whom nativists complain about haven’t set back even the least-educated native-born workers:

“During the three years between the beginning of the 2013 and 2016 surveys, real gross domestic product grew at an annual rate of 2.2 percent, the civilian unemployment rate fell from 7.5 percent to 5 percent, and the annual rate of change in the consumer price index averaged 0.8 percent. These changes in aggregate economic performance led to broad-based income gains across many different types of families. . . .

“Families throughout the income distribution experienced gains in average real incomes between 2013 and 2016, reversing the trend from 2010 to 2013, when real incomes fell or remained stagnant for all but the top of the income distribution.”

Income inequality continues to widen (a phenomenon that doesn’t at all concern those proposing a massive tax cut for the rich), but “families without a high school diploma and nonwhite and Hispanic families experienced larger proportional gains in incomes than other families between 2013 and 2016, although more-educated families and white non-Hispanic families continue to have higher incomes than other families.” Former “car czar” Steven Rattner observes via email, “This is yet another piece of evidence that particularly in a tight labor market, immigrants don’t take jobs or wages from Americans.”

The Fed confirms that not only did income increase in the past few years, but so did wealth for those at the bottom of the income ladder. “Families near the bottom of the income and wealth

distribution experienced large gains in mean and median net worth after experiencing large declines between 2010 and 2013,” the Fed tells us.

Those looking to slash immigration in half, as Sen. Tom Cotton, R-Ark., does, should be pressed to explain why his claims differ so dramatically from actual experience. Doug Holtz-Eakin, a free-market conservative economist who heads the American Action Forum, tells me, “It’s hard to square those facts with the argument that immigrants are robbing those very groups of their economic futures.”

When their fears of job loss or wage depression prove unfounded, anti-immigrant types shift to other phony arguments. President Donald Trump and Attorney General Jeff Sessions repeatedly suggest that illegal immigrants are responsible for a rise in violent crime. There is zero evidence to substantiate that. In fact, a Cato Institute analysis determined that “legal and illegal immigrants are less likely to be incarcerated than natives.”

Next anti-immigrant activists claim that new immigrants don’t assimilate as rapidly as previous generations. Evidence suggests, however, that they assimilate ideologically and politically like prior generations. Moreover, as *The Post* reported a few years ago:

Latino immigrants acquire English as quickly as, or more quickly than, Asian and European immigrants. Although Mexican immigrants lagged behind on language acquisition in 1980, the gap was closed by 2000, the researchers found.

First-generation Mexican immigrants still lag behind on learning English, but second-generation Americans, including those who live with their first-generation parents, acquire English just as fast as do Asian or European immigrants. (Non-Latino second-generation immigrants acquire English even faster. Filipino immigrants beat everyone, perhaps owing to the Philippines’ half-century under U.S. sovereignty.)

At some point, the excuses for opposing immigration or for deporting illegal immigrants en masse no longer pass the smell test. Immigrants are overwhelmingly hardworking and law-abiding members of American society. Anti-immigration sentiment that Trump rode to the White House and stokes as a means of fueling his base’s anger is not based on economic or other data. Strip away the fallacious arguments, and you arrive at an uncomfortable truth: This is largely about plain old bigotry.