



Heritage Foundation Immigration Study Is Light on Substance, Heavy on Flaws

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“ALERT: NCLR has oceanfront property for sale in Arizona available to the highest bidder.”

If you believe that, then you’ll believe the results of a new(ish) Heritage Foundation study which claims that immigration reform would cost American taxpayers \$6.3 trillion. The conservative think tank released its report today just as the Senate Judiciary Committee prepares to mark up the 867-page proposal. The timing of the release is no coincidence, as the group has been all but vocal about its attempts to thwart negotiations on immigration reform for good.

Fortunately for reform advocates, we have been down this road before and we are prepared to fight back against misinformation. In 2007, the last time Congress considered immigration reform, Heritage released a similar study that relied on decades-old data to make its claims. It was as widely criticized then, as it is today, by conservatives and progressives alike.

“We strongly believe that this study’s modeling and assumptions are fundamentally flawed because they do not account for the many contributions that an appropriately reformed immigration system can afford our economy and our country,” said the Bipartisan Policy Institute’s Immigration Task Force, which includes former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and former Governor Haley Barbour of Mississippi, in a statement.

Other heavy-hitting conservatives such as Grover Norquist and the libertarian Cato Institute have roundly disputed the results of the study, calling into question the methodology the authors used to support their claims. Even the former head of the Congressional Budget Office under George W. Bush, Douglas Holtz-Eakin, has criticized the Heritage Foundation report as deeply flawed.

From the Cato Institute:

The new Heritage report is still depressingly static, leading to a massive underestimation of the economic benefits of immigration and diminishing estimated tax revenue. It explicitly refuses to consider the GDP growth and economic productivity gains from immigration reform—factors that increase native-born American incomes. An overlooked flaw is that the study doesn’t even score the specific immigration reform proposal in the Senate. Its flawed

methodology and lack of relevancy to the current immigration reform proposal
relegate this study to irrelevancy.

The bottom line: Don't believe the hype by opponents of commonsense solutions to fix our broken immigration system. If you want the truth about its economic impact, it is this: Immigration reform will boost the economy by \$1.5 trillion over ten years and slash the federal deficit by more than \$2.5 trillion. These are the real, measurable economic and fiscal benefits to reforming our immigration system, and they are backed up by comprehensive, methodical research conducted by conservatives and progressives alike.

If you don't believe that, well, have you ever been to Arizona?