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Scholar: Immigrants Are a 'Blessing' To Americans

Expert Explains How Immigrants Increase Americans' Wages

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ATLANTA -- A director of a respected think tank said immigrants are a blessing to Americans because they make the country more productive and push native-born Americans to be more successful.

Daniel Griswold, director of the Center for Trade Policy Studies at the Cato Institute said he believed the truth about the issue of illegal immigration has been lost in a polarizing debate.

Griswold said one common myth that illegal immigrants are taking American jobs isn't quite right. He said census data show the number of native-born Americans in the underclass is shrinking. He thanks the increase in low-skilled immigrants. He believes they push Americans to become more educated and in turn, earn more money.

Griswold said they are critical to our nation's agriculture, food processing and retail industries. He said they do work that we don't have enough willing Americans to do.

The drain on our government services, like schools and hospitals, isn't as great as critics claim, said Griswold. He said any drain is more than offset by the productivity of the workers.

When President George W. Bush proposed comprehensive immigration reform in 2004, it is believed he based his ideas on Griswold's plan. Griswold said he supports a guest worker program to track the immigrants and restrict welfare opportunities.

"We've tried for more than a decade to enforce our broken law. We have increased the number of agents on the border five-fold. We've increased spending on the border 700%. We've raided factories coast to coast and we haven't solved the problem," said Griswold.

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