

# LATINOS POST

## Immigration Reform 2013 News: Republicans Blast Heritage Study On Reform Costs; Actors, Musicians Call For Obama To Pass Immigration Legislation

By Jean-Paul Salamanca May 07, 2013

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Critics on the right were not sold on the Heritage Foundation's recent study projecting the costs of putting millions of undocumented immigrants on a pathway to U.S. citizenship in the trillions range. (Photo : Reuters)

Following the release of a report from a conservative think tank placing the cost of immigration reform to be around \$6 trillion, some Republicans criticized the group and the study, implying the study was a scare tactic to spook Republicans away from passing immigration legislation.

The Heritage Foundation, founded by former Republican South Carolina Senator Jim DeMint, released a controversial study on Monday that projected the costs of putting millions of immigrants living illegally in the U.S. to cost around \$6.3 trillion to taxpayers during the next 50 years.

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"This should be considered a minimum estimate. It probably understates real future costs because it undercounts the number of unlawful immigrants and dependents who will actually receive amnesty and underestimates significantly the future growth in welfare and medical benefits," the study reported.

However, not all conservatives were sold on the study, some critics on the right arguing that the Heritage Foundation did not factor in the economic advantages that could be had in fixing the nation's immigration laws, such as making it easier for businesses to legally obtain high- and low-skilled workers.

"This study is designed to try to scare conservative Republicans into believing that the cost will be so giant that you can't possibly vote for it," former Republican Party Chairman Haley Barbour said in a conference call with reporters.

This has not been the first time that the study, released originally in 2007 before being updated recently, was criticized. Alex Nowraseth of the Cato Institute, a libertarian think tank, called the study "fatally flawed," and warned that unless those errors were corrected in this updated version, "its analysis must be judged as lacking."

In response to the criticism of the study, Derrick Morgan, a Heritage vice president, said, "We are a research institution here. We can't necessarily speak to the motivations of other people."

"But we very much want the fiscal costs to be part of the debate because it protects the American taxpayer," Morgan added.

Meanwhile, the coalition to support immigration reform is now expanding into the prominent circles of the entertainment industry as more than 100 musicians and actors have signed a letter to President Obama and Congress to pass immigration reform that allows a pathway to citizenship for millions of unauthorized immigrants.

The letter, provided to USA Today by Air Traffic Control, one of the groups that organized the effort, also asked legislators to pass immigration rights to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people trying to become U.S. citizens.

Among the signers so far include Robert Redford, Ed Harris, Stockard Channing, Rosario Dawson, John Leguizamo, Margaret Cho and Sarah Silverman, and musicians such as Chuck D, Yo-Yo Ma, The Roots and Jeff Ament of Pearl Jam.

The letter coincides with the launching of a new website, [MigrationIsBeautiful.com](http://MigrationIsBeautiful.com), which supports making legal immigrants who are in the U.S. illegally.

"I have a familiarity with the immigrant experience and what this country represents to people all across the planet," René Balcer, a Canadian immigrant to the U.S. and an Emmy Award-winning head writer and executive producer of *Law & Order*, told USA Today.

However, Roy Beck, executive director for NumbersUSA, which rallied opposition to derail immigration reform in 2007 and advocates for low levels of legal and illegal immigration, dismissed the effort as having little impact on the ongoing immigration debate.

"If anything, it calls attention to the fact that rich people have a tendency not to notice the horrible unemployment rates among black and Hispanic people, and are thinking mostly of how to legalize the status of the many undocumented people who provide services to them," Beck said.