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## The numbers don't lie, but anti-immigration radicals do

Jennifer Rubin

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Anti-immigration advocates, including Sen. Jeff Sessions (R-Ala.), have long peddled in phony facts and misleading rhetoric to support their objection to both legal and illegal immigration. In essence, they've tried to construct an economic justification for their objection to non-white immigration. The arguments never held up; now the numbers tell us their economic rationale is baseless.

Some of their allegations are easily debunked. Immigrants are not “pouring” over the border. And **President Obama** dramatically increased the number of deportations:

Between 2009 and 2015 his administration has removed more than 2.5 million people through immigration orders, which doesn't include the number of people who “self-deported” or were turned away and/or returned to their home country at the border by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP). ... The Obama administration has deported more people than any other president's administration in history. In fact, they have deported more than the sum of all the presidents of the 20th century.

Contrary to President-elect Donald Trump's rhetoric, the focus *has* been on violent criminals. (“In fiscal year 2015, 91 percent of people removed from inside the U.S. were previously convicted of a crime.”)

Moreover, **more people are leaving the United States** to cross the border to Mexico than are coming the other way. (According to the Pew Research Center: “From 2009 to 2014, 1 million Mexicans and their families (including U.S.-born children) left the U.S. for Mexico, according to data from the 2014 Mexican National Survey of Demographic Dynamics (ENADID). U.S. census data for the same period show an estimated 870,000 Mexican nationals left Mexico to come to the U.S., a smaller number than the flow of families from the U.S. to Mexico. ... The decline in the number of Mexican immigrants residing in the U.S. has been mostly due to a drop of more than 1 million unauthorized immigrants from Mexico from a peak of 6.9 million in 2007 to an estimated 5.6 million in 2014.”)

The notion that immigrants are “stealing” our jobs is belied by the near-full employment figures (4.6 percent unemployed) and a **record number of job openings** in the manufacturing sector. As

a CNN report noted, this is symptomatic of “a growing problem in the U.S. economy, where employers can’t find skilled workers for the jobs that they need. That disparity is called the job skills gap, and it’s a major challenge in right now.” Demagogues find it easier to blame foreigners than to tell Americans that they need to retrain or relocate to where work can be found.

Collectively, the numbers refute the notion that we are being overrun by illegal immigrants who are stealing our jobs and contributing to unemployment and economic misery, especially in the Rust Belt.

Now we learn — to the chagrin of the same anti-immigrant hysterics — that we may badly need *more* immigrants, and not just high-skilled workers. **Daniel Mitchell of the Cato Institute writes:**

The Census Bureau reported on Dec. 20 that America’s population grew 0.7 percent from July 1, 2015 to July 1, 2016 — the slowest rate of increase since the Great Depression. In some sense, this is neither good news nor bad news, just a reflection of demographic trends.

But demographic trends can have big implications. As a general rule, businesses like the idea of more people for the simple reason that they will have more customers.

An expanding population is particularly important for certain sectors of the economy, such as housing. So there is a general assumption that a nation with a growing population will have more economic output.

In addition, our entitlement problem becomes exponentially worse if our population growth slows. “Many of our entitlement programs were created based on the assumption that we would always have an expanding population, as represented by a population pyramid,” Mitchell explains. “In other words, a relatively small group of old people, a large number of working-age people, and then an even bigger cohort of children. And with that demographic profile, a modest-sized welfare state (mostly based on redistribution from workers to retirees) is mathematically feasible.” The upshot: “In the absence of structural entitlement reform, this looming shift in America’s population profile means massive amounts of red ink as the baby boom generation moves into full retirement.” We can cut benefits, raise taxes or *add to the number of young workers paying into the entitlement system*. Conversely, if we deport — as Trump from time to time has said he would — 11 million to 12 million people (consumers, home renters and buyers, sales tax payers and entitlement revenue generators), our weak recovery gets weaker and our entitlement programs collapse.

One after another, the economic justifications (most of them built on the mound of propaganda put forth by **radical anti-immigration groups**) for immigration restriction have collapsed. The census figures should be the nail in the coffin for their economic prevarication. Maybe they should explain why in the face of overwhelming data they continue to promote economically nonsensical policies.