



CEOs Split from GOP Base, Fight Trump's Immigration Reforms

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Pro-migration CEOs and investors are splitting from the GOP's base of 2016 voters, just months after the base provided them with the congressional votes for a huge tax cut.

The donors are splitting from President Donald Trump mostly because of his push for an immigration reform that pressures companies to hire Americans with middle-class wages instead of hiring cheaper foreigners with the promise of taxpayer-funded citizenship.

However, Trump won 63 million voters in the 2016 election, giving him the political clout to block amnesties and the populist base to help him raise hundreds of millions of dollars in small-denomination donations.

Here are four ways in which angry GOP donors are going on strike while Trump promises to make immigration a central issue in the midterms:

1. David MacNeil, a Chicago-area CEO who has donated \$1 million to the GOP is closing his checkbook until one of his employees can get an amnesty because she was brought into the country by illegal-immigrant parents. According to Politico, MacNeil said:

"I'm saying this as a political donor who's donated seven figures in the last couple of years: I will not donate any more money to anyone who doesn't support DACA, period," MacNeil said in a phone call while traveling in Italy. "I'm putting my money where my mouth is."

"She is a critically important employee and it would be a disaster if I were not able to legally employ her," MacNeil said. "They should not be playing political football, political blackmail with people's lives. If you think about how people feel, they wake up at 3 in the morning, wondering: Am I going to be deported?"

2. The New York Times reported May 24 that a group of GOP-aligned donors and activists is secretly allying with elite-left donors to the Democratic Party. The GOP CEOs include several pro-migration advocates, such as Jerry Taylor, president of the Niskanen Center:

The network — composed of overlapping groups led by Democrats such as the donor Rachel Pritzker and several veteran Obama administration operatives, as well as leading Never Trump Republicans like Evan McMullin, Mindy Finn and William Kristol — aims to chart a middle path between a Republican base falling in line behind Mr. Trump and a liberal resistance trying to pull the Democratic Party left.

“If you’re a Republican who is concerned about the health of the liberal order and alarmed over the destruction of the norms of American democracy, there’s no reason you shouldn’t be willing to work with a Democrat who is equally concerned about those same matters,” said Jerry Taylor, a Republican who is president of the Niskanen Center, a moderate think tank that grew out of the libertarian Cato Institute.

The Niskanen Center hosts a semimonthly invitation-only gathering of Trump critics called the Meeting of the Concerned, which attendees are asked to keep confidential. While it is attended primarily by a rotating cast of Never Trump Republicans — including the pundit Mr. Kristol and the former Representative Mickey Edwards.

The Niskanen Center is very pro-migration, amid growing evidence that mass-migration drives down Americans’ wages and expands civic conflicts. The center says:

We believe that immigration yields positive economic and social benefits to the United States, to the global community, and—most importantly— to immigrants themselves. Our work seeks to advance the freer movement of people with four priorities: protecting vulnerable immigrant populations, relieving labor shortages by liberalized migration, strengthening humanitarian immigration, and energizing U.S. economic growth with foreign entrepreneurs, investors, and workers. We have been particularly focused on promoting a path to citizenship for Dreamers and arguing for reforms to increase the number of refugees resettled in the United States.

3. John Rowe, an Illinois-based energy-industry millionaire is threatening to stop donations unless the GOP embrace a policy of cheap-labor amnesty. He told Politico:

“Every member of the Illinois delegation knows this is one of the most important issues facing them and it determines how much money I’m giving them,” said Rowe, who heads a pro-immigrant business group in Illinois. “This is the home state of Abraham Lincoln. We’re betraying our entire heritage if we don’t get this done.”

“In truth, we may not be a huge number of people, but in terms of being reliable, active donors, we’re people who give every year to candidates,” Rowe said.

While attending a recent fundraiser for House Majority Whip Steve Scalise, Rowe said he was direct with the Louisiana congressman: “There’s a whole bunch of Republicans like me who simply aren’t going to keep giving money if you don’t get an immigration bill done.”

Rowe has argued that the GOP cannot win elections without identity-politics appeals to blacks, Latinos, and women. However, Trump won the 2016 election with very different pocketbook-politics appeals to the financial interests of all Americans.

4. The business-led Congressional Leadership Fund Super PAC is backing a majority of the GOP representatives who launched the discharge-petition process that could allow Democrats to pass a no-strings amnesty through the House before the 2018 election.

A partial list of CLF donors is provided by OpenSecrets.org. The list includes investment firms and hedge funds which gain from the GOP's low-tax policies and also from the cheap wages and high real-estate values ensured by mass immigration. According to the CLF's website:

“Founded in 2011, Congressional Leadership Fund has the endorsement of the entire House Republican Leadership. CLF supports candidates who promote the values of the center-right majority in the House of Representatives and counters efforts on the left, like Nancy Pelosi's House Majority PAC and the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee.

One of the CLF's biggest donors is the American Action Network, a pro-migration group of investors and CEOs headed by a hotel investor, Fred Malek. In 2015, Malek's group helped raise funds to run advertising against GOP members who oppose amnesty policies pushed by former President Barack Obama. So far, the group has contributed at least \$12 million to the 2018 campaign.

Malek and his top aide, Corry Bliss, run the CLF. Bliss told the *New York Times* that he will help GOP candidates win reelection by highlighting local issues:

C.L.F. has opened 31 offices across the country and contacted over nine million voters. In each district, we focus on local issues — and our field program will make a big difference in November.

That local-focus strategy can help distract voters from the donors' push for a national cheap-labor amnesty, which is being supported by at least 11 of the CLF-backed GOP legislators.

But Trump's low-immigration/high-wages policies are very popular with the GOP base which provided the 2016 GOP majorities in the House and the Senate. Without those 2016 majorities, the December tax-cut would not have been possible.

Amnesty advocates rely on business-funded “Nation of Immigrants” push-polls to show apparent voter support for immigration and immigrants.

But “choice” polls reveal most voters' often-ignored preference that CEOs should hire Americans at decent wages before hiring migrants. Those Americans include many blue-collar Blacks, Latinos, and people who hide their opinions from pollsters. Similarly, the 2018 polls show that GOP voters are far more concerned about migration — more properly, the economics of migration — than they are concerned about illegal migration and MS-13, taxes, or the return of Rep. Nancy Pelosi.

Trump's low-immigration policies are pressuring employers to raise wages nationwide. So far, those policies have delivered higher wages and overtime to many employees, including African-American bakers in Chicago, Latino restaurant workers in Monterey, Calif., disabled people in Missouri, high schoolers, resort workers in Hilton Head, the construction industry, Superbowl

workers, the garment industry, and workers at small businesses, and even Warren Buffett's railroad workers.