



Trump's Wife May Be an Illegal Immigrant — but There's More to the Story

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(ANTIMEDIA) Melania Trump, formerly known as Melania Knauss, has faced heavy scrutiny ever since independent journalist Jarrett Hill broke the story that presidential candidate Donald Trump's third wife had plagiarized portions of her speech from a speech First Lady Michelle Obama gave in 2008.

More recently, nude photos of Melania Trump's modeling days resurfaced, kickstarting a wave of speculative reports regarding the source of the leaked images. But the nude photos tipped off yet another wave of criticism — one that has nothing to do with Melania's husband, nor his economically catastrophic policies or ever-shifting rhetoric on immigration.

Instead, the left-leaning media is obsessed with an aspect of Melania's life usually championed by liberals: her immigrant status.

In an article for the progressive outlet, *AlterNet* — a news magazine that takes pride in being a source that hopes to “*inspire action and advocacy on the environment, human rights and civil liberties, social justice*” and more — author Elizabeth Preza dissects Melania's comments concerning her immigration status over the years, drawing from investigations carried out by other news organizations.

At no point in the entire article does *AlterNet*'s Preza mention anything about the organization's long-standing opposition to anti-immigrant rhetoric. Instead, the article focuses on a *Politico* report that claims Melania may have used a B-1 visa to enter the country in the 1990s instead of an H-1B visa, also known as a work visa, making her early stay an unlawful one simply because she was working as a model on American soil at the time.

“Trump's tale of returning to Europe for periodic visa renewals is inconsistent with her holding an H-1B visa at all times she was living in New York,” Politico reports. Since “[a]n H-1B visa can be valid for three years and can be extended up to six years ... and would not require renewals in Europe every few months,” Trump's claims “are more consistent with someone traveling on a B-1 Temporary Business Visitor or B-2 Tourist Visa, which typically last only up to six months and do not permit employment.”

To be fair, Melania Trump continues to claim she has always “*been in full compliance with the immigration laws of this country,*” but even if she came to America on a B-1 visa instead of the H-1B, which gives the immigrant the chance to work legally, one would have thought *AlterNet*’s editorial team would understand that the issue here isn’t how an immigrant makes their way to America. The problem is that complex immigration laws make it hard for immigrants to comply with the law.

In an article published by *AlterNet* in 2010 entitled, “Why Becoming a Legal Immigrant is Next to Impossible,” writer Mari Herreras claims “[m]any wrongly assume there is a process you can easily go through to become legal. In reality, our immigration system is a bureaucratic nightmare.”

Herrera is right. Even when immigrants want to use the proper channels to work legally in America, they are left with few options that often take too long — and require a lot of money.

In an article for the Cato Institute, immigration policy analyst Alex Nowrasteh explains that closing the doors to legal work-related immigration visas 50 years ago boosted illegal immigration. Why? Because it subjected immigrants to more regulation, meaning that for many poor immigrants simply looking for work, crossing into America became impossible.

But *AlterNet* editors must know this much.

In another immigration-related post on the left-leaning news magazine, writers Ronald Lee and Meredith Higashi wrote that the U.S.’ “*broken [immigration] system has left an estimated 4 million close family members of U.S. citizens and green card holders—potential Americans who would be a tremendous asset to this country—stuck in visa backlogs.*” They conclude their article by urging readers to join them in pushing the government to enact reforms that do “*not force people to make the impossible decision between their family and their home or livelihood.*”

In yet another article for *AlterNet*, Axel Caballero criticizes right-wingers for making the anti-immigration debate all about nativism.

He contends that reforming the complex U.S. immigration laws would “*mean going against the nativist, anti-immigrant, supremacist powers who have done such an incredible job of convincing people that they should be very, very afraid of immigrants.*”

So why is *AlterNet* perpetuating shaming rhetoric concerning an immigrant — Melania, in this case — whose only crime was to resort to a simpler visa in order to come to America for work?

In the article, “There’s New Evidence That Melania Trump Might Have Broken Our Immigration Laws,” Preza claims recent discoveries “*could compromise one of the key components of the billionaire wife’s self-proclaimed history, namely, that she immigrated to the United States through the proper channels.*” But Preza offers no sympathy to a member of a minority group the website has, for so long, helped to empower: immigrants. The very title targets the former model for breaking “*our immigration laws,*” something other related articles seldom attacked in the past.

To be fair, the article makes the point that Melania's actions "*strike at a very core issue of her husband's campaign,*" making him seem like a hypocrite — though this is not a hard task. But shaming an immigrant for going around the system to work sounds a bit out of character for the publication. Especially when you consider the former model's less than extravagant origins.

If Trump were a Democrat, would *AlterNet* have been as harsh?