An America First Immigration Policy

While leftists debate a poem about "huddled masses," two senators introduce a very smart bill.

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Last Wednesday, something truly remarkable happened: A Republican actually framed an agenda and forced Democrats and their media allies — along with weak-kneed fellow Republicans — to defend their resistance to it.

An updated version of the Reforming American Immigration for a Strong Economy Act (RAISE) was introduced at the White House by Republican Senators Tom Cotton and David Perdue. The bill would give America a skills-based immigration system similar to those of Canada and Australia.

In other words, this is an effort to admit people who are a benefit *to* America, not people who merely benefit *from* America.

Thus, "Diversity Lottery Visas" that give 50,000 green cards to immigrants completely at random — for diversity's sake — would be eliminated. RAISE would also scale back chain migration. Currently, when an immigrant and his or her spouse become a citizen, they can petition to bring in their parents, their adult children, those children's spouses and children, and *their* adult siblings.

Chain migration precipitated an increase in immigration from 250,000 per year during the '50s and '60s to more than one million annually since 1990.

RAISE "would take a sledgehammer to this system, dramatically reducing low-skilled immigration and revamping our system for skilled immigration," explains columnist Robert VerBruggen. "It would cut immigration by more than 40 percent immediately, and by half in a decade."

The best part of RAISE is the points system it uses to determine who should be admitted. The scale goes from one to 100, but practically speaking, no one other than Nobel Prize winners, Olympic athletes or wealthy investors would score higher than 45. Those who score lower than

30 would not be admitted. An immigrant's level of education, English fluency, age and the salary he's been offered would be decisive factors.

The salary provision is critical. Applicants would be awarded 13 points for compensation at least triple the median salary of the state where a job is located, and zero points for a salary offer less than 50 percent above the median. This provision is aimed at undercutting employers looking to drive down wage scales by hiring foreign workers who will work for far less than their American counterparts.

More important, RAISE challenges the collective presumptions of the American Left and its Republican allies in place since 1965, when Congress passed the Immigration and Nationality Act. "The bill will not flood our cities with immigrants," insisted Ted Kennedy at the time. "It will not upset the ethnic mix of our society. It will not relax the standards of admission. It will not cause American workers to lose their jobs."

Kennedy was not the only one advancing such "idealistic" (read: duplicitous) nonsense. An avalanche of false assurances regarding the "minimal" effect the bill would have on our nation makes the lies used to sell ObamaCare pale by comparison. As Fortune Magazine pointed out in 1988, the "family reunification" category alone completely belied minimalism. "Within a dozen years, one immigrant entering as a skilled worker could easily generate 25 visas for in-laws, nieces, and nephews," it reported.

The two most catastrophic realities arising from that bill? First, the notion that America *must* accept one million immigrants per year, irrespective of need. Second, the increasingly popular but completely erroneous perception that emigrating to America is a right, not a privilege.

Regardless, leftists and their allies are "all in" for maintaining the status quo, and no one exemplified it better than CNN reporter Jim Acosta. As far as he's concerned, America's *entire*immigration policy should be based on Emma Lazarus' poem on the Statue of Liberty. "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free," she wrote.

In other words, no restrictions whatsoever.

Anything less? "Lazarus has long been a target of white nationalists," the Democracy Now! website asserts, implying anyone who disagrees with Acosta and his fellow travelers is racist.

That all of the net gain in the number of working-age people (16 to 65) holding a job has gone to immigrants since 2000? Or that immigrants access various welfare programs at far higher rates than native born Americans? Or that immigrants remain completely removed from any conversation regarding wage stagnation? Or that only 6.5% of immigrants are admitted based on labor and skill? Or that immigrants compose 22% of federal prison population, despite being just 13.5% of the U.S. population as a whole?

All irrelevant, along with anything resembling journalistic integrity on Acosta's part. As columnist George Neumayr aptly describes it, his hectoring of presidential advisor Stephen Miller was "indistinguishable from a La Raza activist at a Trump rally."

As for many Republicans, they remain wedded to their cheap labor campaign donors who insist a shortage of low-skill American workers largely in agriculture, and high-skill workers, largely in the nation's science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) fields, requires stratospheric levels of legal immigration and illegal "reform."

The former assertion is an insult in a nation with millions of able-bodied Americans collecting welfare. The latter assertion is an outright lie, one rationalized by people like Marco Rubio, who insisted in 2015 that foreign STEM workers are necessary because American workers "for lack of a better term can't cut it."

If that's true, better to fix America's education system than sell out its workforce. Unfortunately our ruling class, globalist-minded corporations and a plethora of special interests are far more invested in expanding opportunities for immigrants than their fellow Americans, claiming it's a gain for the overall economy — while conspicuously omitting an individual American's share of that economy is reduced as a result.

Thus, cynicism about the bill's passage remains rampant, and Alex Nowrasteh, an immigration policy analyst with the libertarian Cato Institute, advances the argument likely to be the central strategy used to intimidate weak-willed legislators. "For years, we've heard people say they are only against illegal immigration, not legal immigration," he told The Daily Signal. "This shows there are a significant number in Congress who are against legal immigration."

Legal immigration and *massive levels* of unvetted legal immigration are interchangeable concepts? A nation that is home to *20%* of the world's entire immigrant population says otherwise. And the notion that it's "draconian" to reduce immigration levels from a number that exceeds the population of Austin to one around the population of Atlanta — *every year* — is laughable.

Yet Americans are supposed to believe that reduction constitutes xenophobia or isolationism?

Trump has promised to enact an *America* first agenda. The negotiations surrounding this bill will reveal — perhaps more than any other piece of legislation — which lawmakers stand by that proposition, and which ones are more beholden to special interests.

Globalist, wage-undercutting special interests, for whom the distinction between "patriotism" and "profiteering" is conspicuously blurred.