



## **Fresh Ideas: The case against non-immigrants**

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Although it might be unfashionable these days to read, much less respect or, God forbid, revere national newspaper columnists — often disparagingly referred to as "pundits" or "talking heads" simply because they are either better informed than most of us, or intellectually insightful — I have not let diatribes of "fake news" or "political propaganda" deter me from reading their opinions.

This is due to my immigrant parents who had enough of communist lies to appreciate America's free press. They were literally glued to TV news programs and commentators William Buckley and Gore Vidal. When PBS began broadcasting Washington Week in Review, they thought they'd hit the jackpot. They were a testament to the virtues of knowledge and learning. Ignorance was anathema.

A couple of weeks ago, I read a column by Bret Stephens titled "Only Mass Deportation Can Save Us" in the New York Times, and just in case there is anyone whose hackles immediately rise in protest, let me reassure you that Stephens's opinions on foreign policy have been characterized as neoconservative and that he also wrote for years for the Wall Street Journal, winning the Pulitzer Prize for Commentary in 2012. The Pulitzer committee described his work as "incisive on U.S. foreign policy and domestic politics, often enlivened by a contrarian twist." In other words, he has a sense of humor.

The previously mentioned column is a perfect example of his wit as he makes his case for why it's the NON-immigrants who need to be deported.

Non-immigrants, of course, are those Americans whose roots go back a number of generations. Referring to a study by the Cato Institute, Stephens begins by noting that non-immigrants are jailed at nearly twice the rate of illegal immigrants, and at more than three times the rate of legal ones.

In terms of educational achievement, he points to the finalists in the 2016 Intel Science Talent Search (often called the "Junior Nobel Prize") among whom only 17 percent were children of United States-born parents. And at the Rochester Institute of Technology, only 9.5 percent of graduate students in electrical engineering were non-immigrants.

When it comes to religion, especially Christianity, 83 percent of illegal immigrants identify as Christians compared to 70.6 percent of the Americans. This might be of special interest to the

"right-wing immigration restrictionists" as they "bemoan declines in church attendance" and, I might add, if they draw any correlation between church and the rate of out-of-wedlock births, which for American mothers is 42 percent, whereas for foreign-born mothers it is only 33 percent. The rate for delinquency and criminality among American teens also exceeds that of immigrant youth. Stephens writes that a recent report by the Sentencing Project finds "evidence that the fewer immigrants there are in a neighborhood, the likelier it is to be unsafe."

In business, non-immigrants accounted for fewer than half the companies started in Silicon Valley between 1995 and 2005. In fact, American entrepreneurs fell by more than 10 percentage points between 1995 and 2008, according to a Harvard Business Review study. All told, Americans start businesses at half the rate of immigrants.

Stephens's contrarian conclusion, though jokingly expressed, is that "so-called real Americans are screwing up America. Maybe they should leave, so that we can replace them with new and better ones: newcomers who are more appreciative of what the United States has to offer; more ambitious for themselves and their children, and more willing to sacrifice for the future. In other words, just the kind of people we used to be — when 'we' had just come off the boat."

As a son of immigrants, Stephens contends, and I agree, that immigrants "strain hardest to become a part of it [the U.S.] because they realize it's precious."