



IMMIGRATION REFORM: THREE VITAL COMPONENTS

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Author's Website

Today President Obama is meeting with immigration reform activists, labor unions, and business leaders to discuss immigration reform. The House Judiciary Committee is also having a hearing about opportunities for legal immigration and enforcement of existing laws. Opening the House hearing, Representative Bob Goodlatte (R-VA) said that any immigration reform “must prevent unauthorized immigration into the future.”

So far President Obama and the Senate blueprint for immigration reform have either not mentioned lower-skilled workers outside of agriculture and dairy or propose increasing the rules and regulations that currently make American guest worker visas unworkable. The 2007 immigration reform effort was stopped cold in the Senate when its guest worker provision was gutted because of union pressure—with help from then senator Barack Obama (D-IL) and then senator Jim DeMint (R-SC).

Unions and immigration restrictionists came together in 2007 to stop reform. If they cannot stop it again, they can certainly eviscerate much of the long term gains of a freer international labor market.

In a video released today, I discuss how immigration reform could severely reduce immigration problems going forward, including unauthorized immigration. My three points in the video are:

Increasing lawful migration opportunities for lower-skilled workers will funnel potential unauthorized immigrants into the legal market.

Welcoming highly-skilled immigrants regardless of where they were educated jumpstarts innovation, entrepreneurship, and allows for firms to expand production in the United States while also increasing employment opportunities for native-born Americans.

Pursuing border and immigration enforcement without a lower-skilled guest worker visa program is a waste of resources. The economic allure to immigrants of coming here is so great that many of them will knowingly and intentionally defy America's international labor market regulations immigration laws if they are too restrictive. A legal avenue for lower-skilled workers to come to the United States in sufficient numbers to satisfy economic demand and eliminate the supply of unauthorized immigrants is essential.

Legalizing unauthorized immigration will be good for the United States and good for legalized workers. However, without a guest worker visa program going forward this reform will just be an improvement on President Reagan's 1986 law, but with highly-skilled worker visas.