

The Washington Post

Eight reasons for optimism on immigration reform

By: Jennifer Rubin – April 23, 2013

Immigration reform was certainly not the issue that most of us thought would have the best chance of success in the Obama second term. Granted, everything else has crashed and burned, but immigration reform looks increasingly promising for a host of issues:

1. Rep. Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) is firmly on board, leaving the immigration exclusionists once again on the opposite side of a popular conservative.
2. Right-wing opponents of immigration reform have tossed out shoddy arguments that their opponents have easily swatted away. Taking the lead against the Heritage Foundation (which used to be at the forefront of conservative reform) has been the Cato Institute. In a recent takedown, it pulverized the Heritage anti-immigration reform message by documenting 11 erroneous items. Reason magazine is also stepping up to the plate, most recently substantiating the pro-reform argument that “low-skilled immigrants don’t take away jobs from native high-school dropouts. Instead, they open better opportunities for them.” Restrictionists are trying to torpedo immigration reform by scapegoating poor foreigners for the overextended U.S. welfare state and the country’s job troubles. If these forces succeed, all Americans will pay the price.
3. No serious GOP 2016 contender has come out against the Gang of Eight’s bill.
4. Opponents aren’t yet offering an alternative that puts them in the position of defending the current mess — porous borders, insufficient unskilled and skilled labor and 11 million people living here without paying federal income taxes or undergoing any sort of background check.
5. Multiple hearings and an extended period for debate have taken away the argument that this is being jammed through.
6. Polling suggests that, with the proper conditions, even Republicans favor a path to citizenship.
7. The White House has been relatively mum. President Obama has a knack for inciting Republicans. So far he’s left the heavy lifting to Republicans and pro-immigration groups, which aren’t nearly as liable to generate indignant opposition.
8. Sen. Marco Rubio (R-Fla.) and his team have been beating down objections as fast as they are tossed out and rose in defense of immigration reform in the wake of the Boston bombings. As a result, no one conservative argument has really taken hold.

