



TheLiberalOC: Is is possible to be against illegal immigration but for reform?

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It's a befuddling question. And one sure to have strong opinions, but I pose this question to our readers. Is it possible to be against illegal immigration and for [comprehensive immigration reform](#). And by being anti-illegal immigration, does that automatically make someone a racist? Or a hater?

Arizona's SB1070 debate did bring the issue of immigration reform back on the front burner. It's also worth noting that [President George W. Bush](#), who was about as pro-immigration reform as any recent president, still couldn't reform the immigration process while he held majorities in both the House and the Senate. Now, [Republican Senator John Kyl has come out for hearings to repeal the 14th amendment](#) that grants birthright citizenship — making him the highest ranking Republican to do so. And of course, Senator Kyl represents Arizona.

From the story: "In the House, Rep. Lamar Smith (R-Tex.) has introduced the [Birthright Citizenship Act of 2009](#), which would attempt to deny children of illegal immigrants U.S. citizenship through statute rather than a constitutional amendment (thereby lowering the vote threshold). He has 93 co-sponsors for that effort including Rep. Nathan Deal, the Georgia Republican who is in a runoff to be the party's candidate for governor.

Senate candidate Rand Paul (R-Ky.) caused a stir shortly after winning his primary by saying he supported stripping citizenship from children of the undocumented. Former congressman and potential Colorado gubernatorial candidate Tom Tancredo — one of the staunchest anti-illegal immigration voices in national politics — has made repeal of the 14th Amendment a major cause."

Of course, this will play well with the John and Ken crowd on KFI.

But according to a [January 2010 study by the Immigration Policy Center](#), the cost of implementing comprehensive immigration reform would be considerable less than a sweeping program to deport all undocumented workers and their non-citizen family members.

From the study: "comprehensive immigration reform that includes a legalization program for unauthorized immigrants and enables a future flow of legal workers would result in a large economic benefit—a cumulative **\$1.5 trillion in added U.S. gross domestic product over 10 years**. In stark contrast, a deportation-only policy would result in a loss of \$2.6 trillion in GDP over 10 years.

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Comprehensive immigration reform that includes a legalization program for unauthorized immigrants would stimulate the U.S. economy.

- Immigration reform would increase U.S. GDP by at least 0.84 percent. This would translate into at least a \$1.5 trillion cumulative increase in GDP over 10 years, which includes approximately \$1.2 trillion in consumption and \$256 billion in investment.

- The benefits of additional GDP growth would be spread broadly throughout the U.S. economy, but immigrant-heavy sectors such as textiles, electronic equipment, and construction would see particularly large increases.
- The higher earning power of newly legalized workers would mean increased tax revenues of \$4.5-\$5.4 billion in the first three years.
- Higher personal income would also generate increased consumer spending—enough to support 750,000–900,000 jobs in the United States.
- Experience shows that legalized workers open bank accounts, buy homes, and start businesses, further stimulating the U.S. economy.

Comprehensive immigration reform increases all workers' wages.

- The real wages of less-skilled newly legalized workers would increase by roughly \$4,405 per year, while higher-skilled workers would see their income increase \$6,185 per year. The wages of native-born high skill and low skill U.S. workers also increase modestly under comprehensive immigration reform because the “wage floor” rises for all workers..
- Legalized workers invest more in their human capital, including education, job training, and English-language skills, making them even more productive workers and higher earners.

Mass deportation is costly, lowers wages, and harms the U.S. economy.

- Mass deportation would reduce U.S. GDP by 1.46 percent, amounting to a cumulative \$2.6 trillion loss in GDP over 10 years, not including the actual costs of deportation. The [Center for American Progress](#) has estimated that mass deportation would cost \$206 billion to \$230 billion over five years.
- Wages would rise for less-skilled native-born workers under a mass deportation scenario, but higher-skilled natives' wages would decrease, and there would be widespread job loss.

Studies from various researchers with divergent political perspectives confirm these findings.

- A report by the **libertarian** [CATO Institute](#) using a similar CGE model came to startlingly similar conclusions. CATO found that legalization would yield significant income gains for American workers and households. Legalization would boost the incomes of U.S. households by \$180 billion in 2019. CATO also concluded that tighter restrictions and a reduction in less-skilled immigration would impose large costs on native-born Americans by shrinking the overall economy and lowering worker productivity.
- A [study by the national dairy industry](#) confirmed the essential role of immigrant labor in that sector. A loss of just 50 percent of immigrant dairy workers would lower dairy farm sales by \$6.7 billion and reduce total economic output by \$11.2 billion. Removing all immigrant dairy workers would cost nearly 133,000 U.S. jobs, affecting both immigrant and native-born workers.
- An analysis by the farm credit system in the Northeast found that an enforcement-only regime would result in jobs lost, farms closed, and farmland converted to other uses. Approximately 800 farms would be at high risk in New York alone; this would cost \$700 million in lost production, 7,000 on-farm jobs, and nearly 16,000 off-farm but farm dependent jobs.
- A [new study](#) from the University of Southern California concludes that legalizing California's unauthorized Latino immigrants would boost California's economy. California's unauthorized Latino population would have earned \$29.6 billion last year if they had been legal—this is \$2.2 billion more than they actually earned. This growth would spur direct consumption spending by approximately \$1.75 billion, which would ripple throughout the state economy generating an additional \$1.5 billion in indirect local spending. This increase would generate over 25,000 additional jobs in the state, \$310 million in additional state income taxes, and \$1.4 billion in additional federal income taxes.”

Illegal immigration exploits workers, exposes them to harsh and unsafe working conditions, and allows employers to evade paying appropriate taxes and benefits for labor. I'm always bothered to see the children of migrant workers in the fields picking produce when school is in session.

Are those who are opposed to illegal immigration racists? Are the Minutemen racist? Certainly some of them are. Is the Tea Party racist? Yes, some of them are too? Are John and Ken racists? No, but some of the things they say about undocumented workers is patently offensive. Is La Raza or the NAACP racist? No, but I'm sure some people who are members of either organization are as racist as the Minutemen.

Is racism a two way street? It certainly is. This [2007 study](#) from New America Media examines racist attitudes of minorities towards each other and other minorities. The statistics are fascinating to review.

From the announcement of the survey, this summary:

"The nation's first multilingual poll of Black, Hispanic and Asian Americans has uncovered serious tensions among these ethnic groups, including mistrust and significant stereotyping, but a majority of each group also said they should put aside differences and work together to better their communities.

The poll, which was released today during a news conference at the National Press Club, was sponsored by New America Media (NAM) and nine ethnic media outlets who are founding members of the organization.

"This extraordinary poll reveals some unflattering realities that exist in America today," said Sandy Close, Executive Editor and Director of NAM, the nation's first and largest collaboration of ethnic news media. "The sponsors of the poll strongly believe the best way to move forward is by identifying the problems and initiating a dialogue that can bring ethnic groups closer together in their fight for equality and against discrimination."

Broadly, the poll of 1,105 African-American, Asian-American and Hispanic adults found that the predominantly immigrant populations – Hispanics and Asians – expressed far greater optimism about their lives in America, concluding that hard work is rewarded in this society. By contrast, more than 60% of the African Americans polled do not believe the American Dream works for them. Blacks also described themselves as more segregated from the rest of America than the other groups.

The poll found that friction between ethnic and racial groups, which at times has erupted into highly-publicized incidents around the country, is clearly rooted in the mistrust that the groups harbor towards each other, as well as the sentiment that other groups are mistreating them or are detrimental to their own future. For instance, 44% of Hispanics and 47% of Asians are "generally afraid of African Americans because they are responsible for most of the crime." Meanwhile, 46% of Hispanics and 52% of African Americans believe "most Asian business owners do not treat them with respect." And half of African Americans feel threatened by Latin American immigrants because "they are taking jobs, housing and political power away from the Black community."

Moreover, the three groups seem more trusting of whites than of each other. The poll found that 61% of Hispanics, 54% of Asians and 47% of African Americans would rather do business with whites than members of the other two groups.

"The poll reaffirms that while race relations between ethnic groups and whites grab the headlines, there are also serious racial problems between minority groups in America," said Sergio Bendixen, who is an expert on Hispanic and multilingual polling. "Blacks feel they are left out of the American Dream and are being displaced by newcomers, and each group buys into the negative stereotypes about the other two. What's clear is the need to dissolve this friction. The poll results show that the overwhelming majority of ethnic Americans want that positive outcome."

What's really needed is stricter enforcement on employers who hire undocumented workers to make it economically unfeasible to exploit these people. And while there are a number of state and federal laws about this, penalties are rare.

From 2008, penalties for knowingly hiring undocumented workers increased significantly, as part of a larger federal crackdown against illegal immigration that includes tightened border security, an increase in the number of workplace raids and an escalation in the number of arrests of individuals who have already been ordered out of the country. This was the first increase in employer fines since 1999.

- The minimum fine for knowingly hiring an unauthorized worker increased to \$375.
- The maximum fine increased from \$2,200 to \$3,200.
- Repeat offenders saw their maximum penalties increase by \$5,000, from \$11,000 to \$16,000 per violation.

There's been a lot of coverage on the OrangeJuice blog about "HaterGate," which relied heavily on a video where the husband of one of the organizers called some of those attending a July 4th event sponsored by [Santa Ana's Friends of the Library](#) "f&cking wetbacks." And the Latino men in the video were equally offensive about "f&cking white guys." The missing footage that aired later featured a rambling dialogue from the cameraman about nasty names Minutemen call Latinos but oddly enough, there were no "Minutemen" on camera calling Latinos the names being uttered by the cameraman.

The OrangeJuice seems to be the only media outlet giving this story any attention (aside from two small mentions by Scott Moxley on the Navel Gazing blog). The stories seem to be classic guilt by association charges but it leads to a bigger issue. Will the [Santa Ana city council](#) really be led by the nose by a blog that has manufactured a scandal because of the comment made by a spouse of an organizer of a community event that the city council should have taken some leadership on in the first place? And does this mean that if Council member David Benavides is going to be held accountable for the words and actions of people he chose to honor for putting the event together, will Council members Claudia Alvarez (who nominated Lupe Moreno to the Library Board), Michelle Martinez, Vince Sarmiento and Sal Tinajero be held accountable for the statements and actions made by Art Pedroza and Sean Mill (we have some classic emails and texts that would surely embarrass these council members)? Go ahead and support Pedroza; it's your political suicide.

Let's hope cooler heads prevail here. This "scandal" isn't about racists or haters; its about displacing people that the Orange Juice blog considers bitter political enemies. It's about "venganza" and payback. If the council does anything, it needs to listen to all sides of the stories being pushed by OJ that call for someone's ouster or some condemnation of some action blown out of proportion. And don't trust the comments on that blog there either (a friend of mine posted a question to Art for his blogwars post on Sunday which Art edited to answer a question he preferred to answer..a clear ethical breach; I've advise my friend not to comment there) as the comments only reflect the perceptions Arts want to project. And since it looks like Art's ship is about to sink under the weight of his own financial and legal difficulties, he seems more interested in dragging as many people down with him before he goes than proposing any meaningful change.

I don't like SB1070 but I do believe it was a catalyst to move the issue of comprehensive immigration reform to the front burner again. Last week, the New York Times carried a story about illegal immigration featuring the photo of bodies of Mexicans in a refrigerated morgue. Many died in the extreme heat of the Southwest while trying to enter this country illegally. I cannot fault anyone for taking a risk to try to improve their families lives, but the issue underscores the need to work towards a solution that makes it easy for those who want to come here to work to do so legally, contribute to the nation by paying taxes, and force employers to provide fair pay and good working conditions.