



It is an open secret that illegal workers are employed by some of the country's largest and most important companies

Immigration Benefits The U.S., So Let's Legalize All Work

by Doug Bandow, contributor

Immigration reform, once the top priority coming out of the 2012 presidential election, has stalled. The Senate has passed legislation, but the House is badly divided.

The current system is a shambles. Legal categories and subcategories, quotas, and lotteries have created a flourishing legal industry.

The immigration bureaucracy is a lower level of Dante's Hell. Foreign students are turned away from U.S. universities, highly-skilled individuals are barred from working in America, and even political refugees sometimes are denied entry.

It would be difficult for a generally free society with extensive borders to close out the rest of the world. Worse, to be effective such controls as ID cards, citizenship checks, workplace raids, employer sanctions, and more would undermine domestic liberties.

Anyway, immigration benefits the U.S. The economic advantages are significant. Many immigrants are natural entrepreneurs, establishing companies, creating jobs, and driving innovation. Well-educated and highly-trained foreign workers are inventive and productive. Expanded work forces increase business flexibility, allowing companies to quickly respond to changing demands. Larger labor forces also encourage specialization. Labor productivity rises as companies adjust to larger work forces and invest in employees.

Immigration may depress wages for the least skilled workers. However, these are the last jobs that government should seek to protect. Moreover, the work force, like the economy, is not a fixed pie. Immigration makes a more innovative, flexible, and productive economy, leading to new and better jobs. The benefits rise over time, with an expanding economic pie.

Immigration also offers a mix of cultural benefits and challenges, complicated but manageable.

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