

TITLE: JUNE 26, 2007

George W. Bush: This bill goes to the heart of our values. But it also recognizes that it's our nation's interest to bring people out of the shadows. That there's got to be a way forward that recognizes there is a penalty for being here illegally. And on the other hand that recognizes that each person has got worth and dignity. Our soul is constantly renewed, our spirit is invigorated when people come here and realize the blessings of America. So the bill that we've worked hard to craft is an important piece of legislation that addresses the needs of a failed system.

TITLE: TWO DAYS LATER, THE U.S. SENATE FAILED TO PASS BUSH'S OVERHAUL TO IMMIGRATION POLICY. NO LEGISLATION ADDRESSING IMMIGRATION HAS BEEN PASSED SINCE.

TITLE: CENTER FOR HOUSTON'S FUTURE PRESENTS

TITLE: A RATIONAL MIDDLE PRODUCTION

TITLE: RATIONAL MIDDLE IMMIGRATION

TITLE: THE BURDEN OF A BROKEN IMMIGRATION SYSTEM

TITLE: DIRECTED BY GREGORY KALLENBERG

Douglas Holtz-Eakin: I think the most important thing is that there is no single undocumented immigrant. There are some that get all the headlines who are gang members here literally to exploit people and to commit crimes. Those are quite costly people to have in the United States. Then there are people here who came in illegally, they're living, there going to work every day, their kids are going to school. At the local level you see the greatest tensions about the costs of the undocumented. They are receiving police protection, that costs money, fire protection, that cost money.

Robert Juceam: They get sick, where do they go they go? They go to the emergency room. A hidden cost every hospital in the U.S. must treat someone who comes to them and needs medical care. And the cost comes back to the taxpayer.

Charles Foster: Undocumented children who reside in a school district are entitled to go to school under the Supreme Court decision called Plyler v. Doe. People will say "oh they're going to school and that's a burden."

Ali Noorani: So, yes, undocumented immigrants cost us money just like any other resident the United States of America. The question then is: How is that cost offset through contributions?

Charles Foster: They pay taxes like everybody else. When you buy food or you buy gas there's taxes. Taxes are in your rent, or real estate taxes, irrespective of whether you're undocumented or paying that.

Gregory Hoffman: There's something called the ITIN which allows people to file taxes even if they don't have a Social Security card, even if they don't have legal status. And a lot of people do that. In fact, when you go to immigration court, one of the first things the judges will ask you if you're applying for relief is: Does your client pay taxes?

Douglas Holtz-Eakin: I think people have the impression that an undocumented immigrant is just going to collect benefit after benefit, but in fact the laws are written, undocumented immigrants cannot get Social Security, cannot get Medicare.

Laura Reiff: Literally billions and billions of dollars are paid in by undocumented workers who don't necessarily ever get the benefit of that back again and they've been paying in for decades.

Mark Krikorian: Their U.S.-born children are eligible as U.S. citizens for any number of benefits and welfare is always understood and analyzed as a household-based program. So it benefits the whole family. So there is a cost, but it's actually lower than it is for comparable legal immigrants.

Gregory Hoffman: So, ironically there are a lot of people who are working in the shadows as it were, but they're, at the same time, paying taxes and being good "citizens".

Theresa Cardinal Brown: Whether immigrants cost the country or benefit the country the answer is both at the same time. We cost our country during the time that we're going to school that we then later work and pay back in our taxes. Immigrants do the same thing.

Douglas Holtz-Eakin: They're here . On balance they're working and they're providing, as a result of the fruits of their labor to the economy. They're buying the products that other people are making and so, just as a native-born citizen contributes to the economy, so do the the undocumented.

Deborah Notkin: Many of them started out as agricultural workers many of them started out in construction, in whatever lesser-skilled positions they could get and the reason they can get them is that we have a shortage of US workers who are willing and available to do these jobs.

Ali Noorani: So let's say tomorrow the administration says we're going to deport every single undocumented immigrant worker in the United States. The country would lose \$551 billion in economic activity. \$245

billion in gross domestic output. These are significant impacts to not just the economy in an abstract national way, but ultimately the American worker and their family.

Douglas Holtz-Eakin: Here's what we know: If they're deported or precluded from doing that work, one of two things is gonna happen. Either Americans are going to step in and take that job – I think the evidence is it won't happen at the same wages. It's gonna have to be a lot better pay to make that happen. So the peaches or the strawberries or whatever your picking is going to be a lot more expensive... Or, more likely, those folks will be in another country they'll be picking crops in another country. We're gonna get those crops, bring them to our supermarkets and buy them. The value of the production will end up abroad, the income will end up abroad, and we will complain about the fact that we import those crops when we should be doing them in America. There are no cheap ones here, and the bigger lesson is: Those immigrants are not competing with American workers because they're here. They're already competing with American workers whether across the street or across an ocean. It's a global economy. If we're going to have that competition, we might as well get the benefits of it by having it here. Clearly you need a comprehensive immigration reform system.

Stephen Klineberg: You've clearly got to have some path to citizenship for the 11 million folks who are here illegally. The reason why we had 11 million illegal immigrants in this country is because we did not allow for 30 years enough immigrants to come here legally to do the jobs that we in this economy that's pretty needy to have done.

Robert Juceam: You've often heard said that they should go outside and get in line. I'm gonna tell you a secret: There is no line.

Charles Foster: There is no legal path for people to come in to do all the jobs that we don't want to do or we don't want our children or grandchildren don't want to do.

Douglas Holtz-Eakin: So you've got 11 million people here undocumented – what do you do? The two ends of the spectrum are pretty simple. One end is: You enforce current law. What that would mean is we would have to find all 11 million. We would then have to give them a hearing and an administrative court. We would then have to deport them and send them back to the country of origin. That's current law and, if you were serious about not having undocumented immigrants, that's what you'd have to do. We've looked at what that looks like. It looks like about \$200–300 billion to do that at any kind of speed. You'd need about 30,000 new administrative judges. You'd need about 300,000 beds in a bunch of new detention centers. It's a lot of money, it's a lot of big government. And worse you'd have to go find people, which means you have the police walking into businesses and homes all across America.

And the bottom line is you take about 6% of the U.S. labor force and say "get out of the country" you'd have a pretty good recession. So, you know, it costs a lot of money, destroys the social fabric, recession – that's one choice. On the other end of the spectrum: Give them a path to an earn legal status. Most people think that about 20% would leave, and then the remainder would in a more orderly fashion assimilate into the legal labor force, and and that would have benefits to the U.S. economy and much lower costs.

David Bier: The simple answer is to create a visa system that's available for all types of jobs. We don't need to have a specific visa for every single job in the economy. We just need to allow the market to operate. Having a work visa that immigrants can apply for regardless of whether it's agriculture or high tech, we need one across the board that immigrants can apply for and then use to come into the country legally. I think a lot of Americans actually get it. There are some who don't think that immigration is benefiting the country. Ultimately we have to respect people's opinions and feelings on the issue, but the facts are that immigrants overwhelmingly benefit Americans rather than harm them.

Ben Johnson: We have to be willing to be honest with ourselves about who we are as a nation. How much do we value the things that we say that we stand for – Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness? And who gets a shot at those values? We can't have a system with open borders, but we can have a system that is much more in tune with and respectful of those core principles. We have spent 250 plus years as that place that the rest of the countries in the world want to try to emulate. That's a really special thing that's happened to us, but it comes with a really important responsibility. Are we really being true to those values? We've drifted a long way from having an immigration system that we can be proud of, but it's not a long way to get back there.

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