

SAMPLE SPEECH

IMMIGRATION POLICY SHOULD BE OPENLY DEBATED

Despite its immense effect on the future of the United States, the wave of immigration unleashed by the 1965 Immigration Act continues with little debate or even serious discussion by the political establishment. In fact, mass immigration is transforming the U.S. as we know it -- even though the American people have never been consulted about the desirability of the transformation.

Each year, roughly 1.3 million immigrants come to live in the U.S., legally and illegally. That is the highest sustained rate of immigration in our history. According to demographers, immigrants and their offspring now account for as much as two-thirds of the country's annual population growth.

The U.S. Census Bureau projects that the U.S. population of 280 million today will reach 392 million by 2050. One hundred million new people in such short a time is already having a dramatic effect on the entire country in many ways -- yet candidates for public office rarely mention immigration as a public issue.

Just before the 2000 presidential campaign, a C-SPAN program reported that strategists for both major political parties were looking at the same major issue to use in the upcoming fall campaign. But was it immigration? No, it was the question of Internet privacy. Now, privacy certainly is an important issue. After all, we all want to make sure our credit card numbers and personal information are protected.

But the most serious problem facing the United States today is not Internet privacy.

The most serious issue facing the United States is immigration.

Immigration is important because its impact is felt from coast to coast, and across the entire range of issues that political parties and politicians are willing to discuss and debate.

Immigration affects crime and the cost of administering criminal justice, for example. The U.S. Bureau of Prisons reports that one-fourth of federal prison inmates are foreign-born. Overall, the incarceration rate for illegal aliens is three times the U.S. average. That doesn't mean immigrants are inclined to be lawbreakers, it only means

we are not being careful about who we let in.

Immigration also provides fuel for multiculturalist ideologies and bilingualism in our schools and universities. Without foreign populations as a ready-made constituency and justification, the multiculturalist ideology causing so much trouble on college campuses today would dry up overnight. Immigration is also the engine that creates the expenses for bilingual education, and is driving the explosion of the school-age population. That, in turn, is creating the crowded classrooms and the need for new school construction.

Welfare and public health costs are also dramatically impacted by immigration. The simple fact of the matter is that welfare benefits provided by federal, state, and local governments in the U.S. are typically far higher than the average annual per capita income of the countries sending a majority of the immigrants. [*The Immigration Invasion*, Lutton & Tanton, pages 7-8.] In 1992, Mexico's per capita annual income was just over \$2,000. In the U.S., a disabled person can receive that much in just five months under the Supplemental Income Security program.

The *International Migration Review* [Spring 1986] reported that foreign-born residents of the U.S. were 56 percent more likely than native-born Americans to be living in poverty, and 25 percent more likely to receive public aid.

Professor Donald Huddle of Rice University found that in 1992, immigrants who came to the U.S. since 1970 cost American taxpayers \$42.5 billion in net public assistance – that's in excess of the \$20.2 billion they paid in taxes. Prof. Huddle projects that future net costs – if our immigration policies remain the same – will reach \$668.5 billion between 1993 and 2002. That's an average net cost of \$67 billion per year. [Quoted by Lutton & Tanton, pg. 32.]

Immigration even poses real risks to the cultural unity of the American people. The unprecedented ethnic diversity of the current wave of immigration is fueling the emergence of the radically new idea that we are not one nation at all, but a group of separate ethnic nations within a nation. Not surprisingly, even such a basic unifying principle as our common language is now being called into question.

Ten years ago, the Census Bureau reported that 31 million U.S. residents spoke a language other than English in their homes. Once the

data is analyzed, the 2000 Census is bound to report a dramatic increase in that rate. The number of school-age children enrolled in both public and private schools who do not speak fluent English already doubled between 1986 and 1997. The Department of Education reports that the number jumped from 1.5 million in 1986 to nearly 3.5 million in 1997. The IRS has supplied income tax forms in Spanish, and state and local governments are also providing election ballots in Spanish and other foreign languages.

The 1964 Civil Rights Act forbids discrimination on the basis of "national origin." Consequently, non-English speaking persons are even entitled to government interpreters if they are called for jury duty. At the same time, ethnic television shows, newspapers and radio broadcasts are multiplying to meet the growing demand for news and entertainment in foreign languages.

The risk to our future as a united people is very real.

One of the most direct and immediate impacts of immigration is how it affects the American economy and the American worker.

We've all heard from the establishment press that immigration is good for the economy – that the American economy needs even more immigration. But contrary to the conventional wisdom, studies show that immigration has essentially no economic value for native-born workers, particularly lower-skilled workers. In fact, immigration has a negative effect – primarily because immigrant workers today are mostly unskilled.

The National Academy of Science in a 1997 study called "The New Americans" found that the benefits from immigrant workers are insignificant when weighed against the costs, such as welfare loss through transfer payments, and concluded that native born workers do not benefit from the present wave of immigration. In fact, the NAS estimated that every native-born family in California is spending at least \$1,000 extra per year in taxes because of the enormous immigrant presence in that state.

One of the most disturbing consequences is the role that labor unions are adopting as a result of mass immigration. Just last year the top officials of the AFL-CIO did a 180-degree turn on immigration policy. They reversed their former position favoring sanctions on employers who hire illegal aliens, and endorsed not only increased immigration, but a blanket amnesty for illegals, and *repeal* of employer sanctions.

Of course, amnesties beget more illegal immigration by signaling that American jobs – and eventual welfare benefits and citizenship – can be had by sneaking across the border rather than playing by the rules. More importantly, however, a new amnesty for illegals is extremely unfair to unskilled native-born workers, and threatens their ability to move up the economic ladder.

Professor George Borjas of Harvard University has studied the economic effects of immigration for more than a decade. He estimates that almost half of the widening gap between the wages of high school drop-outs and all other workers can be traced to the immigration of unskilled workers. Borjas finds that overall, immigration is the catalyst for transferring wealth from the working class to business owners and the affluent. He estimates that because of immigration, business owners and the employers of gardeners, chauffeurs and nannies pocket an extra \$140 billion a year, while causing native workers to lose about \$133 billion in depressed wages. [The Case Against Immigration, Roy Beck, page 84.]

That measurable effect is due to simple economic laws. As the supply of low-skilled workers increases, the price of their labor falls.

Robert Dunn, Jr., professor of economics at George Washington University, agrees. Here is how he described the problem:

"If the United States faces an unlimited supply of labor from the South at a wage of about \$5 per hour, incomes of less-skilled Americans will not increase even if economic growth in the country accelerates. If Washington wants to increase incomes of low-wage Americans and reduce the growing inequality of U.S. incomes, it must severely restrict the inflow of unskilled workers from abroad." [Beck, page 84]

Prof. Huddle reports that during the last recession – from 1982 to 1983 – approximately 3.5 million American workers were displaced in the labor force by aliens. [Lutton and Tanton, page 37.] He concluded, "immigration has substantial negative wage and employment effects... More immigration... means higher displacement and wage depression for America's unskilled workers." [Quoted by Lutton & Tanton, p. 39]

Advocates of mass immigration are well aware of the effect on U.S. wages and heartily applaud it. Writing in *Foreign Affairs* magazine

[Spring 2000] – the journal of the Council on Foreign Relations – immigration advocate Stephen Gotz-Richter endorsed the depression of U.S. wages.

Labor costs, he said, "have grown at an annual rate of only 1.5 percent in the second half of the 1990's, compared to about 3.5 percent in the 1980's. Even as job growth has soared in the past year, labor costs and wages have shown few signs of accelerating." Gotz-Richter says, "It is in America's interests to keep it that way." He claims that's because "Since 1990, immigrants have filled almost 5 million new jobs – which would just about cover today's level of unemployment. Absent this immigrant labor pool, the U.S. unemployment rate...would in fact be much lower."

The steady influx of foreign labor keeps adding enough workers to the economy to ease upward pressure on wages, and helps maintain significant unemployment among natives. Thus, it is primarily the working classes who suffer from immigration. They are being left out of the increasing prosperity enjoyed by the upper and upper-middle classes whose stock portfolios are blooming.

So why is the AFL-CIO, which purports to represent the interests of workers, advocating a policy that injures American working people?

We're all aware that in recent years America's industrial base and its often unionized manufacturing jobs are moving overseas. The percentage of the American work force that is unionized has steadily dropped and what union growth there has been is primarily among government employees.

The AFL-CIO's position on immigration is not designed to help native-born workers. Far from it. Union officials see very limited potential growth in union membership. They have despaired of unionizing many more American workers. But in immigrants they see literally millions of future labor union members. The education and skill level among the vast majority of today's immigrant laborers is low, and their varied origins work against self-organization. That makes them prime targets for skilled union organizers.

And union officials see prospects in the very illegality of many alien workers' presence in the United States.

For example, unions can offer illegal immigrant workers a powerful lobbying machine to secure amnesty for them. They can offer individu

als legal aid to fight deportation. In fact, some unions are offering direct help in violating United States law. The *New York Times* reports that in Chicago the DRIVE union is negotiating contracts in which the employer agrees to notify union officials when they learn an INS raid is rumored. Because illegal immigrants often use multiple false identities, the union included a provision in the contract requiring the employer to give seniority to an employee based on the time he works no matter how many false names he uses on the job!

The AFL-CIO's position favoring amnesty for illegal immigrants obviously does not help American workers. It is designed to help the union leadership by providing more dues money and power to union officials by unionizing and politically organizing millions of legal and illegal immigrants. In the process, the AFL-CIO is hurting both unionized and non-unionized native-born American workers. American workers who have been injured by the export of American jobs overseas are further injured by the import of low wage immigrants who compete for lower skilled jobs in America.

We're all familiar with the drain on the United States economy created by our welfare system. Government welfare was obviously not a factor attracting the last great wave of immigration which ended in the early 1920's. That's because government welfare didn't exist back then. However, the lure of welfare is indeed a major factor in the current wave of mass immigration. Not only does our generous welfare system attract poor immigrants, but it is a primary cause of the mistaken perception among business leaders that a labor shortage exists for lower-skilled jobs. High welfare payments make lower-skilled jobs relatively unattractive to U.S. workers. Government payments for not working competes with private industry's ability to pay for work. The government payments -- our tax dollars -- are high enough that many wages in lower-skilled jobs are simply not competitive.

The mainstream press, including the *Wall Street Journal*, advances the argument that America needs immigrant workers to do the jobs native-born workers don't want. But is that really true? A reduction in the number of low-skilled immigrants would require employers to use low-skilled native-born workers who are now on welfare or simply not yet trained for existing jobs. That means employers would have to pay enough to compete with government welfare payments and train workers or give workers who have taken government or other training a chance for the job.

In some areas of the country, that is already happening where genu

inely tight labor markets exists. A tight job market moves low-skilled workers into productive work, because the incentive is there for employers. The process may ultimately do more good for the United States' economy and the American people than all our government welfare reform programs.

For example, last year there was a tight job market in construction in northern Virginia, near Washington, D.C. The job market was benefiting native-born low-skilled workers through offers of employment and training.

A June 3 *Washington Post* explained it this way: "As Job Market Tightens, Construction Trades are Building the Next Generation of Skilled Labor.. .. In this time of hot housing markets and record low national unemployment, the company is reaching out to people it may not have recruited in the past. For example, Ace -- [the company] -- is employing graduates of a training program run by the Labor Department's Job Corps and the Home Builders Institute . . . most home builders say they are being forced to hire people who aren't experienced or well trained."

I'm glad the graduates of the Job Corps are being offered the jobs they trained for. It simply makes common sense to train the workers we already have, rather than import foreign ones. Not only is the practice more just for citizens, it is a safeguard in times of recession. When the next economic downturn comes – and unless we can repeal the law of the business cycle, it WILL come – what will America do with millions of its recently imported low-skilled laborers, suddenly out of work? Will taxpayers happily accept sending welfare checks to millions of unemployed foreigners forced to join unemployed Americans on the dole? Will state and local governments be able to cover the costs? No one knows.

America has hundreds of thousands, even millions, of low-skilled workers who find government payments better than any job they can get. When low-skilled jobs successfully compete with government welfare payments, the American economy is helped in two ways: less welfare and more productive work. That's the best solution – to put Americans to work.

No country on earth has – or can afford – open borders, including the

United States. Government policy determines how many immigrants are admitted, the ethnicity of the immigrants, and their skill and education levels. Ultimately, governments are responsible for the impact of their immigration policies. All governments must make the same kinds of decisions about immigration, and each government must decide how best to manage immigration for the benefit of the people it governs. America has been generous, but its immigration policy – like the policies of all other governments – must answer three basic questions: How many will be admitted, who will be admitted (that is, what criteria will be used to determine admission), and how shall the rules be humanely enforced.

In light of America's virtually open-door current policy, we must decide a more fundamental question before we can answer those three: Shall we devise an immigration policy in the best interests of our workers, our citizens and their future, or shall we ignore the impact of mass immigration, whatever that impact may be?

I'll conclude with a story: In 1979 China's president Deng arrived in Washington on an official visit to President Jimmy Carter. During their conversation, President Carter told Mr. Deng he was concerned over the right of the Chinese people to emigrate. Mr. Carter pointed out that most favored nation trade status could not be granted to regimes like China's that did not allow their people to emigrate.

"Well, Mr. President," Deng replied, "Just how many Chinese do you want? Ten million? Twenty million? Thirty million?"

Deng had made the point that hundreds of millions of people would emigrate to America, far more than we could take in, if we threw open our borders.

More than anything else, immigration will shape America's future. Immigration is now the single most important national issue facing the United States. It's time the issue received the full debate and serious discussion it deserves.

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