

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

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Dear Republican Colleague:

As our conference prepares to hold its annual policy retreat, we would like to share some thoughts on the one policy that most separates the views of the GOP's voters from the party's biggest donors: immigration.

The enormity of what is happening is somehow being lost on our political leaders. But it is not lost on the American people.

Immigration affects every aspect of our constituents' lives. It affects their jobs, wages, schools, hospitals, neighborhood crime, social stability, and community living standards.

It is also a national security issue. There can be no higher duty as lawmakers than to keep our constituents and their families safe. Yet our reckless refugee programs, lax green card and visa policies, utter failure to enforce rampant visa overstays, along with our wide open southern border, put the U.S. at grave and needless risk. There are dozens of terrorists identified or apprehended in recent years whose presence in the United States stems exclusively from immigration policy; there will be many more unless we establish firm controls.

In the fifty years since visa caps were lifted in 1965, the level of immigration in the country has quadrupled – from fewer than 10 million foreign-born residents in 1970 to more than 42 million today.

Over the next five decades, Pew Research projects immigration will add another 103 million to the U.S. population – or the population equivalent of 25 cities of Los Angeles. That would mean 100 straight years of uninterrupted record-breaking immigration growth.

This autopilot immigration flow is not only extreme, but ahistorical. Attached is an article we jointly authored for *Roll Call* detailing the facts.

After the numerically-smaller 1880-1920 immigration wave, immigration was reduced for half a century. There was no net increase in the immigrant population over a fifty-year period – in fact, the foreign-born population declined substantially between 1920 and 1970. During this mid-century period of low-immigration, wages surged, incomes soared, the melting pot churned, and – crucially – millions of immigrant workers were now able to climb out of the tenements and into the middle class.

Today, after five decades of record immigration, a record number of Americans are not working. The share of men in their prime working years who do not have jobs has tripled since the late 1960s. Workplace participation rates for women have declined more than three full percentage points since 2000. Median household incomes today are \$4,000 less than they were fifteen years ago.

By a 3:1 margin, voters in all parties say the level of immigration should be reduced – not increased. Absent visa reductions, the annual rate of immigration, the total level of immigration, and the percentage of the country that is foreign-born will continue surging every single year.

Ninety-two percent of GOP voters oppose this immigration growth, Pew reports. A microscopic 7 percent of GOP voters say they'd like to see more immigration. And yet party elites continue pushing for more - with no recognition of, let alone concern for, its impact on workers. This includes the harmful impact on prior immigrants whose wages are pushed down by waves of new arrivals competing for the same jobs. There is nothing more beneficial for recent immigrants than to reduce the flow.

How can it be possible that the demands of 92 percent of our electorate are not merely ignored, but sabotaged? The last legislation put forward would have *tripled* green card issuances over the next ten years - a population of new permanent residents almost seven times larger than the population of South Carolina.

There is never a "right time" to push an "immigration reform" plan opposed by more than 9 in 10 of our voters. Just like there is never a "right time" to push a "healthcare reform" plan that socializes medicine, a "tax reform" plan that destroys private sector business, or an "energy reform" plan that skyrockets the price of electricity.

Instead, we should correctly define the words "immigration reform" to refer exclusively to the policies our voters - and all voters - can cheer and celebrate. Real "immigration reform" protects American workers, families, and livelihoods. Defined this way, it is *always* the "right time" to promote "immigration reform."

If we want to lay out a "bold, conservative agenda," and demonstrate that we serve the voters - and not the special interests - we should begin by advancing bills to reduce out-of-control immigration. That is the reform our voters want, and that is what we must deliver.

Such action will not only bolster our existing electorate, but draw millions of new voters to our party from the ranks of independents and disaffected Democrats. Polling shows that across all parties and backgrounds, voters agree by a nearly 10:1 margin that companies should raise wages instead of bringing in new foreign labor. This is the right policy, and the winning strategy.

Voters' requests are good and just and decent. For years, politicians have pledged to create a lawful system that serves the interests of Americans, but they have dishonored those promises. It is time to follow through on that pledge.

Very truly yours,



Senator Jeff Sessions



Congressman Dave Brat

ROLL CALL

Memo to GOP: Curb Immigration or Quit | Commentary

By Sen. Jeff Sessions and Rep. Dave Brat | Oct. 19, 2015, 10:39 a.m.

America is about to break every known immigration record. And yet you are unlikely to hear a word about it.

The Census Bureau projects that the foreign-born share of the U.S. population will soon eclipse the highest levels ever documented, and will continue surging to new record highs each year to come.

Yet activists and politicians who support unprecedented levels of immigration are never asked to explain how they believe such a policy will affect social stability, community cohesion or political assimilation.

They can simply cry out, “We must pass immigration reform!” without ever explaining what they believe “immigration reform” means.

Immigration reform should mean improvements to immigration policy to benefit Americans. But in Washington, immigration reform has devolved into a euphemism for legislation that opens America’s borders, floods her labor markets and gives corporations the legal right to import new foreign workers to replace their existing employees at lower pay.

Consider the giant special interests clamoring for the passage of the Senate’s 2013 “gang of eight” immigration bill: tech oligarchs represented by Mark Zuckerberg’s FWD.us, open borders groups such as La Raza and the globalist class embodied by the billionaire-run Partnership for a New American Economy.

For these and countless other interest groups who helped write the bill, it delivered spectacularly: the tech giants would receive double the number of low-wage H-1B workers to substitute for Americans. La Raza would receive the further opening of America’s borders (while Democratic politicians gain more political power). And the billionaire lobby would receive the largest supply of visas for new low-skilled immigrants in our history, transferring wealth and bargaining power from workers to their employers.

What would be the effect on schools? On hospitals? On police departments? On labor conditions? On poverty? What would the effect be on millions of past immigrants forced to compete for scarce jobs and meager wages against these new arrivals?

Few seemed to ask, or care.

This is not immigration reform. This is the dissolution of the nation state, of the principle that a government exists to serve its own people.

When stories broke of loyal workers at Southern California Edison and Orlando Disney being forced by executives to train the lower-wage H-1B workers flown in to replace them, our political class could not be budged to even the slightest action. No tears were spilled by a cultural elite who would march on Washington to get drivers' licenses for illegal immigrants.

Instead of pleas for justice on behalf of these discarded workers, industry and lawmakers pushed for legislation that would accelerate their replacement. They demanded passage of the Immigration Innovation Act — a bill to triple the number of foreign tech workers brought in as lower-wage substitutes.

The narrative could not be allowed to depart from the approved script.

Here are the forbidden facts which have been edited out:

The great and broadly-shared middle-class growth that occurred in the 20th century took place during a period of low immigration.

Following the 1880-1920 immigration wave, which saw the foreign-born population double from 7 million to 14 million people, Congress passed a law to reduce future immigration. Between 1920 and 1970, America's foreign-born population shrank from 14 million to 9.6 million. For half a century, the number of immigrants declined both in total number and as a share of the population.

This period witnessed rapid wage growth.

According to the Congressional Research Service, from 1945 to 1970 — as the foreign-born population fell — the bottom 90 percent of wage earners saw an 82.5 percent increase in their wages. During this time, millions of prior immigrants were able to climb out of the tenements and into the middle class.

In 1965, Congress passed a new immigration law which helped produce an unprecedented wave of low-skilled immigration. The foreign-born population more than quadrupled, from fewer than 10 million in 1970 to more than 42 million today. In 1970, fewer than 1 in 21 residents were foreign-born, today it is approaching 1 in 7. In cities such as Los Angeles and New York, almost 4 in 10 current residents were born in another country. One-fifth of our residents now speak a language other than English at home. One-quarter of our residents is now either an immigrant or born to immigrant parents.

This ongoing immigration wave continues during a time when workers are being replaced with automation, when record numbers are living on welfare and when manufacturing plants are closing their doors. All of this has combined to help create an

immense wage-compressing surplus of labor: 66 million working-age residents are not working. Real average hourly earnings are lower now than they were in 1973.

The Congressional Research Service reports that during the 43 years between 1970 and 2013 — when the foreign-born population grew 325 percent — incomes for the bottom 90 percent of earners fell nearly 8 percent.

And yet, on autopilot, each year the U.S. further swells the labor supply by issuing millions of new visas to foreign nationals seeking jobs and residency in the United States.

The green card is the immigration document responsible for the overwhelming majority of immigration into the United States. One million green cards are now being handed out each and every year. This document legally invites foreign nationals to live permanently in the U.S., claim virtually all federal benefits, receive lifetime work authorization, and ultimately become voting citizens. No nation on Earth admits more new permanent immigrants each year than the United States. No nation on Earth has more than one-fourth as many total immigrants as we do today. And no nation on Earth anywhere near as large as ours has a higher percentage of foreign-born residents.

Over the next 10 years, the U.S. will hand out more green cards than the combined populations of Iowa, New Hampshire and South Carolina. This has absolutely nothing to do with the border or immigration enforcement: These green cards will be issued — this year and a hundred years from now — unless Congress passes a law to prevent their issuance.

On top of this, the U.S. issues each year approximately 700,000 visas to temporary foreign workers, 500,000 visas to foreign students, and 100,000 visas to refugees and asylum-seekers.

Because these new immigrants and foreign workers arrive legally, corporations can legally substitute them for their existing workers at lower pay. From 2000 through 2014, all jobs gains among the working-age were claimed by foreign labor. Moreover, because immigrant workers are paid lower salaries, their wages are subsidized by U.S. taxpayers. A recent report from the Center for Immigration Studies revealed that 3 in 4 immigrant households with kids are drawing welfare payments.

Including all forms of immigration, the Census Bureau estimates another 14 million immigrants will enter the U.S. on net between now and 2025 — that's almost five times the number of students who will graduate from public high school in America this year.

Assuming no law is passed to reduce immigration, the Census Bureau estimates that, in less than eight years' time, the percentage of U.S. residents born in a foreign-country will be the highest level in our history. And the bureau estimates — again, assuming Congress does not reduce immigration rates — that the foreign-born population share will keep rising to new all-time records for as long as they can project.

Pew Research Projects that new immigrants and their children will add another 103 million residents to the U.S. over the next five decades. That's the population equivalent of 25 cities of Los Angeles.

Did any American vote for this extreme and untested policy?

Yet our politicians who have created this policy do print or speak a word about it. This remains the forbidden conversation.

And the reason it is not discussed is because it cannot withstand scrutiny. Pew Research polling found that Americans want immigration reduced — not increased — by an overwhelming 3 to 1 margin. A mere 20 percent of Democratic voters and a miniscule 7 percent of Republican voters want more immigration.

GOP pollster Kellyanne Conway found that colossal majorities of Hispanics and African-Americans — among those hurt the most by the unceasing arrival of new low-wage workers — want U.S. workers to be given preference for jobs. By nearly a 10 to 1 margin, Americans of all backgrounds believe companies should raise wages instead of importing new labor from abroad.

This is the immigration reform voters want.

Rhetorical games grow weary. We've had vastly more immigration than ever before, but our politicians pretend like we've had very little. Nearly 1 in 4 residents aged 25-53 is not working, but our politicians talk of needing more immigration to fill "labor shortages." Billionaire CEOs bully and intimidate concerned parents into silence while helicoptering their own kids to the world's most expensive private schools.

What is missing from this conversation is a sense of moderation, of limits and of compassion for struggling families.

It is not caring, but callous, to bring in so many workers that there are not enough jobs for them or those already living here. It is not mainstream, but extreme, to continue surging immigration beyond all historical precedent. And it is not rational, but radical, to refuse to recognize limits.

Lettered on our nation's seal are the words E Pluribus Unum. Out of many, one. It does a disservice to both the country and the immigrant when we bring in larger numbers than we can reasonably expect to assimilate. If we allow our immigration system to replicate in America the same failed conditions which people have left, we are hurting the country and any who would seek to enter it in the future.

For that reason, we should only admit as many new arrivals as we can reasonably expect to absorb into our schools, labor markets and communities. We must never admit so large a number that the immigrants themselves are unlikely to enter the middle

class or achieve stable incomes. And we have to recognize that there are record millions already living inside our borders in desperate need of a job.

After nearly half a century of massive immigration it is time to turn our attention to our own residents. It is time to help our own workers, families and communities — immigrant and U.S.-born — rise together into the middle class.

We need an immigration policy that shows compassion for Americans.

Anyone running for the White House who cannot publicly commit to these principles should consider a different occupation. Americans should no longer have to wonder for whom their leaders work.

Sen. [Jeff Sessions](#) is a Republican from Alabama and serves as chairman of the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Immigration and the National Interest. Rep. [Dave Brat](#) is a Republican from Virginia.