Mass Immigration Harming American Workers, New Report Confirms

A new analysis of government employment data demonstrates that continued mass immigration and the failure to enforce laws against illegal immigration are harming millions of Americans who cannot find jobs in this tough economy. Research conducted at the Center for Labor Market Studies at Northeastern University in Boston shows that between 2008 and 2010, while some 6.26 million Americans lost their...

Immigration-Driven Population Growth Threatening the Chesapeake Bay

The 2010 Census data show that America’s population grew by an astounding 27 million people during the previous decade, and that some two-thirds of that growth was a result of immigration and births to immigrants. A new report from FAIR looks at the impact of immigration-driven population growth on one of the nation’s most endangered ecosystems: the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

Mirroring the nation at large, Immigration, Population Growth, and the Chesapeake Bay finds that two-thirds of the population growth that occurred in the Bay’s 64,000 square...
As we do each time a new Congress takes office, FAIR issued an Immigration Reform Agenda for the 112th Congress, setting forth a list of legislative priorities that we believe would move the nation in the direction of true immigration reform. What sets this Congress and this set of legislative proposals apart from those of recent years is a political climate that makes achieving some of these goals a realistic possibility.

While President Obama and Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) continue to press to make amnesty for illegal aliens the centerpiece of any immigration reform effort, the new House leadership has made it clear that it will focus on reforms that benefit the American people. Moreover, as we begin 2011, there is broad bipartisan consensus on many steps that must be taken to enforce U.S. immigration laws, a wave of state-based enforcement bills, and growing public demand for meaningful action on immigration enforcement.

FAIR’s agenda for the 112th Congress includes proposals for reforms to better enforce laws against illegal immigration, long overdue changes to our legal immigration policies, and improvements in homeland security.

Among the key reforms called for in the agenda:

**ADDRESSING ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION**

- Increased worksite enforcement including penalties against employers and apprehension/removal of illegal workers.
- Permanent reauthorization of the E-Verify program and expansion of the program to make it mandatory for all U.S. employers.
- Reinstatement and codification of the “No Match Rule,” informing employers of irregularities in workers’ Social Security information.
- Improvement in the security of vital identity documents and records, including making the Social Security card a secure and tamper-resistant document.
- Enhanced cooperation between federal immigration authorities and state and local police.
- Denial of certain federal funds to jurisdictions that maintain sanctuary policies.
- Greater sharing of pertinent information between government agencies.
- Prohibit employers from deducting wages and benefits paid to illegal workers from their taxes.

**REFORMING LEGAL IMMIGRATION POLICIES**

- Reduce overall levels of immigration to no more than 300,000 a year.
- Limit family-based immigration to spouses and unmarried minor children.
- Give immigration preferences to skilled workers over unskilled ones.
- Eliminate the “immigrant visa lottery.”
- End birthright citizenship for children of illegal aliens and aliens in the U.S. on temporary visas, such as tourist visas.
- Reduce the number of guest workers admitted and provide greater enforcement to prevent fraud.

FAIR Issues a Legislative Agenda for 112th Congress
New reports by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) and the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services agency (USCIS) indicate that the E-Verify program is performing nearly flawlessly and that it is ready for the eventuality that all employers will be required to use it. E-Verify is an Internet-based system that compares the names and Social Security numbers of new hires to data from Homeland Security and Social Security Administration (SSA) records to confirm an employee’s eligibility to work lawfully in the U.S.

Over 243,000 employers nationwide now rely on E-Verify as a tool to screen out illegal workers, and that number continues to grow. In FY 2010, E-Verify ran more than 16 million queries from employers. In about 97 percent of those queries, E-Verify was able to provide instantaneous confirmation of eligibility without need for further information. And, according to the glowing report from GAO, the program has since FY 2007 significantly reduced the number of inquiries that produce “temporary nonconfirmations.”

USCIS randomly surveyed employers who are enrolled in the E-Verify program and found that the vast majority are pleased with all aspects of the program. Users rated the program highly for registration, tutorial, ease of use, technical assistance, and customer service. In each area, satisfaction with E-Verify vastly outperformed almost every other government-run program.

While praising E-Verify, the GAO also offered a series of recommendations for improving the accuracy of E-Verify and making it less susceptible to fraud. Among GAO’s recommendations was the use of cross-referencing of digital photos in the Department of Homeland Security’s database and the inclusion of biometric information in government-issued identity documents.

GAO also noted that USCIS and SSA have been working cooperatively to prepare for the possibility that E-Verify will be made mandatory for all employers. While the technology appears to be in place, and the need to protect U.S. jobs is self-evident, President Obama and some congressional leaders continue to hold expansion of E-Verify hostage to a potential amnesty for illegal aliens.

The findings of both GAO and USCIS further expose the reality that the obstacle to implementation of a universal system to protect American jobs from being filled by illegal aliens is purely political. Ever since the adoption of employer sanctions in 1986, FAIR has fought for a mandatory worker verification process. In light of the incontrovertible evidence of E-Verify’s effectiveness, FAIR will press the 112th Congress to mandate that employers verify the work eligibility of all U.S. workers. (See: FAIR Issues a Legislative Agenda for 112th Congress, page 2.)
Florida

Only moments after taking office, Gov. Rick Scott signed an executive order requiring all Florida state agencies to use the E-Verify system to determine the employment eligibility of all state workers, contractors and subcontractors. The executive order is seen as a down payment on a campaign pledge to require all Florida employers to use E-Verify. As the new session of the legislature got underway in January, Gov. Scott reiterated his support for legislation similar to Arizona’s SB 1070. The governor is resisting pressure from fellow Republicans, like Senate President Mike Haridopolos and Agriculture Commissioner Adam Putnam, to water down state immigration enforcement legislation.

[Illegal immigration costs Florida $5.46 billion annually.]

Mississippi

Acting quickly to address a growing problem of illegal immigration, both houses of the Mississippi legislature approved strong immigration enforcement bills in January. The legislation passed both houses by overwhelming majorities, but since the two are not identical versions, the differences must be worked out by a conference committee before a bill can be sent to Gov. Haley Barbour for his signature.

[Illegal immigration costs Mississippi $106 million annually.]

Georgia

Georgia, which has already enacted immigration enforcement legislation, seems poised to take further steps to protect the jobs and security of state residents. The legislature has even gone so far as to establish a Joint Committee on Immigration Reform. State Rep. Matt Ramsey was first out of the gate, introducing the Illegal Immigration Reform and Enforcement Act of 2011, which, among other provisions, would enable state law enforcement agencies to investigate the immigration status of people they reasonably suspect to be illegal aliens. Other legislators are expected to follow suit with bills of their own.

[Illegal immigration costs Georgia $2.4 billion annually.]

Kentucky

Senate Bill 6, legislation similar to Arizona’s SB 1070, easily passed the Republican-controlled Kentucky Senate in January. The immigration enforcement measure now faces a less certain fate in the Democratic-controlled House. The measure is being promoted by State Sen. Dave Williams, who warns that failure to pass an illegal immigration enforcement bill will make Kentucky a magnet for illegal aliens as other states in the region take steps to discourage illegal immigration.

[Illegal immigration costs Kentucky $326 million annually.]

South Dakota

South Dakota has only a small illegal alien population, and state lawmakers are aiming to keep it that way. But even the estimated 2,000 illegal aliens in the state are adding to South Dakota’s fiscal woes, says Rep. Manny Steele, who introduced an Arizona-style enforcement bill in January. Steele said he is intent on moving the bill through the South Dakota legislature and hopes to have it on the governor’s desk by July.

[Illegal immigration costs South Dakota $39 million annually.]

Maine

In one of his first official acts, new Gov. Paul LePage reversed a de facto sanctuary policy implemented by his predecessor by issuing an executive order authorizing all state agencies to inquire about people’s immigration status. LePage explained that he wants to dispel “the impression that Maine is a so-called ‘sanctuary state’ for those who are in the United States without lawful status.”

[Illegal immigration costs Maine $66 million annually.]
Arizona Legislation Seeks to Clarify Birthright Citizenship

As has been widely expected, Arizona legislators have taken the first step in an attempt to clarify the legal interpretation of the citizenship clause of the U.S. Constitution. In January, bills were introduced in both houses of the Arizona legislature that would require that at least one parent be “lawfully domiciled” in the U.S. in order for Arizona to recognize a child born in the state as a citizen of that state. Companion legislation was also introduced that would seek permission from Congress to allow Arizona to enter into a compact with other states seeking to do the same thing.

The move, spearheaded by State Senator Russell Pearce and State Representative John Kavanagh, followed an announcement by a coalition of state legislators from across the country that states intend to challenge the current policy of granting automatic citizenship to some 340,000 children born in the U.S. each year to illegal aliens and “birth tourists,” imposing enormous cost burdens on state and local governments.

The citizenship clause of the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution states that “All persons born or naturalized in the United States and subject to the jurisdiction thereof” are citizens. Many constitutional scholars take the view that illegal aliens do not meet the legal definition of being subject to the jurisdiction of the United States and that, therefore, their U.S.-born children should not be recognized as citizens.

Arizona House Bill 2561 and Senate Bill 1308 would define children in the state born to illegal aliens and other non-U.S. residents as not meeting the requirement of being subject to the jurisdiction of the U.S. Under the legislation, Arizona would not recognize them as citizens of the state. In doing so, the authors of the legislation hope to force the courts to examine the wording and intent of the 14th Amendment as it applies to U.S. citizenship.

House Bill 2562 and Senate Bill 1309 would require Arizona to issue separate birth certificates to children whose parents are legal residents and, therefore, subject to the jurisdiction of the U.S. and those whose parents are not. These bills would also seek permission from Congress for Arizona to enter into a compact with other states to deny state citizenship to children born to parents who are not subject to the jurisdiction of the United States. States may enter into compacts, agreeing among themselves to establish certain policies. With the approval of Congress, these compacts have the force of federal law.

Enactment of these bills in Arizona would not immediately alter the practice of granting citizenship to the U.S.-born children of illegal aliens and non-U.S. residents. They would, however, serve as legal vehicles to seek a judicial ruling on what the phrase “subject to the jurisdiction thereof” means with regard to U.S. citizenship.
jobs, new immigrants—both legal and illegal—flooded into our labor market and found jobs.

Northeastern University researchers analyzed data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Census Bureau and concluded that, during one of the bleakest economic periods in our history, about 1.1 million newly arrived immigrants found jobs in the U.S. About 35 percent of these new workers were in the country illegally.

According to the Center’s director, Andrew Sum, unemployed American workers lost out on job opportunities that went to immigrant workers instead. Sum stated categorically, “Employers have chosen to use new immigrants over native-born workers and have continued to displace large numbers of blue-collar workers and young adults without college degrees...One of the advantages of hiring, particularly young, undocumented immigrants, is the fact that employers do not have to pay health benefits or basic payroll taxes.”

Among the labor market sectors hiring new immigrants—but not American workers—cited in the report were construction, hotel and food services, cleaning and sanitation, and retail. The recession-ravaged construction industry hired 86,000 newly-arrived immigrant workers between 2008 and 2010, found the report. Those hurt most directly by the immigrant-hiring boom are low and unskilled American workers who face unemployment rates not seen since the Great Depression.

The Northeastern study provides further academic support for research conducted by FAIR over many years. FAIR has long contended that our nation’s failed immigration policies are doing great damage to millions of American workers—particularly the less educated and poorly skilled. It is unconscionable that our government maintains policies that inflict severe harm on large segments of our population.

The new study also demonstrates that it is not just our failure to enforce laws against illegal immigration that is harming American workers, but our legal immigration policies as well. Despite the severe recession and forecasts for continued high levels of unemployment, the influx of new legal immigrants continues at a record pace. In addition to excessive numbers—about 1.1 million a year—our policy of family chain migration means that newly arriving workers wind up competing with the most vulnerable American workers.

In spite of clear cut evidence that our immigration policies are displacing large numbers of American workers, President Obama refuses to use laws against the employment of illegal aliens to locate and deport them, and Congress remains reluctant to reduce immigration levels or change the family chain migration policy.
mile watershed was a direct consequence of immigration. The region’s population has now swelled to 17 million people, threatening the 3,600 plant and animal species that rely on the fragile watershed for their survival. The massive immigration-driven population growth continues unabated, in spite of widespread recognition by environmentalists that the population already exceeds the Bay’s carrying capacity.

Among the report’s findings are:

• The population of the Chesapeake watershed is increasing by some 150,000 annually and is on track to reach 23 million people by 2050.

• Population growth is the primary factor threatening the watershed according to leading environmental groups, although most refuse to acknowledge the impact of immigration.

• Overpopulation in the watershed region threatens the Chesapeake seafood industry and undermines the lucrative recreation and tourism industries.

• The cost to clean up the Bay was estimated by the EPA in 2007 at $28 billion.

Preventing runaway population growth through mass immigration has been a core principle of FAIR since its inception in 1979. For more than three decades, FAIR has consistently called for reductions in overall immigration as a necessary step to preserving the nation’s environment and resource base. *Immigration, Population Growth and the Chesapeake Bay* provides a graphic example of the harmful environmental consequences impacting our nation as a result of immigration policies that ignore the effects of runaway population growth.

FAIR’s complete *Immigration, Population Growth and the Chesapeake Bay* report can be found on our website: www.fairus.org.

President Obama Renewed Call for Amnesty in State of the Union Address

While the overriding theme of President Obama’s 2011 State of the Union address was about moving past the bitter partisan battles that have prevented Congress from attending to the American people’s priorities, he ignored his own advice on the issue of immigration. Rather than press for action on immigration reforms that enjoy broad public and bipartisan consensus, the president used the address to reopen the divisive debate about amnesty for illegal aliens.

President Obama mischaracterized the DREAM Act as an educational priority—instead of a potentially huge drain on already scarce higher education resources—and urged Congress to revisit the issue, barely a month after an effort to pass the measure died in the Senate. The president also sought a broader amnesty for nearly all illegal aliens in the country. During the address, he once again indicated that improvements in border security and enforcement in the workplace—steps that are essential to protect the security of the nation and American jobs—must be contingent on implementing an amnesty program for illegal aliens.

Unfortunately, at a time when the president correctly senses that the American people want the two political parties to work together to promote policies that serve the national interest, Mr. Obama used his most important public forum to promote immigration policies that serve narrow interests at the expense of ordinary Americans.
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