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Writing 2010

April 1st 2019

OBAMA: An Immigration story

Immigration has been an integral part of the United States of America's history and development and is one of the most hotly debated topics of the present day. While some people like to argue that immigrants take jobs from hard working Americans, the truth is that immigrants take up a small percentage of the workforce and are not the main reason for American unemployment. Immigration betters the United States of America by adding to American ideals and culture, increasing Americas educated and uneducated workforce and boosting the U.S. economy through spending, innovation and entrepreneurship.

There is a common idea that is spread throughout the media that immigrants are detrimental to society and hurt American values and culture. The truth is immigrants are actually continuously adding to American culture and assimilating into U.S. society with a 44% increase in immigrant home ownership, an increase in foreign born men with an income level above the "low income bracket" from 35 to 66% from 1990 to 2008 and a massive increase of immigrants becoming US citizens from 7% in 1990 to 56% in 2008 (Myers and Pitkin, 2010). This shows how immigrants are not only assimilating into US society but are also having a positive impact

on the US economy as they can afford to spend more and keep the flow of money going. The massive increase in immigrants becoming citizens shows how well they are integrating into American culture and showing interest in U.S. values, while the increase in home ownership and males with an income level above the low income bracket shows how the U.S. economy is benefiting from immigration.

Another example of how immigrants are readily assimilating into American culture and society is in the number of immigrants capable of speaking English. First generation immigrants often find it difficult to learn English due to a lack of access to educational facilities that they can use to learn and the large amounts of time they must spend working to support their families. (Myers and Pitkin, 2010). This changes when looking at second and third gen immigrants however as they are given the correct educational tools to quickly learn English and further assimilate into US society (Ibid.). This once again shows how immigrants are actively adding to society with immigrants who are unable to assimilate fully only being held back by the massive workload put onto most first wave immigrants as a result of their lack of formal education. These immigrants must work so hard to support their loved ones it is impossible for them to properly assimilate, also showing the hard working nature of first wave immigrants and how they truly embody the hardworking and enduring spirit of the United States of America.

Another factor proving the assimilation of immigrants into American culture is that majority of third generation immigrants had an equal or better level of education, English speaking and occupational distribution as natives (Waters and Pineau, 2015). This shows the rapid improvement of the wellbeing of immigrants and displays a general improvement in the levels of assimilation seen in immigrants as a whole.

An aspect of the immigrant population of the U.S. that is often misrepresented is the number of illegal immigrants compared to legal immigrants. When immigrants are mentioned in the news or in politics they are normally painted in a negative light. This is shown in the quote “The overwhelming majority of U.S. Immigrants came to the country through proper legal channels. However, the degree of attention given to the issue of illegal immigration has overshadowed that of legal immigrants in recent years” (Eastman, 2016). This has lead to the term immigrant having a negative affiliation in most peoples minds. This means immigrants are being hated on despite being perfectly good members of society. Immigrants are as a majority legal, upstanding and hardworking, and the bad rep they have been given thanks to a minority of illegal immigrants (not all of which are bad either) has lead to an overall negative view of immigrants and their families.

Contrary to popular belief immigrants are responsible for a large portion of the United State’s GDP, adding 2 trillion to the U.S. GDP in 2016 (Blau and Mackie, eds., 2016), showing one of the greatest positive impacts of immigration; economic growth. This growth has been felt throughout U.S. history, from the Irish immigration boom of the early 1800s to the European wave of immigrants of the late 1800s and early 1900s. These waves of immigration have always been met with much resistance and have always lead to economic prosperity in the United States. A perfect example is the Chinese immigration act, a policy banning the immigration from China that was created after American xenophobia had peaked in the late 1800s (“Chinese Immigration Act”, 1882). The Chinese were blamed for low wages and taking American jobs despite only making up 0.002% of the population (“U.S. Immigration Timeline” 2018). Using immigrants and minority groups as the an enemy who are responsible for internal issues has been repeated throughout history from the Chinese to the Mexican immigrants that are being condemned by

media today. These claims never have any basis in reality and are a classic example of causation being confused with correlation. It is additionally easier to assign issues to a group of people than it is to admit fault, and giving pain that is being felt a reason makes it easier to deal with for most people.

This aspect of human nature is being abused by those in the conservative party, people who are much happier blaming people who can't stand up for themselves than actually working to better everyone's situation, people who are content stirring up fear and hatred instead of actually addressing the real issues that are on hand. Donald Trump is the holy grail of conservative deceit, blaming job loss on immigrants while simultaneously outsourcing work to other countries to minimize costs. He misled the public, blaming America's problems on people who actually make it better, creating unnecessary and uninformed xenophobia and failing to deliver on his promises anyway. In this way President Trump is a classic used car salesman, dismissing any evidence that contradicts his points as fake news and manipulating his supporters to believe only his word.

A key aspect of immigration that is not often mentioned by liberal or conservative media sources is the innovation and entrepreneurship of immigrants. Immigrants are the founders of 40% of fortune 500 companies, employing over 10 million people worldwide ("The New American Fortune 500", 2011), which contradicts the classic idea of immigrants 'stealing' American jobs as they are ironically responsible for creating them. This also shows another way that immigrants have helped the U.S. economy grow, with the success of immigrant founded companies being a significant factor in the prosperity of the U.S. stock exchange and by extension the success of the U.S. financial sector.

The positive impact of immigrants in the workforce extends much further than just the economy however. Immigrants are often employed in jobs that while crucial are either

considered undesirable or require highly educated and sought out workers that simply don't exist in the U.S. An example of one of the undesirable jobs that are taken by many immigrants is agriculture. The agriculture industry is desperate for workers, with farmers watching their crops die because there aren't enough workers willing to help with the harvest (Serrano, 2012). After efforts to deport illegal immigrants in Georgia, the agricultural industry began to tank as farmers struggled to find enough workers to harvest their crops, leading to millions of dollars of lost produce (Mataconis, 2011). The agricultural industry is desperate for workers and needs, and immigrants are the only ones filling the labor deficit in the industry. The above examples show how a large number of immigrants are extremely important to the success of the U.S. immigration industry and how decreasing the number of immigrants into this country could be detrimental to the economy at large.

Immigrants also make up a significant portion of the healthcare industry, filling highly skilled positions that can't be taken by majority of the U.S. population (Singer, 2012). As shown by the above two examples, immigrants are not competing with native U.S. workers as they work jobs that are either not wanted by the general American populous or are in jobs that require highly trained and educated specialists that cannot be filled solely by America's own population, adding vital skills to Americas educated and uneducated workforce.

The jobs that are created by immigrants is another positive aspect that is often overlooked in the immigration debate.

Immigrants create new demands for business, as the need for food and commodities increases in a community as its population rises. According to the National Beauro of economic research, every immigrant generates 1.2 jobs for local American workers(Hong and McLaren, 2015). This means

immigrants directly increase the need for new workers, creating jobs for American citizens and further boosting the economy, and also show the positive correlation between immigration and the creation of jobs.

To conclude, Immigrants are an important part of America's economy: adding vital skills to the workforce, significantly boosting the number of jobs available to American citizens through entrepreneurship and innovation and raising the G.O.P. by 3 trillion dollars. Immigrants also help bring new ideas and culture to the United States of America, and have shaped and developed its societal values and ideas since the country was founded.

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