

Introduction

*"Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!" cries she
With silent lips. "Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"*

This quote is the second stanza of the infamous poem, The New Colossus, which is carved into the stone of the Statue of Liberty, the iconic image which represents the American Dream, and the journey of millions of people to America.

On Friday, Jan. 27, Trump signed immigration executive order, barring entry to US for people from Iraq, Syria, Iran, Sudan, Libya, Yemen, and Somalia and suspends US refugee program for 120 days- hundreds detained in the following days from airports around the US, including international students with visas and green-card holders. Protesters emerged at major airports like JFK in objection of the executive order. Many deemed it unconstitutional and a direct attack on Muslims, since the seven countries have a predominantly Muslim population. In the days after federal judges around the country blocked Trump's executive order in certain International airports including Dulles and Logan. Later, Trump fired Sally Yates, the attorney general, who deemed the executive order unlawful. Federal appeals court will announce decision this week on Trump's immigration ban this week (Feb 7 2017).

The first people to come from Europe and colonize the Eastern US were escaping religious persecution. This is no different from today - many of those who immigrate to the US are being persecuted based on their race, religion, political opinion, and more. Others are escaping military turmoil or natural disasters in their own countries. A lot of people come for the opportunities that the United States offers: healthcare benefits, better job options, better education for their children, and others. Overall, the US is completely made up of immigrants, but there are still some concerns that many people have about letting immigrants and refugees into the country.

Terrorism and economic downfall are the two major concerns among American citizens to allowing immigration, especially after the September 11 attacks. While there is extensive economic benefit to having immigrants in the country, there are still concerns that government subsidized programs like public education funding will be hurt in the process.

One buzz phrase that has been used extensively in immigration discussions to describe policy is called "Comprehensive Immigration Reform". There are a lot of different ways of defining this phrase based on one's political views. Left-wing politicians believe that comprehensive

immigration reform involves paths to citizenship for all immigrants (legal or illegal), full assimilation of immigrants into American life, the end of mass detention of immigrants, and calls to address the root causes of emigration. Right-wing politicians' policies would include cutting immigration numbers, no amnesty or guest worker programs, and protection of the standard of living and wages. Overall, the concept of comprehensive immigration reform involves an increase in border enforcement paired with paths to citizenship for all immigrants and the ability to bring in workers as needed by the US labor market.

Regulated Immigration Draft

One thing to remember is that the United States was founded and built largely by immigrants. A very large portion of the American population is made up of immigrants; immigrants and their children make up a group of 81 million plus, about a quarter of the population. A lot of these people came to this country to pursue opportunity. And many have given back to this nation as much as they have gotten out, if not more. But that also does not mean that there should be unlimited entry into this nation. It is important to realistically consider the consequences of unrestricted immigration. Nearly 75 percent of drug related crimes can be attributed to illegal immigrants. Additionally, there are dangers possible if immigrants do not properly assimilate into the United States' culture. As evidenced by multiple incidents, isolated groups of immigrants who do not integrate into their host culture can become radicalized and perpetrate acts of crime or even terror.

It is a difficult balancing act between allowing immigrants into the US for the nation's collective benefit and disallowing immigrants in the interests of national safety and security. Yet it is key to find policies which tread this thin line and provide the optimal national benefit. As such, there are a select set of actions which can help perpetuate this goal. It is nearly impossible to prevent an influx of immigrants into the United States. To take a quick look at one idea, President Trump's border wall would cost the nation upwards of 20 billion dollars and, honestly, would still not be very effective. Of course, that does not mean to forsake policing of the nation's borders, but that needs to be supplemented by proper oversight of illegal immigrants. On the flip side, it is additionally necessary to provide opportunities for people to immigrate to the United States legally, or otherwise earn their way to residence and citizenship. America is known as the land of opportunity and should be able to live up to its repute. The relation between the US and immigrants can again be mutually beneficial. Particularly it would likely be good to encourage the immigration of specific groups, such as highly skilled workers or foreign business interests. However, this approach is probably the most difficult to enable as it would require a lot of oversight, both over immigration itself and providing opportunities for immigrants. That said, it probably is the most comprehensive and in-depth approach to immigration.

Restrictive Immigration Draft

Why do we need to restrict immigration? Most Americans don't hate immigrants as many know they have come from families of immigrants. Just like many others, their ancestors immigrated to the United States to escape evil, start a new life, or create better opportunities for themselves and their posterity. However, many Americans are increasingly unhappy with the amount of immigration taking place today. Since 1965, immigrants and their children represent 55% of total population growth with that figure climbing to 80% in recent years. This problem becomes more concerning because the United States has not seen at least 3% GDP growth in a decade, so at the current rate we are bringing in immigrants faster than we can create jobs. This leads to greater competition in the job market and more Americans out of work and many being replaced by cheaper labor.

So how do we help Americans? We begin with shutting down illegal methods of entry. That means better enforcement of America's borders and stopping individuals who overstay visas. Methods to increase border protection include building a wall, like 65 other countries have done, increasing border guards, and ending practices such as catch and release. Once illegal immigration is under control, the United States should then turn its sights to legal immigration. At the current rate, the United States accepts over 1 million legal immigrants each year. This has led to the foreign-born nationals comprising 13.7% of the USA population, almost matching the record 1890 level of 14.8%. Levels of legal immigration could be cut to as low as simple replacement level immigration so the population of the United States does not begin to decline. Other avenues like redefining birthright citizenship may be needed to end practices like "Birth Tourism." A sovereign nation's first duty is to its citizens. Reducing immigration may be necessary to maintain a high standard of living for the citizens of the United States.

Open Immigration Draft

Timeline

Syrian Civil War breaks out (2011), Assad used sarin gas on Damascus (2013), Russian intervention in the Civil War (2014-2015), Refugee Crisis (2015)

Background

According to the United Nations, in 2015, the world saw the most amount of refugees since the end of the second World War. Nearly 60 million individuals were displaced from their homes without shelter or other basic human needs. After Russian intervention in Syria, the national situation deteriorated even more, and millions of individuals fled the country. The migration patterns show that the refugees went north through Turkey into eastern European countries such as Greece, Hungary, Croatia, etc.

Current EU approach

Free Flow of people throughout member countries. Refugees have largely illegally entered member countries near the Mediterranean, and then attempted to claim asylum within the EU. So far, the majority of refugees have attempted to journey as far north as Germany to claim asylum, but the EU itself has tried to equally disperse the number of migrants all across the union. Sweden is a member state of the EU and has largely followed suit in their policies, but is renowned for their superb programs regarding refugees. However, due to their size as a smaller nation, they can only take in so many. In the meantime, thousands upon thousands of the migrants have set up their own refugee camp cities across countries such as Greece and France. Many of these have been torn down by European authorities for illegal zoning reasons as well as the poor conditions displayed. While the highest number of migrants have decided to go to Germany, Hungary has taken in the most refugees per capita. After the mass initial influx of individuals attempting to enter Europe, Turkey has begun to act as a crossroads between the refugees and Europe. Many of the migrant families have been left in limbo by this crossroads solution as often times only part of the family will be granted asylum vs the entire family.

Controversies

Immigration restriction is basically punishing people for choosing the wrong parents. Why on Earth would we ever not let someone into a country when they just want a better life than the one they were given? The extreme vast majority of these people are fleeing violence and have personally affected by it, so we cannot turn a blind eye to the suffering of others. However, we can't have unrestricted immigration because there are many states that offer so much governmental assistance to everyone no matter of income (France, Canada) that it would be undue financial burden on them. Many people question why the local Arab states such as the Qatar and the UAE are not taking in any of these refugees or doing anything in their power to try to end the civil war.

Why are we punishing people for choosing the wrong parents

"If such limits seem unfair, they are far less unfair than the status quo, which traps countless foreigners in poverty and danger because they proverbially 'chose the wrong parents.'"

Potential burden on welfare states such as France that offer quality free public schooling, healthcare, and other government benefits.

Potential Benefits:

A mind is a terrible thing to waste. By letting everyone in, there is no chance of missing out on such an incredible thing. By giving immigrants equal rights we are going to see the same benefits to society that we did when we increased rights for minorities and women. Many of the people fleeing the violence are people such as doctors, lawyers, and other high functioning members of civil society, yet we have shut the door on them because of their nationality.

Most countries welcome tourists, yet developed countries place heavy restrictions on foreigners who want to settle down, find a job, and make a new life. This would be weird if we didn't take it for granted. Immigrants, like tourists, are normally paying customers, not beggars. Like our ancestors, today's immigrants come to swap their labor for our products. Most move because their productivity—and hence their pay—is higher here than it is at home. If you lived in Syria or Haiti, you wouldn't be very productive either.

How would open borders benefit those of us who are already here? You could just as well ask, “How would equal rights for blacks benefit whites?” or “How would equal rights for women benefit men?” The answer, in all three cases, is the same: A mind – white or black, male or female, native or foreign – is a terrible thing to waste. Despite the bipartisan popularity of immigration restrictions, these laws trap most of mankind's skill, determination, and ingenuity in countries that cripple these precious assets.

Final Thoughts: How Can We Make America (Immi)Great Again?

Immigration policies and systems in the United States have been evolving since the country's conception. A country built by immigrants, for immigrants, is now caught in a constant debate over whether or not we can sustain ourselves while keeping our doors open to those in need. In light of recent changes to US immigration policy, we've proposed three plans for addressing the issue in the United States.

Approach #1: Regulated Immigration

During Obama's administration (2008-2012), the United States saw the revitalization and expansion of what is considered to be a moderate or regulated form of immigration policy. The goal of such a policy was to create a sense of balance between the rights of immigrants and the rights of Americans, between the benefits of open doors and the risks of open doors, and between acting for the good of others and acting for the good of ourselves. The proposal to continue this policy attempts to achieve this balance by identifying the flaws in the current system and calls for the introduction of new legislation or policy to fix these holes--specifically, those who inappropriately limit immigration for certain individuals OR those who allow for certain individuals to “slip through the cracks,” to put it colloquially. Rather than calling for the outright rejection of all immigration or the elimination of all restrictions on immigration, regulated policy seeks to establish the middle ground, ensuring that not only is the safety of Americans put first, but we uphold the values of unity and freedom upon which our nation was founded.

Approach #2: Restricted Immigration

The precedent for restricted immigration was set with the Johnson-Reed Immigration Act in 1924, which set a quota and implemented restrictions on who could and couldn't enter the states. Restricted immigration places an emphasis on nationalism, and often aims to curb terrorism and

other outside threats. Restricted immigration gained support from the public and politicians following 9/11, and policies implementing restrictions on eligibility for admission into the country became more common in the late 1900s and 2000s. Benefits of restrictive immigration policies include reducing the availability of cheap labor (thereby keeping American wages up), as well as reducing the likelihood of terrorists entering the country. However, restricted immigration also risks perpetuating the stigma and discrimination against immigrants.

Approach #3: Open Borders

Currently, both the European Union (E.U.) and Canada operate under an open borders policy. This approach to immigration was adopted primarily as a reaction to the Syrian Civil War and the millions of refugees that sought protection amidst the conflict. In terms of the E.U.'s open border policy, immigrants are allowed to travel freely through member countries. As a result of the opportunities for asylum within the E.U., many refugees illegally enter member countries through the Mediterranean, and then attempt to claim asylum through the E.U. Most refugees have settled in the areas of Germany and Hungary, but the E.U. makes a conscious effort to evenly disperse migrants across the union. Similar to the policy enacted by the E.U., Canada's approach to immigration features one of the most accepting policies in the Western world. For example, Canada's "Start Up Visa" program allows immigrating entrepreneurs to apply for a Visa based on innovative business plans. In addition, Canada accepted America green-card holders over the course of President Trump's immigration ban. Overall, an open border policy seeks to ensure the free flow of persons who wish to relocate on the basis of protection, business, or otherwise.

Although the resolution of the current immigration crisis is an extremely time sensitive, it is not an issue that can be finalized over night. Rather, it requires the willingness of not only politicians, but the people of this country to come together and discuss the virtues of each potential solution. With open dialogue and continuous communication, we can foster the intellectual environment needed to come to a final conclusion--a decision that will combine elements of each approach in order to act in the best interest of all people, American by birth or not.