

Letters from our readers

THE SOCIAL CONTRACT Forum

SEND US YOUR COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS VIA:

■ MAIL — Write to Editor, THE SOCIAL CONTRACT, 316½ East Mitchell Street, Suite 4, Petoskey, MI 49770.

■ EMAIL — Send electronic mail to soccon@freeway.net.

■ FAX — Fax to (616) 347-1185.

Immigrants and Social Security

Editor:

In the June 22nd issue of the *New York Times Magazine*, pro-natalist and immigration enthusiast Ben Wattenberg declared that immigrants will “save” Social Security. Since Mr. Wattenberg is a fellow at the Heritage Foundation, he should have consulted with experts on the subject in his own institution.

Bruce D. Schobel, a former actuary of the Social Security Reform Commission wrote in the fall 1992 issue of the Heritage Foundation publication, *Policy Review*, that there will be no money to draw down from this fund in the future, *not because there isn't enough money coming in*, but because the government “spent it on other programs.”

As recently as 1990, The Heritage Foundation endorsed a *cut* in the Social Security tax, as proposed in a bill sponsored by Senators Moynihan and Kasten. That cut would have exposed the problem that Mr. Wattenberg wants to hide by importing more impoverished Third World immigrants. The Moynihan-Kasten bill failed because the big spenders in Congress needed all of the yearly \$50 billion in Social Security taxes as a vehicle to mask multi-billions of accumulated debt and money squandered by Washington to pay for current expenses and new programs.

Without immigration, the lower birth rate of U.S.-born women, which Mr. Wattenberg incorrectly claims is the problem, could lead to a “real” Social Security Trust Fund arrangement. That would expose what Social Security taxes have actually been used for and force both Democrats and Republicans to take action on

overdue spending reforms. *It is a balanced budget we need, not a U.S. population of 400 million people.*

Under the present arrangement, in exchange for the short-term “cheap labor fix” for their business constituents, pro-immigration Republicans help Democrats hide irresponsible spending. Although most immigrants pay their social security taxes, only 15 percent of them are sufficiently skilled to earn more than subsistence level incomes.

A large group with low income and high fertility encourages a variety of government subsidies and politically unstoppable entitlement programs that increase the engorgement and power of the federal bureaucracies. Is that what Republicans want? And when they welcome high levels of poor, uneducated newcomers, they are also delivering millions of future voters to the Democrats, making immigration promotion an odd agenda for the Heritage Foundation, if not for Mr. Wattenberg.

DIANA HULL, PH.D.

Santa Barbara, California