

# A Timeout on Immigration

## *A Cost-Effective Jobs Program Obama Overlooked*

BY TOM TANCREDO

In his State of the Union speech, President Obama said, “Jobs must be our number one focus in 2010.” I agree with that statement, but unfortunately, Obama’s solution will just make things worse and he overlooked a real jobs program that will not cost taxpayers a penny.

Many Democratic strategists and talking heads are saying the party erred by putting health-care before the economy. But the real problem is not Obama’s priorities, but that his solution to every problem is big government.

Obama first took on jobs by wasting over a trillion dollars in his Stimulus package, and then he tried to deal with health-care by proposing another trillion-dollar boondoggle. The new Jobs Bill he outlined in the State of the Union

speech was more of the same: spending money we don’t have on public sector jobs in infrastructure, education, and energy.

Instead of putting future generations further into debt, we could immediately free up millions of jobs by tackling immigration reform — *true* immigration reform, not the imposter called amnesty.

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**Tom Tancredo** (R-CO) served in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1999 to 2009. He founded the House Immigration Reform Caucus in 1999 and ran as a candidate for the 2008 Republican presidential nomination. He is the honorary chairman of Youth for Western Civilization.

Barack Obama mentioned immigration only briefly at the end of his speech when he said, “We should continue the work of fixing our broken immigration system — to secure our borders and enforce our laws, and ensure that everyone who plays by the rules can contribute to our economy and enrich our nation.”

Like with the economy and health-care, Obama has identified a problem but then proposes a solution that makes the problem worse. While the statements in the speech seemed innocuous and vague, the White House’s website issued talking points that explained what the line meant:

The President is pleased Congress is taking steps forward on immigration reform that includes effective border security measures with a path for legalization for those who are willing to pay taxes and abide by the law.



Obama is referring to Rep. Luis Gutierrez’s (D-IL) bill that will gut enforcement, reduce border security, grant a blanket amnesty to illegal aliens, and massively increase legal immigration. This will cost Americans literally millions of jobs!

In a previous column, I discussed a number of real reforms we should make to fix our immigration system. The final step I advocated was a three-year moratorium on legal immigration. In light of the growing debate on job creation, I’d like to elaborate on what exactly a moratorium is and why we need to enact one immediately.

Every month our government lets in 75,000 permanent foreign workers via “green cards” and 50,000 temporary workers through numerous guest worker programs. That’s 1.5 million new foreign

workers each year. Then add all the illegal aliens flooding across our open borders. Every one of those new arrivals is competing with American citizens for jobs—and contrary to the propaganda of the open borders lobby, they are not taking only “jobs Americans won’t do.”

American economy and American citizens first. And with so many Americans out of work and millions of legal immigrants already in the workforce, we need a time-out on legal immigration as well as secure borders to halt illegal immigration. In addition to freeing up jobs for American workers,



Tom Tancredo addressed a filled-to-capacity audience at American University, February 24, 2009. Tancredo's critique of multiculturalism and what he calls the “cult of diversity” generated widespread student protests.

Last month, the Census Bureau issued data that showed that one out of six people in the American workforce is foreign born. That's the highest figure since the 1920s and over three times as high as it was in 1965, when our immigration system was overhauled by the then-junior Senator from Massachusetts, Edward Kennedy.

When our economy was growing, these figures were easy to ignore, but with 25-million Americans out of work, it is insane to continue these policies. Yet, few members of Congress in either party are willing to discuss reducing legal immigration to safeguard American jobs.

While I applaud immigrants who arrive legally, who want to assimilate and play by the rules, our immigration policy needs to put the interest of the

a moratorium will free up resources to help government immigration agencies deal with existing case backlogs and fraud investigations.

A time-out on immigration will also make it easier for the legal immigrants already here to assimilate. And unlike Obama's jobs program, a moratorium will not cost a penny and will create new private sector jobs for Americans and legal immigrants already here.

It is true that a moratorium on immigration will not solve our unemployment problem, but this is a classic case where the old axiom ought to be heeded: when you find yourself in a hole, the first thing to do is — stop digging. ■

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