

Automation Makes Immigration Obsolete

It's time to end an institution that no longer serves Americans

BY BRENDA WALKER

For much of America's history, a growing population was seen as a necessary policy for a country that was geographically expanding to be a continental nation. Now, however, the social and economic landscape has changed fundamentally because machines are performing many of the jobs that humans once did. As a result, America does not need to import immigrant labor.

But in the Washington corridors of power, our elected leaders have not noticed basic shifts in actual needs for labor, or at least they have not adjusted policy to the new technology.

The only political figure who has even mentioned the effect of automation on the workplace has been Senator Jeff Sessions (R-AL) in a 2015 *Washington Post* op-ed, "America needs to curb immigration flows":

This federal policy continues at a time when robotics and computerization are slashing demand for workers. One Oxford University professor estimates that as many as half of all jobs will be automated in 20 years. We don't have enough jobs for our lower-skilled workers now. What sense does it make to bring in millions more?

In addition, the effects of technological unemployment are not a stand-alone problem but are added to decades of government policies promoting economic globalization that have crushed the aspirations of ordinary Americans. The globalized economy has done terrible damage to this country in its twin manifestations: Outsourcing has removed entire industries to overseas sources of cheap labor, and excessive immigration has lowered wages for businesses that couldn't be shipped abroad.

Such a fundamental transformation to the work-

place suggests a severe reduction in immigration would be wise, but the Masters of the Universe in Washington seem unconscious of the worsening problem of technological unemployment. The most recent version of immigration "reform" (amnesty for lawbreakers plus increased legal influx) included a doubling of legal entrants.

The arguments one hears about joblessness are the same old positions: the left demands a higher minimum wage (which causes employers to switch more rapidly to automation) and the right argues that less government regulation will expand employment, which is certainly true, but doesn't touch the automation aspect. Meanwhile, more than 90 million Americans are not working, and labor participation is at a record low level, so it's reasonable to think the jobs universe has shrunk at least partially because of smart machines. And mass immigration continues with no Off switch.

SOCIAL COSTS

The globalized economy has been brutal for American workers and is a huge factor in the rise of Donald Trump because he says he will fix bad trade deals. The wealthy in this country treat America like a garage sale where the industrial infrastructure has been relocated to cheaper labor sources in Asia. Those factories supplied jobs that supported middle-class lives for millions of blue-collar citizens from Detroit to Baltimore, but post-American elites would rather make an extra nickel. Ferguson, the site of rioting in 2014, is a suburb of the St. Louis area where four Big Three auto factories were once located.

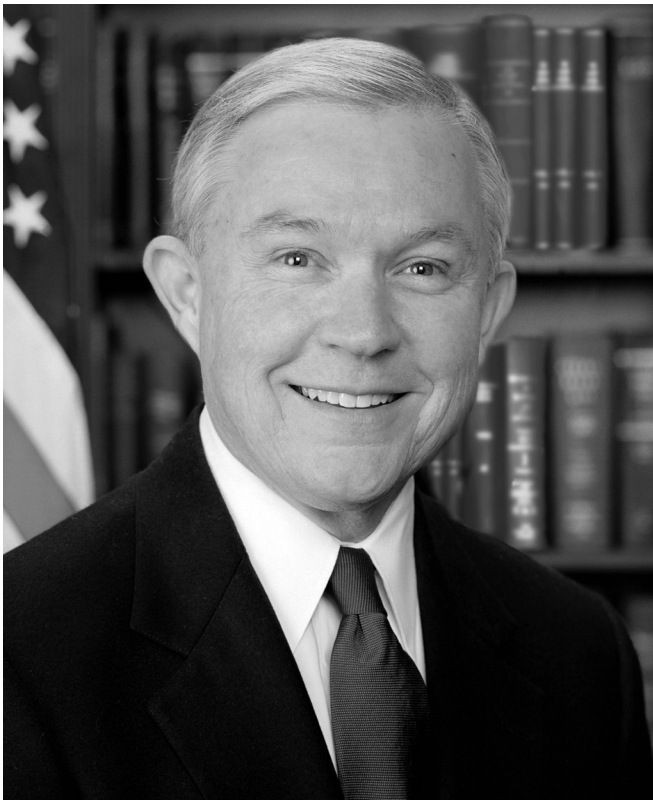
It's certainly true that liberal policies designed to create dependency have led to pathologies in the black community, but the disappearance of jobs came first. The government can't replace middle class jobs with food stamps and expect people to be happy.

Worse, young blacks are angry about the wrong thing: they are so unaware of labor history that they think their problem is racist cops when police are just trying to keep a semblance of peace. The root cause of the problems in poor post-industrial cities is the globalized economy with its outsourcing, excessive immigration, and bad trade deals that have destroyed whole industries — and therefore jobs.

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In addition, jobs are a social glue that goes beyond a regular paycheck, which is certainly central to normal life. Employment supplies regularity and structure, which are particularly good influences for young people. A sense of identity comes from work — we routinely inquire about someone new by asking, “What do you do?” The satisfaction that comes from a job well done is a basic human emotion.

Yet the bright lights in Washington apparently thought no social or economic problems would result when they enacted unfavorable trade agreements and policies that promoted outsourcing and extreme immigration. They are fortunate to have George Soros and Black Lives Matter around to mislead young blacks about their situation.



And now we are facing another blow against American workers of all races from the rapid implementation of automation to perform their jobs more cheaply.

Washington should at least wake up and end immigration. The frontier was declared closed in 1890 because the West was settled and homesteading was obsolete. Now immigration as a labor supplier is similarly outdated.

Plus, automation-caused job loss abroad may spark even more illegal immigration. As the machines become even cheaper, Third World manufacturers will remodel their plants just like America and Europe. In fact, some are beginning to automate now. The basic Baxter robot

costs around \$25,000, and Martin Ford reports in *Rise of the Robots* that “Delta hopes to offer a one-armed assembly robot for about \$10,000,” which would open up machine use for poor countries and small companies.

When jobs disappear and there is no work to be found at home in the developing world, many will head north to industrialized nations that offer welfare benefits even to illegal aliens. Certainly the promise of an easy life is what has attracted millions from Africa and the Middle East to travel to Europe for the free stuff there. So automation is likely to have secondary effects of an immigration nature.

Interestingly, a 2013 *Computerworld* article about that year’s Gartner tech forecast was titled: “As the digital revolution kills jobs, social unrest will rise,” Certainly,

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If no immigration curbs are enacted, the Census Bureau estimates that another 14 million immigrants will come to the United States between now and 2025. That means we will introduce a new population almost four times larger than that of Los Angeles in just 10 years time.

The percentage of the country that is foreign-born is on track to rapidly eclipse any previous historical peak and to continue rising. Imagine the pressure this will put on wages, as well as schools, hospitals, and many other community resources.

**—Sen. Jeff Sessions (R-AL),
The Washington Post, April 9, 2015**

a jobless future foreshadows worsened economic dislocation and trouble, as other automation experts have warned. Jerry Kaplan, author of *Humans Need Not Apply*, has cautioned, “We’re going to see much worse income inequality” — an issue that already inflames the left. But typically the same activists who refuse to mention Supply and Demand as important factors regarding wages (as they demand \$15 per hour) still want open borders to increase diversity.

A future Ferguson-style riot may take place with Spanish-speakers if the government continues to admit millions of unneeded unskilled immigrants. It would be prudent to get America off the cheap labor addiction now, because the future costs will be very high indeed. ■