Good and Bad Immigration Proposals

by Phyllis Schlafly

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After a genuinely grassroots Republican platform committee produced a principled document on a plethora of issues, including immigration, some people who were not part of the process are promoting pro-amnesty proposals. Writing this week in the *Wall Street Journal*, Jon Huntsman suggested that President Obama's executive order offering work permits to 1.6 million illegal immigrants doesn't go far enough.

The facts do not support the pie-in-the-sky views of those, such as Jon Huntsman, who say they want to increase immigration because it will boost our sagging economy. A new study by the Center for Immigration Studies reports that the economic progress made by all immigrants, legal, illegal, and their U.S.-born children under age 18, lags far behind native-born Americans and nearly half remain below the poverty line.

The 2010-2011 census data found that 43 percent of immigrants who have been in the United States at least 20 years are receiving welfare benefits. That figure is nearly twice as high as welfare given to native-born Americans.

Immigrant children account for one in five public school students, and one in four public school students speaks a language other than English at home. The expensive boondoogle called bilingual education keeps children speaking their native language year after year instead of using the successful early 20th-century immersion system of teaching the kids only in English, who then went home and taught English to their parents.

Immigrant households account for half of all overcrowded households. Only 2 percent of native Americans live in overcrowded households, compared to 13 percent of immigrant households.

Only 7 percent of adult native Americans have not finished high school, but that's true of 28 percent of adult immigrants. That is a major reason for their low economic status and prospects.

One of the great myths about immigrants is that they are doing jobs that Americans will not do. The truth is that native Americans are the majority of workers in all the jobs where immigrants are reputed to be especially needed, such as janitors, maids, construction laborers, butchers and meat processors.

Legal and illegal immigration over the last 10 years has caused 80 percent of our total population growth, but it is a big myth that this has increased our economic wealth. Even after immigrants have been in the United States for 20 years, they are still well behind native Americans in economic well-being.

Highly paid lobbyists are continually pressuring Congress to expand immigration for foreigners to fill science and engineering jobs, using a variety of visas, especially H-1Bs. Their propaganda often includes labeling these young foreigners "the best and the brightest."

The notion that foreigners are better and brighter than Americans is nonsense. And we have enough unemployed and underemployed engineers to fill vacancies, if there are any.

The big businesses like to employ foreigners because they can be paid less than Americans and given fewer benefits. Visa employees are subject to carrot-and-stick control: the offer of a path to citizenship, and the threat of deportation if they try to transfer to another company.

The question we should ask all candidates this year is, with jobs and unemployment being our Number One problem, why did we tolerate the decade from 2000 to 2010 becoming the highest decade of immigration to America in history? It's clear that the Obama administration has betrayed its own constituency of African-Americans, as well as citizens of all races who desperately need entry-level jobs.

Despite the low level of job creation in the so-called recovery, the Center for Immigration Studies calculates that more than half of net new jobs in the last five years have gone to recent immigrants. The share of immigrant men holding a job is now higher than the percentage of native-born men who are employed.

Our government used to obey a federal law that denied visas to potential immigrants who were unable to support themselves and might become a “public charge.” Somehow, that whole concept seems to have disappeared.

Just this month, some Republican Senators wrote to Homeland Security and the State Department asking why they don’t consider whether potential immigrants would use some of our nearly 80 federal welfare programs when they evaluate visa applications. We’re still waiting for an answer to the senators’ letter.