Layoffs Prove the Deceit of Amnesty

by Phyllis Schlafly

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The shocking announcement that Microsoft is cutting 18,000 jobs is still sinking in. Most of those employees do not have a realistic chance of obtaining as good a job as the one they are losing.

In the United States, the number of engineering jobs has been sharply declining. In 2002 the number of electrical engineering jobs in the United States was 385,000, but despite increased demand for technology, the job total dropped to only 300,000 last year.

And that number is not even for American workers, because thousands of these jobs are soaked up by the H-1B visa racket, whereby companies like Microsoft can import and pay foreign workers less than it costs to hire an American. High-tech companies have thousands of foreign employees working on H-1B visas, who are almost like indentured servants to the company because they lose their right to be in our country if they leave their job.

Microsoft's massive layoff makes downright ridiculous the op-ed recently published by Bill Gates and his billionaire pals, Warren Buffett and Sheldon Adelson. They and Facebook's Mark Zuckerberg, who financed the lobby group FWD.us, demand immediate amnesty disguised as immigration reform in order to bring in more cheap labor.

The real shortage is in good jobs, but these visas flood the labor market and hold wages down, when wages should be climbing for American workers. Fewer Americans have a job today than just six years ago, even though the potential workforce has expanded during that time. One reason is the overuse of foreign labor by large companies.

Microsoft is highly profitable, breaking its own records for revenue and profits as recently as last year, with an effective tax rate of less than 20 percent. One of its directors has agreed to pay $2 billion for a basketball team, and Bill Gates is often listed as the wealthiest man in the world.

In 2007, at a U.S. Senate committee hearing, Gates asked for permission to import "an infinite number" of foreign workers. "I don't think there should be any limit," he continued, but at any rate the cap should be "dramatically increased."

In 2008, before the Science and Technology Committee of the U.S. House, Gates claimed he had jobs "going begging" that no American could be found to do, so he had no choice but to import workers from India. When Representative Dana Rohrabacher (R-CA) suggested he might consider raising the pay for those jobs, Gates impatiently dismissed that option, saying, "No, it's not an issue of raising wages. These jobs are very, very high paying jobs."

Economics 101 teaches that wages are a function of supply and demand. When the supply of labor is increased, such as by expanding immigration, then wages can and do decrease, despite increased productivity.

Recently a reporter caught up with the laid-off semiconductor engineer whose wife publicly challenged President Obama in January 2012, "Why does the government continue to issue and extend H-1B visas when there are tons of Americans just like my husband with no job?" Darin Wedel eventually found a job in the health care industry, earning $40,000-a-year less than before.

President Obama is still deceiving the American public about the economy, bragging that 288,000 jobs were created last month. As Mort Zuckerman explained in the Wall Street Journal, "Most people will have the impression that the 288,000 jobs created last month were full-time. Not so." They were part-time jobs, which pay lower wages than the full-time jobs that have disappeared.

There are several reasons for this, such as employers' desire to avoid the Obamacare mandate to provide health insurance to anyone working 30 or more hours a week. Another is women's willingness to accept lower pay in exchange for a flexible schedule with fewer hours per day, per week, and per year.

But now many breadwinners, including men, have been forced to take these jobs. Of men aged 25 to 54, one in six does not work; fifty years ago, only one in 20 was not working.

When we first brought the transformation of the American economy into a part-time worker society in 2010, many scoffed and suggested that when the 'recovery' really gets

going the temp jobs will all be morphed into high-paying full-time jobs. Instead, Zuckerman writes, "more than 24 million Americans remain jobless, working part-time involuntarily or having left the workforce."

Zuckerman hits us with the depressing conclusion: "Faith in the American dream is eroding fast. The feeling is that the rules aren't fair and the system has been rigged in favor of business and against the average person."

One Senator who always speaks up for Americans, Jeff Sessions of Alabama, said, "I don't think you can make the argument that we have a labor shortage." The answer should be: close the border; absolutely no amnesty masquerading as "immigration reform."

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