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Think Strategically: "The Economics of Compassion: How Humane Immigration Policies Benefit America"

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The Piccirilli Brothers: An Artistical View of Immigration

Perhaps you may have never heard of The Piccirilli Brothers. However, the life and works of art of these six Italian brothers who set up a carving and sculpture shop in the 1890s at some point have touched your life.

The Piccirilli Brothers' works allowed them to shape the view of the city as no one has in its history; their work includes The Maine Monument at the southwest corner of Central Park in Columbus Circle, the Firemen's Memorial on Riverside Drive, the glass sculpture, "Youth Leading Industry", in Rockefeller Center, the Policemen's Memorial at One Police Plaza, the Alexander Hamilton Sculpture in the U.S. Customs House, the New York Stock Exchange Building, The Washington Square Arch in Greenwich Village, the New York Public Library, the Brooklyn Museum, the Bronx Zoo, and the Lincoln Memorial among many other spectacular works of art. The brothers, Ferruccio, Attilio, Furio, Masaniello, Orazio, and Getulio, were also master marble carvers and between commissions for large public sculptures, the brothers produced many smaller works, often for their artistic interests. Most of these are housed in museums or private collections, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

You could easily spend three or four days touring their life's work. We cannot imagine much of New York and many emblematic sites in Washington DC had we not allowed the Piccirilli brothers to emigrate from Italy to New York. Had we turned them down at Ellis Island in 1890, it would have been an enormous loss for the U.S.

Immigration by the Numbers

The United States, since its founding, has been made up of immigrants. From 1850 to 2022, when the most recent data is available, the foreign-born population share hit a high of 14.8% in 1900. From 1850 to 1920, immigrants comprised large percentages of the total U.S. population; for example, Britain had 1.3%, Ireland had 4.9%, Germany had 4.6%, and Italy had 0.6%, among others.

From 1920 to 1980, the share of immigrants fell, dropping to a low of 4.7% in 1980.

After 1980, the composition of Immigration has shifted materially, and by 2016, Mexico made up 3.7% of the total U.S. population, while other Latin American Countries represented 3.4% of the U.S. population. Between Mexico and Latin America, there are 23 million Spanish-speaking immigrants in the U.S., or 7% of the total U.S. population of 327.3 mm.

The foreign-born population growth rate remained essentially flat between late 2019 and 2021, with an increase of 337,000 people, or growth of less than 1 percent, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

As the pandemic abated, the Mexican and Latin Americans were seeking job opportunities in the U.S. and chasing the American dream, experiencing a 26% increase in the Hispanic population, faster than the nation's 8% growth rate. As of 2022, Hispanics made up nearly one in five people in the U.S. 19%, up from 16% in 2010 and just 5% in 1970.

In total, there are north of 48 million legal immigrants in the U.S., or 14.6 % of the total U.S. Population, a number large enough to change the result of any U.S. election.

I believe neither the Republicans nor Democrats want to fix the immigration crisis engulfing our nation. We only have to look at the influx of immigrants into New York, Los Angeles, Miami, and Houston, among many others, with heart-wrenching photos of crowded accommodations, sleeping on sidewalks, or being bused from Texas or Florida to the so-called "Sanctuary Cities".

If we dig deeper into the 48 million immigrants in the country, 61% or 29.3 million were employed, translating to six out of 10 immigrants; the rest include wives, children, or grandparents. The fact that six in 10 immigrants work is an essential reminder that immigrants are human beings with families and loved ones, not just workers. While many work, others do not because they are too young or too old to work because they are caring for young children or due to a disability.

In our view, U.S. politicians do not fully understand the power of the immigrant vote in the U.S. There are 26.7 million immigrants in these five states alone, with the numbers changing constantly. The Top five include California with 10.5 million, Texas with 5.1 million, Florida with 4.6 million, New York with 4.4 million, and New Jersey with 2.1 million.

Past and Recent Contributions to the U.S. by Immigrants

Let's examine some pivotal immigrants of the turn of the 20th Century. From that period, we can name Andrew Carnegie (Britain) of U.S. Steel, who had a net worth of \$372 Billion, and E.I. Dupont (France) of Dupont \$14. Billion Bob Hope (Britain) comedian and actor \$150mm; Chef Ettore Boiardi (Italy) \$60mm, better known as Chef Boyardee, yes as in Beefaroni and others canned pasta, John Roebling (German) Builder/Designer of The Brooklyn Bridge and Albert Einstein (Germany) \$1 mm, notable for the Theory of Relativity and Nobel Laureate in Physics. These are just some immigrants who changed the nature of the U.S. states and the world.

However, looking closely at the immigrant contribution in the U.S., we find that more than 43 billionaires made their wealth as immigrants in the U.S. Collectively, the group has more than \$711 billion in wealth.

Below are some notable immigrants:

1. Elon Musk, South Africa, with a net worth of \$253.2 B, is CEO of Space X, Tesla, and X
2. Sergey Brin, Russia, with a net worth of \$110.8 B, is the Co-Founder of Google
3. Len Blavatnik, Ukraine, with a net worth of \$29.9 B, is the CEO of Access Industries
4. Thomas Peterffy, Hungary, with a net worth of \$27.3 B, is the CEO of Interactive Brokers
5. Orlando Bravo, Puerto Rico, with a net worth of \$8.7 B, is the CEO of Thoma Bravo

The United States would not be what it is today without the contribution of the immigrant population. Through decades of discriminatory policies and international humanitarian crises, it has been challenging and, at other times, easy to immigrate to the U.S.

The Last Word: Humane and Comprehensive Immigration Reform is Needed Urgently

Immigration policies have not worked in the U.S. for a long time, and it's time to prepare justly and adequately to treat all immigrants who want to chase the American Dream.

The President and Congress must analyze the trends of Immigration and its contribution to the U.S. before continuing to embark on the divisionist policies that are rocking the U.S.

Here are some critical steps and approaches to address immigration challenges in the United States:

1. **Comprehensive Immigration Reform** is a legislative approach that seeks to address various aspects of the immigration system holistically. It should include solutions for undocumented immigrants, border security, legal immigration pathways, and workforce needs.
2. **Path to Citizenship:** Providing citizenship for undocumented immigrants already living and working in the United States is a fundamental step.
3. **Legal Immigration Streamlining:** Simplifying and streamlining the legal immigration process can help reduce the incentive for undocumented Immigration.
4. **Border Security:** Enhance border security measures while respecting human rights and treating those seeking asylum or refuge compassionately.
5. **DACA and Dreamers:** Provide a permanent solution for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients and Dreamers brought to the U.S. as children.
6. **Workforce Needs:** Align immigration policy with workforce needs, addressing labor shortages in sectors like agriculture and healthcare.
7. **Family Reunification:** Strengthen policies to keep families together.
8. **Humanitarian Policies:** Ensure that asylum and refugee policies are compassionate and efficient.
9. **Public Awareness and Education:** Promote public awareness and education about Immigration to dispel myths and stereotypes, fostering a more inclusive society.
10. **Legislative Action:** Encourage lawmakers to work across party lines and find common ground to pass comprehensive immigration reform with mechanisms for oversight and accountability.

It's important to note that immigration reform is a politically and socially sensitive issue, and finding a solution that balances security, economic interests, and humanitarian concerns is challenging. It often requires bipartisan support and public dialogue to achieve meaningful change in the U.S. immigration system.

Most politicians will have trouble getting reelected without massive voting from 48 million legal immigrants. A good reminder is in the song "Yorktown (The World Turned Upside Down)" from the play Hamilton by Lin Manuel Miranda, which has a line that states, "**Immigrants, we get the job done**". This line celebrates the vital contributions of immigrants to the history and development of the United States. The musical, inspired by the life of Alexander Hamilton, not only explores our Founding Fathers but also recognizes the role of immigrants and their impact on the nation's growth and success. It's a powerful reminder of the value immigrants have brought to the United States throughout its history.

Immigration reform is not just a moral imperative; it's an economic necessity. We miss out on the incredible contributions of immigrants when we don't fix our broken system.

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