

The Fallacy of Open Immigration

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Nothing is more common than for well-intentioned people to believe that if everybody just does what is right (as they see it), nothing but good can possibly result.

Libertarians have always been skeptical about that assumption. They know, for example, that wars have always been fought for causes believed to be right. The vast fabric of the modern welfare state was created to ensure proper care for the poor and needy. Yet very terrible things have resulted from the impulse to assert the right through warfare and to create the right through social engineering. This, more than anything else, has caused thinking men and women to look for ways of limiting, rather than increasing, the power of the state and, with it, the bad effects of good intentions.

But libertarians themselves have not always succeeded in resisting the allure of good intentions, the assumption that there will be no unfortunate consequences of our good ideas. The best example I know is the attempt by some libertarians (not a majority, but a sizable and vocal minority) to ignore any bad effects that may result from open immigration – a policy that they favor on moral grounds, considering it an obvious expression of our faith in individual liberty. Many libertarians who speak and write about this issue scorn the view that immigration could be anything other than a stimulation to the economy and a vindication of universal human rights.

I deny that it is either one. I believe that under current circumstances the bad effects of open, or even large-scale, immigration vastly outnumber its good effects. Further, I dispute the proposition that anyone has a right to claim membership in a body politic simply by moving into the space it occupies.

I'm going to outline my reasons. But first I want to observe that there are certain debates in which practically nobody, on either side, can conceive of any sincere opposition to his or her own views. Immigration is one of those debates. Opponents of open borders are routinely amazed and angered to discover the existence of arguments against their view. Proponents of open borders react in the same way. Neither group shows any remarkable ability to focus on what the other group is saying. Both prefer to restate their own opinions and call their opponents names.

The name that supporters of open immigration most frequently call their opponents is “racist” – as if every country that has more restrictive immigration laws than the United States (and almost all of them do) were manifestly “racist” in its intentions. If you are a supporter of open immigration, I can't demand that you keep your temper and refrain from calling me a word like that. But I hope you do. Then maybe something like a real discussion can emerge.

Let's Talk Economics

Libertarian arguments for open borders fall into two groups: economic and moral. I'll consider the economic arguments first, despite the fact that they almost always function as supplements to the underlying moral arguments.

Few people want to keep foreign doctors, engineers, computer scientists, and financial magnates out of the United States. Most of the economic arguments for immigration are therefore defenses of immigration by poor and unskilled persons. Proponents of open borders insist that unskilled foreign workers contribute

vastly more to the American economy than they cost, resting their case on the idea that “immigrants work hard and create wealth.” Some also point out that a large supply of cheap labor makes the prices of certain other commodities cheaper, thereby making more money available for consumers to invest on other things, to the benefit of the whole economy. Others try to avoid that argument, for fear of alienating American workers who don’t want their own wages to decline. These proponents bring forth a third argument: “Immigrants do work that Americans refuse to do.”

Remember this argument the next time you watch your garbage being collected. Americans are perfectly willing to collect garbage. They are also perfectly willing to cook meals, prune flowers, or harvest vegetables – so long as someone is willing to pay them enough. If all immigration suddenly became legal, immigrants would enjoy the same wage scales as native-born workers. They would compete for the same jobs, join the same labor unions, and be subject to the same labor laws and the same rates of taxation as everybody else. In short, their wages would rise, and there would no longer be any work that “Americans won’t do.”

It is true, of course, that the existence of a large and growing supply of unskilled workers tends to reduce prices – especially the price of lawn mowing, Tyson’s chicken, and certain kinds of fruits and vegetables. But if you think that the more unskilled laborers we have, the larger and more dynamic the economy will be, you have a strange idea about the production of wealth. When I have my car washed, some of the work is done by unskilled labor, but as much as possible is done by machines. If more human squirters and swabbers were available, I’m sure that the price of their labor would go down, and at some point the machines would be completely replaced by muscles. The same might be said about, say, the sweeping of streets or the growing of crops. I don’t believe, however, that a low-wage, labor-intensive economy is preferable in any way to a machine economy, paying high wages to well-educated people. If you believe that, you belong in the pre-industrial age.

Recently the mayor of Los Angeles, trying to speak to America on behalf of all Mexican immigrants, shouted triumphantly to a rally of open-immigration supporters: “We [sic] cook your food! We [sic] clean your toilets!” People like the mayor are the last supporters of the labor theory of value. They think that wealth results automatically from toil. It doesn’t. And great increases in wealth never do. They result from the kind of work that is done by people who are highly skilled and, ordinarily, highly paid. Our immigration policy should target the entrepreneurs, the professionals, the wealth producers, and make it easy for them to come to America – supposing, as I do, that doctors and software engineers do something more for the economy than the guys behind the counter of the local 7-11.

Do we have to choose the kind of workers who should be invited in? Yes, we do. I will return to that theme. Before doing so, I want to examine another issue that proponents of open borders usually don’t want to think about: the net contributions of unskilled laborers to the actual American economy. Despite all the talk about the economic contributions of unskilled labor, few unskilled immigrants contribute anything equal to what they extract from the unwilling taxpayer.

I’m not saying this simply because illegal immigrants generally avoid paying income taxes. Imagine an unskilled laborer who has come here legally, just as proponents of open borders wish that all unskilled laborers could do. Let’s say he makes \$15,000 a year – an income that is above the minimum wage, an income that is quite good enough to draw millions of people here from almost anywhere in the world, provided we had open borders. And let’s say that his wife works too (part time, because of the kids) and makes \$10,000 a year. That \$25,000 is the value they contribute to the American economy. Out of it, they pay maybe \$1,200 in sales taxes, \$500 in the property taxes that are included in their rent, \$1,900 in Social Security payments, and zip in income taxes. (Whatever taxes are extracted from their checks, they get back in refunds. Actually, because of tax subsidies to poor people, they will probably get back a good deal more than they pay in, but to be extra-fair I won’t pause to calculate that.)

Of course, the Social Security contributions are not invested and will never earn enough to pay the total cost of the couple's retirement benefits; other taxpayers will have to do that. In this respect, the couple is already a serious economic loss. The scale of that loss will appear when they retire. Other losses are happening right now. Because of their low income, man and wife are eligible for innumerable welfare programs – from subsidized housing to medical assistance (if they don't have adequate private insurance, which they won't) to free legal aid to disaster aid if a storm comes through. Any physical disability may result in hundreds of thousands of dollars in bills to other taxpayers. Whenever the couple have a child, that's \$10,000 at the county hospital. Afterwards, it's probably \$5,000 a year for a government-financed preschool, then \$10,000 a year (the approximate national average) in government funds for K-12 education.

Let's not even think about the public bills for their children's college education. Or – to look at the other side of the coin – for the social problems of a population in which relatively few people qualify for a college education. Some of those problems were pointed out by Heather Mac Donald in an article in the Summer 2006 City Journal. She noted that in 2002 half the Hispanic children born in the United States were born out of wedlock. Further, "The illegitimacy rate in Mexico is 38 percent; in El Salvador, it is 72 percent." Immigration from these countries currently seems to select for "social choices" that are detrimental to society.

But to return. Suppose that our unskilled couple has three children. This family is putting \$25,000 into the economy, taking \$30,000 out of it, just for K-12 education (\$54,000, if they live in Los Angeles), and paying only about \$3,600 in taxes. Oh, but there are other things. Dwellers in the city of Los Angeles sop up about \$2,500 per year, per capita, in city and county expenditures for . . . this and that. Now the five-member family, if located in Los Angeles or some other large city, is putting \$25,000 into the economy and extracting \$42,500 (and more, much more, that I haven't tried to quantify). Net cost to other taxpayers, once the family's own tax contribution is figured in: \$38,900.

I haven't even mentioned the cost of new highways, airports, and rapid transit, or anything else constructed by state and federal governments to minister to America's burgeoning population. Shall I add the increased cost of car insurance resulting from an influx of people who are too poor to buy it for themselves? Or the increasing expenditures for security guards and other crime-protection devices in neighborhoods inundated by unskilled, unassimilated poor folk? Or the rising costs of homes in the places to which former residents of those neighborhoods flee? Or the increased costs of controlling the formerly obscure diseases now coursing across our frontiers from every economically backward area of the world?

But the best part is yet to come. Poor people, and ethnically self-identified recent immigrants vote overwhelmingly for modern-liberal candidates, and modern-liberal candidates, once elected, take as the whole duty of life the effort to raise taxes and expand government programs and entitlements. They seek to bless their constituency with affirmative action programs, ethnic quotas, foreign-language maintenance programs, socialist and race-conscious school curricula, and every other modern-liberal institution that has any potential for transforming the United States into the Canadian or Mexican version of a progressive country.

The expectation of political support explains why modern-liberal politicians are such vigorous proponents of immigration, why they are, even now, trying to enlist illegal immigrants in the electoral process (see "The Election of 666," Reflections, August 2006 – a commentary that prompted a nice little flurry of hate mail). The same goes for labor unions. They used to be the biggest opponents of immigration. No more. Now most of them are endorsing every open-borders proposal that comes along. Why? Because they too have identified their natural constituency: unskilled, politically unsophisticated workers, just waiting to be organized in support of higher minimum wage laws, universal social welfare, and whatever other political demands the unions want to make.

Is it possible that politicians and labor leaders know a few things that libertarian theorists don't? Is it possible that they have correctly identified the current immigration from third-world countries as the ultimate weapon in the attack on limited government?

Nor is this mere politics, without any economic implications. Suppose, as frequently happens, that an election in the state of California results in a modest increase of one billion dollars in state expenditures, and that the election is won by a margin of 100,000 votes. Every voter within that margin has just cost the taxpayers one billion dollars, or \$10,000 per left-wing voter. One would think that libertarians would do everything they could to decrease that margin. Instead, many libertarians, even candidates of the Libertarian Party, join with labor unions, Mexican nationalists, the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic church, professional advocates of the welfare state, and Bushite conservatives, hustling for any vote they think they can get, in attempting to increase the number of voters who are likely to approve the largest possible extension of the welfare state.

This would be funny, if it were happening on some other planet.

But thus far, we've been considering only the people who cross America's borders with the honorable intention of working and supporting themselves, whether they actually manage to do so or not. This is the only group that open-border advocates want to notice. Yet there are other immigrants – lots of them. There are (1) the tens of millions of nonworking relatives of the already-immigrated, tens of millions of people whom a liberalized immigration policy would bring to this country under the aegis of "family unification"; (2) the criminal class that is already migrated here in enormous numbers; and (3) quite simply, terrorists.

No one can say how many people are included in the first group, though the number is certainly stupendous. As for the second group, testimony submitted in 2005 to a committee of the House of Representatives by Richard Stana, Director of Homeland Security, reveals that at the end of 2004 there were 49,000 criminal aliens in federal prisons (15% more than at the end of 2001). Stana – with every sign of unwillingness, employed as he is by the Bush administration – also revealed the existence of 215,000 other criminal aliens for whose incarceration the federal government reimbursed state and local governments during fiscal year 2002 ("data represent only a portion of the population"). Those, of course, are the few people who got caught. Let's make a conservative estimate of the costs of their imprisonment (not of their crimes), and put the bill at about \$13,000,000,000. That is one of the small, ancillary, foot-notable costs of uncontrolled immigration.

Terrorism can also be an economic problem. A single terrorist attack can easily cost this country tens or even hundreds of billions of dollars. Which do you think is likelier to reduce the risk of terrorist penetration of America – making it easier to get into the country, or harder?

We do not know how many intended terrorists have been turned back at our borders. We do know that every one of the 9/11 terrorists was an alien, and that several of them were illegal aliens. And evidence of bad intentions never ceases to appear. Last month an example appeared in the government's special green-card program for religious workers. The Boston Globe – not exactly an anti-immigrant venue – obtained a copy of Homeland Security's hitherto secret study of the program. It showed that one-third of visa applications were fraudulent, and "instances of fraud were particularly high among applicants from predominantly Muslim countries." Clearly, it is not in the interest of the people of the United States to permit unlimited immigration of clerics from Arabia or unemployed young men from Egypt, no matter how much money they bring with them. But under the principle of open immigration, in they come.

In my experience, proponents of open immigration rarely stay to listen to arguments like the ones I've just tried to outline. If they do, they ordinarily drop their own economic argument and turn to the moral argument about human rights. So . . .

Let's Talk Human Rights

In a way, it's silly to argue against the "right" to immigrate. Very few open-borders people actually believe in it. When questioned about who should be allowed to take up residence here, they almost always say, "Oh, everyone – everyone, that is, who will swear to support the Constitution," or "Everyone – everyone, that is, who is willing to work for a living," or even, with President Bush, "Everyone – everyone, that is, who . . . who is a . . . who is a decent person and . . . uh . . . wants, who wants to learn English." Thus they admit that the "right" to immigrate is no right at all.

My right to freedom of speech is in no way contingent on the language I speak, on my possession of a job, or on my willingness to give a political oath. A right is absolute. It is conditioned by nothing. It depends on no action of mine. It is endowed by my Creator. It is inalienable. But advocates of the "right" to immigrate see this "right" as far from absolute, unconditioned, or inalienable. They make it dependent on something else. They call it a right, but they don't believe that it is one, any more than I do.

If you say that any country in the world that wants to get rid of its convicts and insane asylum inmates can send them to the United States, as Cuba did in 1980, and the United States is morally obliged to take them in, because they have a right to be here, then I will admit that you are talking about people's right to immigrate.

If you say that you welcome the idea of a hundred thousand Wahhabi missionaries being allowed to land in America, with no attempt to check or approve them in any way, and with no regard to their political affiliations or intentions, then I will admit that you are talking about people's right to immigrate.

If you say that any nutball political or religious group has the right to import its adherents, by the tens or hundreds of thousands, with the intention of supporting them on public welfare until such time as they are ready to bomb Wal-Marts all over Kansas and Missouri, then I will admit that you believe in people's right to immigrate.

But if you say that you welcome the idea of ten million more unskilled laborers arriving from Mexico, because that is their right, except that they should not be permitted to live here unless they get a job, learn English, and swear to support the Constitution, then you're not talking about a right at all. You're just talking about something that you want to happen.

So much, I might conclude, for the issue of rights. Even the proponents of immigration "rights" don't really take them seriously. But why do people think they do? That's a more interesting question. In my view, it's because of an understandable confusion between the right to immigrate and the right to emigrate.

How many times have you heard somebody bewail the perfectly practical idea of building a fence or "wall" along our frontiers? "It's just like the Berlin Wall!" they cry. Now, before you say, "That's the silliest analogy I've ever heard – the Berlin Wall was meant to keep people in their own country, not out of somebody else's!", you should grant the fact that immigration and emigration are, from a purely factual or photographic point of view, the same thing. Every act of immigration is necessarily an act of emigration. If you took a picture of Osama bin Laden leaving Quebec, it would be the same picture as one of Osama bin Laden entering New Hampshire.

But the philosophical as well as the practical difference is immense. Jason quarrels with Joanna and walks out of their house. Jason has a perfect right to leave. But he does not have a right to leave for my house, despite the fact that his leaving her and his coming to me are, to all appearances, the same act. Someone's right to leave East Germany did not entail that person's right to turn up in the United States, Bulgaria, Burundi, or even West Germany. It was simply the right to leave East Germany. If your house burns down, and I am next door to you, you do not have a right to come and live in my house. I may let you

live there. More likely, I will let you visit. This might be a good idea, but it's up to me. It's not your right.

Well . . . but . . . is a nation really like a house? Can the people living in a nation properly decide to keep other people out of it, as a householder might decide to keep strangers out of his bungalow? Yes it is, and yes they can.

A nation's laws and customs are the framework in which its people live their lives. Life involves enormous investment of time and effort. It requires a framework. It requires stability. It requires a certain amount of predictability. It requires the ability to say, Well, I will buy a home in Hillcrest – without worrying about the possibility that Hillcrest may soon be overwhelmed by immigrants from some Islamic country who decide to ban homosexuality, pork, the Episcopal Church, and slacks on women.

Human life also requires freedom as well as stability – and the more the better, so far as I'm concerned. A real nation is not a prison; but it isn't a tent, either. It isn't something that is constantly being changed and moved. To build a decent house, to make sure that it doesn't collapse like a tent or constrain like a prison, requires an even greater investment than the other projects of human life. It requires an investment in cooperation, self-restraint, commitment to constitutional order, long-continued belief in first principles. A house whose door is always open, a house where everybody has the right to enter, have a good meal, do a little work around the place, and by virtue of his residence, or mere visitation, start remodeling the structure, regardless of its original plan – that is no longer a house. At best, it's a squatters' camp, where anything may happen, as in the squatters' camps that illegal immigrants have erected all over the American Southwest, defying property owners to do anything about it.

To the degree that a nation is like a house, and requires the security of a house, its inhabitants must have the ability to decide whom they wish to invite inside, whom they wish to enjoy the many investments already made in it. If the house is designed to protect individual liberty, its maintenance requires the exclusion of people whose ill-advised decisions might endanger liberty's protective mechanisms.

No one has the right to move to a free country and destroy its freedom. But this is precisely what happens when people who are unused to the political culture of individual liberty, or who disapprove of it, swing the balance of national decisions.

Many libertarians imagine that all economic and political problems will be solved if only the proper economic and political framework is established: free enterprise, limited government, clear recognition of individual rights. But the question is, How can such a framework, such a "house," be preserved? It can't be preserved if people must continually be convinced, by the tens of millions, that liberty is a good idea, better than the welfare state or some structure of political repression and intolerance. It can be preserved only by a culture in which the vast majority of people assume that individual liberty and responsibility are the ultimate political good. Not every culture makes these assumptions.

There is no foreign army occupying Mexico, Canada, or Saudi Arabia. The political systems, the political errors, of these countries are the result of their own political cultures, just as America's political errors result from its own political culture. An essentially libertarian political system must be supported by essentially libertarian cultural assumptions, by a culture in which virtually no one sees a cartoon satirizing a religious figure and immediately concludes, "Somebody should be punished for this."

Yet that is the automatic assumption of many, perhaps most, of the people in this world. In most political cultures, practically no one assumes that there is any difference between "what is right" and "what ought to be enforced by law." In most of the remaining cultures, a majority of people assume that the welfare of individuals is the responsibility of the state. Both sets of assumptions are inimical to a free society; and while some immigrants from the cultures that harbor them come to America in order to escape from them, the majority are inspired by other reasons. The fact that they desire to possess the economic benefits of

America does not mean they appreciate the social conditions that allow those benefits to exist, or that they will work to maintain them.

Consider the following sequence of events: the employees of a state government demand a raise, and the government refuses, claiming it is out of money. How do the employees react? In one of this continent's many political cultures, they react by arming themselves with machetes and other weapons, occupying the center of the capital city, seizing government offices, blockading roads, burning buses, and doing everything they can to prevent their opponents from demonstrating against them, until such time as their demands are met. And the employees in question are . . . schoolteachers! Bizarre? Yes, but that's what happened this summer in Oaxaca, Mexico. I'm sorry to be crass, but do you want such teachers migrating to Los Angeles or Des Moines, where they can teach both Spanish and revolutionary tactics?

It would not be difficult for a few million representative citizens of, say, the Arab countries to take up residence in the United States and seriously disrupt or even destroy the American political economy. The cost of immigration is now the lowest in history. For just a few hundred dollars, you can get to the United States from any country in the world. If you already have an uncle or a cousin in the States – something that is very likely – you may find it easy to take up residence and get a job. If not, welfare assistance will not be hard to obtain; no one starves in America. And suppose that you are, indeed, one of the great majority of immigrants who want a job and work hard when they get it. What then? Does this mean that the political and social attitudes to which you have been accustomed will simply disappear? I don't think that they will. I think you will probably keep most of those attitudes. I think that the longer you stay in America, the more self-confidence you gain, and the more you and your children are exposed to modern multicultural propaganda, the more likely you will be to insist that America conform to your own cultural assumptions.

That happened to some degree during the heyday of immigration to America in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, which was also the heyday of political bossism in American cities – and of the importation of European socialist ideologies into American political life. And those developments were benign, compared to the impact of current immigration on today's liberal cultures. America might learn a lesson from the turmoil in Holland, where fewer than 10% of the population is Islamic but where maiming and murder are the weapons of choice of Islamic settlers convinced that a liberal society is their enemy, and that they have the right to exploit and destroy it.

Ideally, immigration to America would be restricted to people who understand and support the American constitutional system and the American idea of limited government. But such ideological monitoring is impossible. Most native-born Americans have only a slender hold on the concept of limited government (a good reason not to render the system even more fragile by increasing the numbers of people like them). They will never approve any useful test of ideological sympathies. An oath to support the Constitution is useless. Every president takes such an oath, and you see where that has led us.

The best we can do is to admit immigrants sparingly, not by the tens of millions; to judge their economic fitness by their skills and education, not by their mere presence, and to be especially restrictive about immigration from cultures that do not prepare people for life in a libertarian society. Individual refugees from regions dominated by Islamic fundamentalists should certainly be admitted, but it would be suicide to permit any large or indiscriminate migration. Meanwhile, immigration of professionals or other skilled workers from politically favorable countries should be freed from the ridiculous bureaucratic processes that currently torture and demean people who are trying to immigrate legally, while unskilled illegals continue flooding in.

Parodies of Ourselves?

I know that by this time, the patience of my friends on the other side of the immigration debate has long

been exhausted. Modern liberals are gnashing their teeth over my attempt to deny them their best hope of electoral victory, the support of millions of immigrant voters. Economists are shaking their heads over the suggestion that anything could possibly be bad about a cheap source of labor. Church people are outraged by the inhuman suggestion that Americans need not welcome every single person who wants to cross the border. Libertarian dogmatists are demanding to know why I should call myself a libertarian. And all these people are deploring the hypocrisy of suggesting that “a nation of immigrants” could possibly refuse to admit unlimited numbers of future immigrants.

Well, I'm sorry; I'm not being hypocritical. I'm not saying that I have a right to live in Mexico or France or Saudi Arabia, while denying the right of Mexicans, Frenchmen, or Saudi Arabians to migrate here. As for the “nation of immigrants” cliché: what are we to deduce from that? Every nation is a nation of immigrants. No nation sprang spontaneously out of the soil it currently occupies. The fact that your grandmother, or great-grandmother, or you yourself, originated in some foreign clime . . . what exactly is this supposed to establish – that there should be unlimited immigration for all time to come? When I moved into my present neighborhood, the population was scant and prices were low; that's why I moved in. Then the population increased, prices went up, and it became very difficult for people like me to do what I did in 1986. Is that a moral problem? Should I try to pass a law guaranteeing that people like me should always be able to move in here?

Let's talk sense. The real problem is the price that must be paid for the immigration policy I advocate. Part of the price is greater security at the borders, less fraud-friendly driver's licenses and Social Security cards, and (imagine!) an expectation that public officials will do what they are paid to do – enforce the law. But there is a much heavier price. It is the denial of entrance into the United States of people whose “crime” isn't any defect of individual character but simply their lack of job skills, or their origin in a culture that is inimical to liberty. This is a bad thing, as bad (for example) as the fate of the many young people who would fail to get a higher education if, as libertarians suggest, education were privatized. Ideas have consequences, not all of them good.

It doesn't please me to make that admission. Honesty compels it. Having made it, I turn to my open-borders friends, hoping that they will admit the unfavorable consequences of their own ideas. But if experience is any guide, the response they are dying to make is this: “Don't you understand? None of the problems you mention are problems of open immigration. They are all problems of the coercive state. If there were no minimum wage laws, no labor laws, no Social Security, no welfare programs, no affirmative action programs, no progressive income tax, no government schools, no government entitlements in general; if only people who possessed significant property were allowed to vote; if the populace were fully determined to support all constitutional guarantees of individual freedom; then there would be no problem with immigration. No amount of immigration could disrupt the constitutional order, and no one would come and stay in this country if he weren't contributing to it economically.”

That's what libertarian political candidates and spokesmen for libertarian think-tanks say when they're questioned about the amount of tax money that unskilled immigrants and their families take out of the economy because of the welfare state that is now in place: “Certainly, these government programs need to be reformed. But that has nothing to do with immigration.” They make the same kind of response when they're questioned about the issue of political culture: “Certainly, there are some problems with Mexico's (or Nigeria's, or Saudi Arabia's) political culture. But they're for Mexico (or Nigeria, or Saudi Arabia) to solve. That has nothing to do with immigration.”

When I hear that, I wonder whether these intelligent people understand how foolish they sound, or how much damage they do to the libertarian movement. Interviewers ordinarily laugh them off as irrelevant – not surprisingly, because their response has nothing to do with the political, economic, and cultural problems that are evident to almost everybody else. Does anyone believe that the vast array of

government interventions in society and the economy is about to vanish? Does anyone believe that Social Security is about to go away, that the public schools are about to become private, that property qualifications are about to be instituted for voting? Yet action is being demanded to open the gates of immigration now. And every day brings us still more new immigrants, illegal but permanent, who will vote to strengthen the very aspects of our political life that libertarians want to change.

Alexander Pope once parodied authors who had no sense of reality, authors who wrote things like:

Ye Gods! annihilate but Space and Time, And make two lovers happy.

The libertarian equivalent would be:

Ye Gods! annihilate but the facts of life, And make our dogmas triumph.

But mere dogmas won't triumph. And they won't help the cause of liberty. It's time to stop believing that they will.

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