

Polls and Political Elites

No poll taken in the last fifty-five years has found a majority of Americans in favor of more immigration. Most want less – much less – than the current level. Support is even stronger for better border security and measures to deter illegal immigration. With the economy and homeland security still major concerns, the logic of tighter immigration enforcement would seem to be self-evident.

Politicians can read poll results. Often, these same officials hear citizens complaining about immigration crises in town meetings and other candidate forums. So why the inaction?

The answer is money, of course. Money influences the nature of the constituencies that support mass immigration. The folks who control 90 percent of the jobs in this country make up far less than ten percent of the voting population, yet they have disproportionate influence over campaign contributions. And while any analogy to the Reformation or American Independence might be inexact, few revolutions succeed without some support from the propertied, land owning, and merchant classes. Without help from a sector of the elite – business owners, lawyers, finance capitalists – it will be difficult to change the status quo.

Who is least affected by mass and uncontrolled immigration? Wealthy individuals, business owners and their families. Who has the greatest stake in using immigration as a way to control labor costs? Who puts the most money into the political system? Large corporations and their stockholders.

Who pays most of the costs for cheap foreign labor? Hard-working American families. Who pays education taxes? Just educating illegal alien children costs taxpayers nearly \$52 billion a year. Who pays property taxes – taxes to support housing subsidies, low-income assistance programs, public education, emergency (uninsured) health care, Medicaid, school lunch programs, criminal justice costs? The list goes on and on!

Congress seeks to mitigate the public backlash against these oppressive burdens by federalizing the expenses whenever possible. Spreading out costs helps disguise them. Taxpayers in Michigan, for example, are forced to pay to provide health care to illegal aliens in Arizona. Without an itemized bill, taxpayers don't actually know how much mass immigration is costing them.

Some say that because of this political alignment, the system can never be fixed. I say that while there are challenges, they can be overcome. But only by educating an interested citizenry on the overall national impacts can durable change be brought about.

– Dan Stein, J.D., Executive Director, Federation for American Immigration Reform
See www.fairus.org for poll results.