

Taxes, Compassion and Welfare Costs

Face it. We are a compassionate people. Individually and collectively, we take pride in caring for the needy. When summoned to help anywhere in the world, we respond. Even in the highly personal decision to create a charitable budget, generosity prevails. We strive for understanding and thoughtfulness to maximize the benevolent effect of every dollar.

Compassion for the underprivileged finds expression in our welfare budget. The crossroads between immigration and welfare call for exceptional compassion and thoughtfulness.

According to testimony prepared by the Center for Immigration Studies (CIS) for the House Judiciary Committee, Subcommittee on Immigration, Citizenship, Refugees, Border Security, and International Law in September, 2010: "... the fiscal costs of immigration remain large. Census Bureau data indicate that one-third of those without health insurance in the United States are either immigrants (legal or illegal) or U.S.-born children (under 18) of immigrants. One-fourth of children living in poverty in the United States have immigrant fathers. In 2008, 53% of immigrant households with children used at least one major welfare program, primarily food assistance and Medicaid."

According to an earlier CIS study, illegal aliens, on behalf of their U.S. born children, receive a substantial share of our welfare budget. Immigrants living in the United States even after 20 years continued to use the welfare system at significantly higher rates than others.

The welfare budget helps some, but ignores others. It helps those here illegally. Meanwhile, it perversely turns a blind-eye to the needy in foreign lands. Every dollar given to an illegal immigrant in the U.S. is one less dollar available to help the law-abiding foreigner overseas, where exchange rates expand charitable prospects for the same dollar.

In a world having a net population gain (births minus deaths) of about 228,000 every day, we must learn to help the poor where they are. History has delivered us beyond the point of meaningfully responding to this massive need with relaxed borders.

Persons taking the initiative to cut and run are often the best candidates to agitate for a change back home. Our immigration welfare policies lure them away. We should instead encourage them to stand and fight for changes at home.

Learning to act with thoughtful charity, as we responsibly confront the limits of a finite planet, will become our all-defining challenge.

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