

Information Alert

HOW IMMIGRATION HARMS NATIVE BLACKS AND ADVANTAGES IMMIGRANTS

STATEMENT OF ISSUE

Despite the stance of many civil rights groups, immigration's impact on native Blacks and their communities is disproportionate, direct and devastating. The Harvest Institute strongly opposes any policies that increase immigration, open this nation's borders, legalize 11 million to 20 million existing illegal immigrants, increase the number of immigrant guest workers or ease newly arriving immigrants' access to jobs, health care, education and voting. The Harvest Institute's mission is to help Blacks become self-sufficient and competitive as a group in America.

THE HARVEST INSTITUTE

The Harvest Institute is a 10-year old national education, research, policy and advocacy organization whose programs and activities focus specifically on uplifting Black America. The Harvest Institute should not be confused with civil rights groups that have a broader mission. It is important to clarify several important points at the beginning of this *Information Alert*. The status and life circumstances of today's native Black Americans, the descendants of African slaves, are shaped by the specific laws, public policies and societal culture that excluded **Blacks** economically, politically and socially. Therefore, when the Harvest Institute uses the term Black, it is targeted just as specifically. "Black" is not equivalent to and, therefore, should not be included in such amorphous popular concepts as minorities, multicultural, diversity, people of color or the poor.

CONSTITUTIONAL FOUNDATION

Because Blacks were enslaved by laws, Congress had to pass new corrective laws and Constitutional Amendments to change government policies that were legal under slavery but illegal after emancipation. Congress mandated Due Process and Equal Protection in the 13th and 14th Constitutional Amendments, and the 1866 Civil Rights Law mandated, "All levels of government to use all necessary means to lift all the badges and incidents of slavery off the shoulders of Black people." None of the mandated corrective actions have ever occurred. Nor did the civil rights laws and social integration of the 1960s lift the "badges and incidences of slavery" from the native Black Americans. Instead the federal government enacted policies which allowed an unending flow of immigrants to enter and compete with Blacks for space, rights, access to jobs, education, healthcare and business opportunities. The Harvest Institute

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cannot support current immigration policies, nor any increase in alien benefits until the Constitutionally mandated justice to native Blacks is fully accomplished.

Ways Immigration Injures Native Blacks

Population Wars for Resources:

The civil rights laws and social integration of the 1960s did not lift the “badges and incidents of slavery” and native Blacks are now being pushed into a permanent underclass by an ever increasing influx of immigrants. More than 40 million immigrants, legal and illegal, entered the country between 1970 and 1990. This unprecedented flood of humanity into the country has stressed our physical, educational, health, social and political infrastructure. Accommodating language differences alone cost billions of dollars to schools and other public agencies. The Center for Immigration Studies states that immigrant-headed households currently consume more in public services than they pay in taxes and estimates that the fiscal burden ranges from \$11 billion to \$20 billion above the net gain from having immigrants in the work force. In a 1995 article in the *Journal of Economics Perspectives* titled, “The Economic Benefits from Immigration,” George Borjas, a Harvard economist that specializes in immigration, said that the, “...increase in Gross Domestic Product generated by immigrants is consumed by them.” In 1997 the National Research Council reported that the small economic benefits generated by arriving immigrants accrue to the nation’s corporate elite. This unfair competition for resources, public and private, devastates native Black Americans.

We live in a majority-wins-and-rules and minority-loses-and-suffers society. Our immigration policies have made native Black Americans this nation’s only planned, permanent, involuntary minority loser. Native Black Americans have never been allowed to compete in the population war beginning as far back as 1790 when Congress enacted the first naturalization law that placed a zero quota on Black immigrants. Hispanics, who are non-Anglo Saxon Whites speaking Spanish, are the best example of a group that has been awarded immigration advantages that elevate them over native Blacks in the population war.

The National Hispanic Party publicly declared a population war on Black Americans in the early 1970s at a mid-west meeting, and crafted plans to numerically surpass and supplant native Black Americans by the year 2000. The 2000 Census indicates success and Blacks have been reduced from second-class to third-class citizens. In 1900, there were only 100,000 Hispanics and 11 million Black Americans. With identical birthrates, our immigration policies allowed Hispanics to increase their population through immigration by over 36,000 percent by the time of the 2000 Census. Immigration policies held Black population growth to a mere 300 percent over that same one hundred year time period. Black taxpayers’ dollars helped fund public resources used to meet the needs of immigrants, even though many of those very same resources were not available to native Black Americans.

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Immigrants Displace Native Black Americans:

Throughout this country's history there have been successive waves of immigrants to block native Blacks access to, or to push them off of, the upward ladder of success. Immigrants have two basic incentives that draw them to America: First, the public service benefits available to them because of the Black Civil Rights Movement and second, the liberalized immigration reform law of 1965. Immigrants flood into America looking for space, rights, economics and a priority in the nation's conscience. Immigrants displace Blacks in each area. Where is Equal Protection for Blacks?

SPACE. Although a growing number of immigrants locate in the suburbs, most immigrants find residential and commercial space in urban Black ghettos. Once they establish a toe-hold in ghettos, they then mark and close the space by using their language and culture as barriers. Segregated cultural space allows immigrants to concentrate their resources and establish political and economic niches. (*Immigration Reconsidered: History, Sociology, and Politics*, Virginia Yans-McLaughlin) Urban areas with high Black populations such as Detroit, Miami, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, New York, District of Columbia, have Korea towns, Mexican town, Japan towns, China towns, Little Hialeah, Little Havana, and Little Cambodia. Harlem in New York is no longer Black, nor are Overtown or Liberty City in Florida. As immigrants concentrate, Blacks are displaced whether in Compton, Watts, and Inglewood in California. Numerical displacement means diminished economic and political influence for native Blacks.

ECONOMICS. The economic impact of immigrants on native Black Americans is quantifiable. For every 10 percent increase in the number of immigrants, native Black income is reduced by three-tenths of one percent. In the 1950s, Blacks had an earning ratio of 56 cents to every \$1 earned by Whites. As a result of the Black Civil Rights Movement in 1970, the Black earnings ration was up to 66 cents compared to a White dollar. However, between 1970 and 1990, there was a 300 percent increase in the number of Asians, Hispanics and Arabs immigrants. The ratio of Black earnings to White dropped from 66 cents back to 57 cents, nearly identically to where it was at the beginning of the Black Civil Rights Movement. In short, the nine-point economic gains of the Black Civil Rights movement was wiped out by the 300 percent increase of immigrants that occurred between 1970 and 1990. (*Immigration Reader*, David Jacobson, 223)

EDUCATION. The U.S. Supreme Court's *Brown v. Board of Education* decision was to have corrected damage that was inflicted on Black students over 360 years of no schools and poor schools. But before any major educational improvements could be made, the immigration reforms of 1965 brought in a massive influx of immigrant "minority children" who began to compete with native Black children for resources. The country's mandated legal obligation was

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to “lift the burdens and incidences of slavery from the shoulders of Blacks.” There are no Constitutional mandates to give newly arriving immigrant children, legal and illegal, educational advantages *over* native Blacks. Prevailing policies and laws, however, gave immigrants preferential treatment over Blacks. Here are some examples.

- In the early 1970s the Great Society education programs for inner-city Black children were converted into bi-lingual education programs for immigrants.
- In the Fall of the 2000 presidential election campaign, Congress approved and Vice President Albert Gore delivered, one billion dollars to Hispanic children in the Los Angeles, California schools, but not one single penny for Black children in the same system.
- Local school systems nationwide spend \$3,000 more per year to educate an immigrant child than it does a native Black child. The average cost of educating a native child is \$6,000, therefore \$9,000 for an immigrant child. If only 50% of the 9 million illegal immigrants are educated in the school systems, they would impose a staggering financial burden of **\$35 billion**, primarily on underfunded urban school systems.
- In most mixed school districts, Hispanics have taken over the bulk of administrative positions.

It is a sad irony when native Black taxpayers, whose children have suffered generations of educational deprivation and abuse, pick up the tab for education programs specially designed for children from foreign countries.

EMPLOYMENT. Whether the jobs categories are unskilled or highly specialized, this nation has a long history of displacing Blacks to make employment opportunities for immigrants. According to a United States Department of Commerce survey that was conducted in 1865, over 100,000 of the nation’s 120,000 skilled craftsmen and artisans were Black Americans just released from slavery. Similarly, at that time between 55 and 65 percent of all Southern farmers were Black former slaves. But, instead of main streaming the nearly five million newly freed slaves, President Abraham Lincoln’s administration enacted this nation’s first immigration reform. That action brought in 26 million European immigrants by 1900 to replace native Blacks in jobs and businesses. Ethnic unions initiated “White Only” polices that allowed the arriving European immigrants to displace skilled Blacks by eliminating them from competition. For another century, the unfortunate native Blacks were employed only in the lowest paid, dirtiest and hardest jobs with few if any benefits.

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That historical pattern continues today. In highly skilled job categories such as researchers, engineers, scientists and computer specialists, Blacks are displaced by immigrants with the assistance of laws. Reforms in visa laws enacted in 1986 were designed specifically to attract technically skilled immigrants. Today, nearly 50 percent of the workers who fill highly technical jobs are immigrants recruited and hired under the H-1B visa program. These workers displace highly trained native Blacks and allow U.S. corporations to fill their technical needs without training, or working with schools to train, native Black workers. Corporations also release native workers and transfer thousands of jobs to other countries, further reducing the number of jobs available to native Black Americans. Approximately 55% of the staff members at historically Black Colleges are immigrants and non-Blacks.

The Center for Immigration Studies published a report in 2001 entitled *Immigration from Mexico*, that documents that immigrants, in the area of low-skilled jobs and especially from Mexico, displace native Blacks from employment such as landscaping, construction, hotel and airport service employment, nail care, auto repair, janitorial services, groceries stores, sanitation workers, liquor stores, restaurants, barbering and low level public service jobs. Immigrants also displace native Blacks in businesses and industries they once controlled such as funeral homes, medical practices, gas stations and restaurant cooks and chefs. Native Blacks did not find new industries and employment opportunities. Immigrants operate their businesses in Black communities, but they will not buy from Black businesses and they rarely hire Blacks as employees. (“Help Unwanted,” *The Wall Street Journal*, June 6, 1995)

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION. Affirmative action programs were originally designed to correct injustices to one *race* of people, Blacks, by another race of people, Whites; to eliminate the legacies of slavery and Jim Crow segregation. But today, affirmative action programs have been converted into preference programs for immigrants even though most categories of immigrants are White and have never been negatively impacted by racism or racial conditions that caused these programs to be developed. (“Immigration Keeping Blacks on Bottom Rung,” *New York Daily News*, September 11, 1995) This error can be traced to the Immigration and Reform Control Act of 1986, which effectively required employers to treat immigrants exactly like native born citizens. Since nearly 90% of all immigrants are classified as White on their immigration records and drivers’ licenses and 90% of all native born Americans are White, why aren’t immigrants treated like native Whites and excluded from affirmative action programs? Why are they categorized with Blacks *only* in this instance of affirmative action?

Putting apples and oranges into the same categories sets up a situation where immigrants of any race displace Blacks from the very programs designed to help Blacks. It is not possible to justify including Hispanics, Arabs, Asians, other immigrants or women (who are a majority), in affirmative action programs. The current affirmative action programs ignore the legal mandate

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that “government use all necessary means to lift the legacies and incidences of slavery off of the shoulders of Black people.”

The Harvest Institute’s Position

The Harvest Institute’s opposition to increasing immigration is based upon the Constitution and the disproportionate harm that it imposes on native Blacks. The 13th and 14th Constitutional Amendments and the Civil Rights Law of 1866 placed Blacks in a *protected class* and mandated Congress to lift the badges of slavery from the shoulders of the Black man. The Harvest Institute understands that each branch of government traditionally operates on a policy of benign neglect of Blacks. In some instances there may also be a misunderstanding of the effect immigration has on native Blacks. In other instances, there may be the mistaken assumption that Blacks will react as they have in the past and sit silently as their government institutes laws and policies that will create even more pain in Black America. The latter is an erroneous assumption and no longer accurate. The Harvest Institute is a strong voice that is not against any group, but is dedicated to helping Black America become self-sufficient and competitive within the country that their labor built. Increased immigration will not lead to that outcome, but the following policy recommendations will begin movement in the right direction.

- 1) Oppose reform that increases immigration and close the nation’s doors until policies are in place that redirect resources to native Blacks to correct the inequalities of slavery and Jim Crow semi-slavery;
- 2) Require all immigrants that seek American citizenship to demonstrate knowledge of Black history and the contributions native Blacks made to the development of this nation;
- 3) Establish community economic development banks, funded by a portion of immigration fees, to alleviate the direct negative impact of immigration on native Black communities;
- 4) Reform existing immigration laws to treat Haitian refugees equal to Cuban refugees; increase the number of immigrants of African descent until their numbers match the percentage of Asians, Arabs, and Hispanics who have migrated to the United States, legally and illegally over the last 40 years;
- 5) Prohibit immigrants from applying for affirmative action programs which were initially intended to address the native Black racial problem.

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CONCLUSION

The Harvest Institute offers these recommendations because native Blacks are losing faith in civil rights and social integration. Our government continues a pattern of bestowing the rights that should first go to native Blacks to immigrants from foreign countries. Native Blacks are ignored and patronized with symbolic and ceremonial actions by both political parties. The issue of immigration is roiling within Black communities and has the potential to soon become a divisive issue of historic proportions. A 1995 Roper report indicated that 92 percent of Black Americans are opposed to an open door immigration policy. And, until the 1960s, Black leaders acknowledged the harm to their group and opposed it. Opposition to open-door immigration should not be interpreted that Blacks are against any other group. What it does mean is that native Black people expect concentric circles of justice for the people who built this country and they expect to be in the center of the circle of benefits.

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