

IN PRAISE OF IMMIGRANT CONTRIBUTION TO AMERICAN SOCIETY

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 28, 2005

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and praise the immigrant contribution to the United States. To say that immigration is a driving force in the American economy is to make an understatement. According to the 2005 Economic Report of the President immigration is shown as being a key to the growth of the labor force and has cemented the traditional belief that immigrants provide a positive net fiscal benefit to the American economy. Current governmental policies toward immigration, however, don't reflect the Report's findings.

Facts now point to the fact that today, 23 percent of the population is either foreign-born or children of someone who is. According to the most recent census, over 34 million people living in the U.S. were born outside of the U.S. with most of those coming from Latin America, about 25 percent hailing from Asia, nearly 15 percent from Europe and 8 percent coming from elsewhere including primarily Africa. Another 30 million are "second generation" Americans with one or both parents having been born elsewhere.

Immigrants play a vital role in American society. They are found in diverse occupations ranging from construction work and cooks to computer programmers and medical doctors. Their impact on American society can be seen in everything from musical icons such as Jennifer Lopez to our affinity for exotic cuisine.

It is the contributions of this wide and varying group that give America its diversity. Immigrants are our next-door neighbors, friends and colleagues. They are hardworking and diligent members of our society, who live, work, and pay U.S. taxes. In New York State alone, undocumented workers pay more than \$1 billion in taxes a year.

Although it is true that we have unemployment among American citizens, we also have labor shortages, for example agricultural workers. Immigrants generally fill those jobs, which American citizens simply do not want to take.

America's continued economic growth requires a steady flow of immigration. It almost always has and will in the future, perhaps more than at any time in the past. Therefore, rather than placing up barriers we should embrace and celebrate the contributions of immigrants to our society.

I introduce in the RECORD an article from July 19, NYCariB reporting on the economic benefits of immigrant labor.

IMMIGRANTS AND MELTING POT ECONOMICS—
THE FLOW OF FOREIGNERS INTO U.S. BOOST
BUT DON'T IMPERIL THE NATION

(By Tony Best)

Call it a lesson in "the melting pot economics 101," facts and figures that underscore an important reality of American society: immigration is a key element in the rejuvenation and the prosperity of the country.

Just as important, it's an essential cog in the economic wheel.

The latest data published by the U.S. Census Bureau not only showed that the United States is in the throes of what could be best

described as a significant transformation of its demographic profile but that many of the claims the nativists are erroneous and that if their goals became nation's policy, they would be imperiling America's economic vitality.

"For those of us who believe that the melting pot is a vital and unique feature of American society, this finding that the new immigrants are integrating into our modern economy is highly re-assuring," stated Stephen Moore, a member of the Wall Street Journal's editorial board.

"Even more encouraging is the knowledge that a generous immigration policy can co-exist with high rates of economic growth and low unemployment," he added in an OpEd commentary in the major business daily paper." The nativists have gotten this story wrong for at least the past 20 years; perhaps it would be wise to stop listening to them."

We couldn't agree.

But what do the Census figures and other data show us that we may not have known before?

Here are some of the numbers that support the above contention:

Between 1980 and 2002, about 20 million immigrants entered the United States, most of them coming from the Caribbean, Asia and Central America.

The foreign-born now account for about 12 percent of the country's population, up from 6.2 per cent in 1980.

Housing and financial assets have grown four-fold in the past two decades, a time of great expansion of wealth and skyrocketing immigration.

As more and more people arrived, the unemployment rate declined between 1980-82. Joblessness among Blacks dropped by six per cent and Hispanics almost four per cent in the last 20 years.

The U.S. has been a leader in the industrialized world when it came to immigration, integrating twice the number of immigrants than other wealthy nations.

Median real family income rose about a fifth, going to \$52,000 today. People at the bottom of the economic ladder have seen their median income jump as well between 1980-2000.

Immigrants in the U.S. for less than three years have a jobless rate of just eight percent but that rate fall to 6.7 percent after living here for a decade and 6 percent after 20 years.

The foreign born who recently landed on U.S. shores have a median family income of slightly less than \$32,000 while those persons who arrived in the 1990's have incomes that surpass \$38,000. If you had arrived in the early 1980's then chances are the income is in the vicinity of \$38,395.

According to Dr. Richard Vedde, a labor economist at Ohio University, the states with the highest levels of immigration had the lowest levels of unemployment.

What then do we learn from the data?

The lessons are obvious.

While it is true that immigrants go up against American workers for their jobs in certain industries, such as driving taxis, working in textile mills and serving as field hands in the agricultural sector, "there is no evidence," said Moore, that "on a macro-level," that immigrants suppress wages because native born Americans have left too many of those jobs for better paying tasks any how.

The numbers also allay the fears of Blacks and Hispanics that immigrants take away their jobs. For as the foreign born population expanded, the nation's unemployment rate fell from 7.3 percent to 5.1 percent over 20 years. Black unemployment also slumped as the immigrant numbers expanded.

INTRODUCING A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE GOAL OF THE UNITED STATES ESTABLISHING A RESPONSIBLE ENERGY POLICY TOWARD THE GULF OF GUINEA REGION IN WESTERN AFRICA THAT ENCOURAGES LOCAL CONTENT DEVELOPMENT AND GREATER GOVERNMENTAL TRANSPARENCY

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 28, 2005

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce a resolution supporting the goal of the United States establishing a responsible energy policy toward the Gulf of Guinea region in Western Africa that encourages local content development and greater governmental transparency.

The United States buys approximately 15 percent of its oil from the Gulf of Guinea region in Western Africa. Research indicates that in 10 years the United States will import 25 percent of its oil from the Gulf of Guinea region. The Gulf of Guinea region comprises the countries of Nigeria, Cameroon, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Angola, Congo-Brazzaville, Sao Tome and Principe, and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

With record-breaking prices for oil and gasoline products, reliance on a narrow range of the world to supply most of our oil has proven to be short-sighted as well as costly. We must now consider a broader range of fueling sources. By working as an active partner with the Gulf of Guinea region in Western Africa, the U.S. can positively guide changes that help develop West Africa's oil economy while securing economic growth, finding additional oil resources, and honoring human needs.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this resolution. As Members of Congress, it is our moral responsibility to ensure that we establish a responsible energy policy toward the Gulf of Guinea region that is mutually beneficial and responsible. I look forward to working with my colleagues and moving this promising resolution forward.

RECOGNIZING MS. ROBBIE JACKMON

HON. HAROLD E. FORD, JR.

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 28, 2005

Mr. FORD. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize Ms. Robbie Jackmon, an individual whose continued commitment to public health has improved the lives of countless Tennesseans. Ms. Jackmon retires at the end of the year as the Executive Director of the Office of Minority Health for the Tennessee Department of Health.

Ms. Jackmon served communities within the state tirelessly for nearly 27 years. She has helped Tennesseans in every position she has held. As Director of Treatment Services for the Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Services, she proposed and implemented state policy pertaining to alcohol and drug treatment. As assistant commissioner for the Bureau of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Services, she directed