



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on September 5, 2014

Obama Invents “Immigration Rights” in Milwaukee Labor Speech

During an address to labor union leaders and supporters at Milwaukee’s Laborfest on September 1, President Obama added another category to the long list of special interests that demand their own rights — “immigration rights.”

Obama told the assembled labor faithful:

Cynicism is a bad choice. Hope is the better choice. Hope is what gives us courage. Hope is what gave soldiers courage to storm a beach. Hope is what gives young people the strength to march for women’s rights, and worker’s rights, and civil rights, and voting rights, and gay rights, and *immigration rights*. [Emphasis added.]



In a statement quoted by the *Daily Caller*, Mark Krikorian, director of the Center of Immigration Studies, said that Obama’s “immigration rights” phrase “implies that some people have the right to move here.”

“It is supposed to be Congress [that decides who can immigrate] but what the president seems to be saying is..., ‘If migrants themselves decide to immigrate, and if they are here long enough, we’ll let them stay.’ ”

In a commentary about the president’s Labor Day weekend statement, Rick Moran, blog editor for the *American Thinker*, approached Obama’s statement from a constitutional perspective, noting that “the left is very good at inventing rights that appear nowhere in the Constitution.”

The language of the Bill of Rights serves to prohibit the government from usurping rights that — in the language of the Ninth and 10th Amendments — presumes that the people retain rights that are not specifically listed in the Constitution. Moreover, the Constitution does not pretend to *grant* rights, only to *safeguard* them. The language of the Declaration of Independence, which may be regarded as a “mission statement” for the American Republic, makes it clear that God, not government, bestows rights and that government exists merely to secure these rights.

However, one can search in vain through both of these founding documents (including the Bill of Rights and other amendments) and never find even a vague reference to “immigration rights” among the rights to “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” Certain categories of individuals (e.g., former slaves, women, and those aged 18 and older) are singled out to not be derived of the same rights already enjoyed by other citizens, but aliens who wish to migrate to the United States are not among them.

As Moran states:



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These [invented] “positive rights” authorize the government to bestow goodies on the public, unlike “negative rights” which tell the government what it cannot do. Ergo, liberals invented the “right” to health insurance, the “right” to marry whoever you want to, and more. Positive rights are insidious in that they undermine the balance between liberty and responsibility. Moreover, positive rights chain the individual to the collective, rather than free the individual from state control as negative rights do.

Every sovereign nation on Earth has the right to control its borders and decide under which conditions non-nationals may cross its borders and establish residency. In the case of the United States, the law that regulates immigration is the Immigration and Nationality Act, or INA, passed in 1952. To say that there is a special category of “immigration rights” — apart from the rights our government guarantees to all citizens — is to break with all legal and constitutional precedent and to undermine our government’s responsibility to secure our borders.

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