



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on May 7, 2013

The Real Cost of Amnesty

The authors of the Heritage Foundation's latest report on the tremendous cost of amnesty to U.S. taxpayers do provide a disclaimer that their estimates are probably too low, but they don't go far enough. In their report, they only talk about economic costs of amnesty; they fail altogether to mention the continuing loss of national sovereignty that would take place in the process.



In an interview with Neil Cavuto on Monday, Heritage Foundation President Jim DeMint [said](#) that “any immigration reform should improve the lives, the incomes and the opportunities” for those who are lawfully already living in the country. They should not be forced to pay for the bailout costs of bringing “unlawful immigrants” up to speed as well. According to the foundation's report, “[The Fiscal Cost of Unlawful Immigrants and Amnesty to the U.S. Taxpayer](#),” the total cost to pay for [the bill proposed by the “Gang of Eight”](#) is estimated to exceed \$6 trillion over the next 25 years.

This contradicts [the following opening statement in that bill](#), called “The Border Security, Economic Opportunity and Immigration Modernization Act of 2013”:

The modernization of our legal immigration system will be a net benefit for America as we make historic reforms towards a more merit-based immigration system that will help us attract entrepreneurs, innovators, investors, skilled workers and people driven by the desire to build a better life for themselves and, in turn, create jobs for American workers.

That statement is utterly and completely false, based upon the analysis done by two Heritage scholars, Robert Rector and Jason Richwine. At present, the average American household receives more than \$31,000 in government benefits and services (including direct benefits such as Social Security and unemployment insurance, means-tested benefits such as tax credits and SNAP food stamps, public education, and general population services such as police and fire protection) but most of them don't pay that much in taxes. Only households with college-educated heads pay more in taxes than the benefits they receive. The authors call them “net tax contributors.” The rest are “net tax consumers.” And since the typical unlawful (they avoided the politically incorrect term “illegal” in their analysis) immigrant has only a 10th grade education or less, they will be tax consumers, even after they have reached full amnesty in 13 years under the bill. Note the authors:

In 2010, the average unlawful immigrant household received around \$24,721 in government benefits and services while paying some \$10,334 in taxes. This generated an average annual fiscal deficit (benefits received minus taxes paid) of around \$14,387 per household. This cost had to be borne by U.S. taxpayers.

At no point, according to the authors, would these households ever contribute in taxes enough to offset the costs of government benefits to be granted under the amnesty bill. Conclude the authors:

If amnesty is enacted, the average adult unlawful immigrant would receive \$592,000 more in government benefits over the course of his remaining lifetime than he would pay in taxes.



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Over a lifetime, the former unlawful immigrants together would receive \$9.4 trillion in government benefits and services and pay \$3.1 trillion in taxes.

They would generate a lifetime fiscal deficit (total benefits minus total taxes) of \$6.3 trillion.

The authors note that this is a minimum estimate since it “probably understates real future costs because it under counts the number of unlawful immigrants and [their] dependents who will actually receive amnesty and [also] underestimates significantly the future growth in welfare and medical benefits [for which they will become eligible].”

This bill, if it becomes law, will be [the eighth amnesty bill passed by Congress since 1986](#), the year President Reagan signed into law his [Immigration Control and Reform Act](#), and is likely to have as little success in resolving the issue of illegal immigration into the United States as the others. As Warren Mass noted in “[Permanent Amnesty, Temporary Border](#)” in *The New American* print magazine, Reagan’s law “was a failure.” After a six-month slowdown, illegal immigration returned to previous levels.

What is missing from the economic calculation performed by the Heritage authors is any mention of the political costs of continuing to invite illegals — unlawfully — into the country to partake of the country’s welfare state benefits. As Mass noted,

The policy of providing repeated amnesties without enforcing the border does not make any sense — unless the intent is to eventually eliminate the border as part of a broader agenda to establish a North American Union. The evidence demonstrates this is exactly what’s happening.

The [North American Union](#) reflects the continuing efforts of globalists such as [Zbigniew Brzezinski](#) to erect a regional government based on the model of the European Union. Said Brzezinski: “This regionalization is in keeping with the Tri-Lateral Plan which calls for a gradual convergence of East and West, ultimately leading toward the goal of one world government. National sovereignty is no longer a viable concept.”

Mass provides other quotes from globalists to make his point: The present Heritage Foundation report focuses only on the economic costs of making it easy for unlawful immigrants to become permanent residents. The real costs — the gradual and predictable loss of national sovereignty — cannot be measured.

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