



Business Immigration

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An Update

‘Protectionism, or Paranoia?’ The truth about foreign workers and their impact on the U.S. Economy.

- By Vaman B. Kidambi

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Recently, Bills were introduced in State Legislatures in Maryland, New Jersey and Connecticut aimed at preventing U.S. jobs from being outsourced to India and other Asian neighbors. The argument apparently was, “why should taxpayers in the state have to subsidize the elimination of their own jobs, through tax giveaways to companies that ship jobs overseas?”

Due to intense lobbying, these bills have been held up in committees. I am sure the sponsors of the bills knew it at the time. Backed by Tech unions, who take exception to call-centers and other low level technical support positions being shipped abroad, State lawmakers are supporting extreme views that clearly hurt legal immigration and legitimate attempts by U.S. corporations to become competitive against increasing competition from Asia and Europe. The Unions clearly lack a proper understanding of our immigration laws and ignore the fact that they were never in contention for these jobs in the first place. Entry-level positions have been eliminated by the pool of highly qualified, highly experienced workers who entered the workforce

as a result of the dot com bust. Multitasking is the order of the day. Highly qualified software engineers and systems analysts are wearing multiple job hats and providing multifarious services. Blaming foreign workers for a domestic debacle is not in our long term interest.

After all, the U.S. economy was buoyed by a much needed influx of immigrants in the 1990s. A Study by the Northeastern University reported that, “the nation’s entire male labor force would have grown only marginally over the past decade, and male labor shortages would likely have been widespread in many areas of the country, especially the Northeast and Pacific regions.”

Andrew Sum, the Northeastern University Professor who authored the study told the Boston Globe, “a larger number of immigrants may be going to California, but Massachusetts was more dependent on them. Without these new immigrants coming in, our labor force would’ve shrunk.” Here is a summary of the Study from the American Immigration Lawyers Association:

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Northeastern University Study: The study itself focused on the economic impact of the new immigrant population from 1990-2001. Included below are some of the major findings from the report:

- The Great American Job Machine was largely fueled by new immigrant labor, a finding that has received insufficient attention from most economic and labor market analysts.
- During the 1990s, the civilian labor force grew by only 11.5 percent. Had it not been for new immigration, the nation's labor force would have grown by only five percent over the past decade and would have seriously constrained both job growth and economic growth.
- From 1991-2000, the U.S. economy generated 23.5 million net new jobs, increased the number of employed residents by 17.5 million and lowered the aggregate unemployment rate from 6.8% to 4.0%. At the same time, the nation admitted roughly 8 million new immigrants who joined the labor force. According to the report, these immigrants played a crucial role in filling the new and old jobs.
- The ten states in which new foreign immigration contributed the highest percentage to the resident labor force growth from 1990-2001 include: New York, Rhode Island, Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Jersey, California, Illinois, Hawaii, Maryland, and Florida.
- From 1991-2000, new immigrants provided the entire labor force growth in the Middle Atlantic and New England states; 72% of the labor force growth in the Pacific states; 45% in the South Atlantic States; 21% in the Rocky Mountain States; and from 14% to 37% in the Central states.
- Across the nation, 34% of new foreign immigrants who arrived from 1990-2001 were employed as blue-collar workers. These professions include skilled blue-collar positions, assemblers, fabricators, operators, laborers, helpers and cleaners.
- Service industries, which includes busboys, domestic help, cooks, security guards, nurse assistants, and other essential worker positions accounted for 22% of the new foreign immigrants who arrived between 1990-2001.

Arguments that suggest that immigrants routinely take away jobs and that outsourcing is a bad idea are at best based on anti immigrant paranoia and at worst specious, and probably perpetrated by a conservative agenda that has always worked against the interests of immigrants.

BCIS Disconnects Phone Lines

-Courtesy AILA

The following information regarding the BCIS "800 number" customer service line, which is now the exclusive means of telephone contact with respect to non-premium processing cases filed at Service Centers, has been gleaned from several sources within the BCIS:

The 800 number feeds into two offices, and incoming calls may be routed to either. There are two tiers of people staffing the calls. Tier 1 responds from scripts and is staffed by contractors who are largely clerical type personnel. If the question cannot be handled at Tier 1, the call is forwarded to Tier 2.

Tier 2 handles more complex issues and officers have received training similar to present service center Information Officers. However, Tier 2 personnel may very well have no prior experience with service center processing or operations. If the Tier 2 operator is unable to resolve to the question, they refer the question to the appropriate Service Center and the Service Center has 14 to 30 days to respond in writing. If there is no response received within 30 days, a call should be made back to the Customer Service Center and an "exception broker" can call the Service Center for an answer.

The 800 Number will further delay the system of contacting the already impervious Service Centers. There is no telling how long this experiment will last!

Schedule Mock DOL/INS Audits

In a June 10, 2003 article in Business Week Online entitled, 'Skilled Workers - or Indentured Servants?' the problem of H-1B workers in the U.S. was given critical coverage. Increasingly, the Department of Labor is following up on employee complaints. However, some employee complaints are clearly motivated by anything but a legitimate grievance. Kidambi & Associates, P.C. audits Corporate DOL/INS documentation to ensure proper compliance. Please contact us today to schedule a mock audit of your books.