

Mr. Grover Norquist Responses to Senator Jeff Sessions Questions for the Record

4/22/13 Hearing: “The Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act, S.744”

Question One: If S. 744 were to become law, do you believe that the Department of Homeland Security would deport those who enter the country illegally or overstay their visas after the bill's enactment?

S.744 improves America's immigration system to make it easier to identify and find those who overstay visas or cross illegally into the United States. The law would require anyone illegally entering the US to be deported. S.744 is a significant improvement in the government's ability to enforce the law when compared with present law.

Question Two: If S. 744 were to become law, how many total new immigrants, including those currently here illegally who would be granted some form of legal status and those who would be admitted to the country under all categories of chain migration, would be added to the United States over a ten-year period following the date of enactment and over a fifteen-year period following the date of enactment?

Comparing the results with S.744 to present law:

There are an estimated 11 million people now living without papers in the United States. After passage of S. 744 this number would decline, as those who arrived recently would not be allowed to stay, those with criminal records would not be allowed to stay and those who did not maintain work and income above the poverty level would not be allowed to stay.

S. 744 would reduce the future inflow of immigrants who are entering solely because they are the siblings of U.S. citizens or the married sons and daughters of U.S. citizens because those categories, which you refer as the "chain migration" categories, are being eliminated in the proposal.

There would be more immigrants in the future who come because they have specialized skills and talents needed in the United States than under present law.

Question Three: Dynamic macroeconomic models of the U.S. economy assume an average wage rate that is applied over the entire population of workers. With respect to the analysis that you relied on for your testimony, please explain what wage rate was used, how much that wage rate changed over the course of the forecast period, and whether it was based on income earned only by legal workers or on income earned by both legal and illegal workers.

I cited economic analysis recently released by Douglas Holtz-Eakin. He was a witness before the committee and one assumes you have asked him for this information, as he would be the best source.

Question Four: Although your testimony concludes that a large-scale amnesty will result in budget savings from lower deficits, your testimony is silent with regard to inflation and interest rates, which often make significant differences in budget outcomes. Please provide the the interest rate and inflation (CPI or GDP deflator) results in the simulation that you relied upon in your testimony.

I cited an economic study by Douglas Holtz-Eakin He was also a witness before the committee the day before I testified. I assume you have asked him this question, as he would be most authoritative person.

Question Five: Experts on the current illegal population report that the average educational level adjusted for age is below that of the legal population. However, worker productivity is closely associated with educational attainment and productivity is causally connected to growth in the economy. Please explain whether the economic model or analysis you relied upon in your testimony suggests that the illegal population will gain the training and education needed to support your claims regarding economic growth.

The economic model I discussed before the committee was that of Douglas Holtz–Eakin. He testified before the committee on Friday and would be the best person to speak to his study and its assumptions/analyses.

Question Six (A): In your written testimony you state: “The majority of those undocumented immigrants currently here are low-skilled. Some argue that we should not be importing or legalizing this type of talent. But, in reality, the U.S economy demands an enormous number of low-skilled workers. . . We need immigrant labor to fill demand for low-skill jobs.” Please explain how you anticipate that many of the low-skilled workers who would be legalized under S. 744 would find employment in light of the current unemployment rate of 7.6 percent and the fact that 90 million Americans are outside of the labor force.

S.744 would reduce the total number of those now working in the United States without authorization. First, by deporting those who entered the United States more recently, second, by deporting who could not pass background checks and third by denying legal status to those who do no consistently work and earn above the poverty level.

And by bringing those now in the United States living outside the protections of the law and into the legal workforce, even those who believe Malthus was a fine economist would recognize that this concern would be reduced.

Question Six (B): Please list the sources that you used to reach your conclusion that the U.S. needs more labor to fill a low-skill job demand.

The history of the past 10, 20, 30 years, and the assumption that our economy will continue to grow at least at Obama/French levels, and one hopes soon at Reagan levels. And the fact that the children of the 1960s forgot to have as many children as their parents and grandparents.

Question Seven: (A and B). In your testimony you asserted that S. 744 “puts at least 13 years between legal status and access to public benefits for most undocumented immigrants, mitigating the negative fiscal impacts of our bloated entitlement programs.” Your testimony went on to say that immigrants come at the beginning of their working lives, which means they will have years to pay taxes and contribute to the economy before they receive any benefits. Eugene Steuerle and Caleb Quakenbush of the Urban Institute published a report in 2012 titled “Social Security and Medicare Taxes and Benefits over a Lifetime.” Their report provides data indicating that even among two-household couples where one earns a high wage (\$71,400) and the other a lower wage (\$44,600), the amount paid in total lifetime taxes is lower than the total lifetime benefits they receive as they get older.

- a. Please provide the data on which you rely that suggests illegal immigrants will pay enough taxes to mitigate any negative fiscal impacts of receiving entitlement benefits over the long-term.*
- b. Please explain how you reconcile your conclusions with those of the report by Steuerle and Quakenbush.*

The study by Steuerle and Quakenbush, and other studies, point out that Social Security and Medicare will, on average, pay out more in benefits than they seize from American citizens in “contributions.” Is an indictment of the political class that created—and failed to reform--unsustainable entitlement programs.

They make a good case for passing the Ryan Budget which would fix this problem. The House has acted on this and the Senate should follow their wise path.

Yes, the present structure of entitlement programs must be reformed. This is not a good argument against having children, adopting children, or allowing immigrants to join our nation. Reasoning backwards from dumb government policy would argue for more abortions and more fatal car accidents.

While we reform the entitlement programs, let us as a nation remember that in a free society people are a resource and that includes both babies and immigrants.

Question Seven (C): Please provide the data on which you rely to calculate the average wages that illegal immigrants will earn once they are authorized to work in the U.S.

In my testimony I pointed out that S. 744 would result in those now working in the United States without papers earning higher wages, paying more in taxes and being more productive. After the 1986 Reagan amnesty, wages of immigrants increased 15 percent just by gaining legal status. But commonsense informs us also. Imagine if your son or sister was told to go earn as much money as they could with a few limitations: no driver’s license, no ability to fly on an airplane, and the real fear that any change in jobs might end in deportation. Imposing those restrictions would dramatically decrease the ability of any American to earn a living. Removing them would increase wages, opportunity, growth and wealth creation.

Question Seven (D): Under S. 744, when is the earliest that illegal immigrants who become legalized would be eligible for federal benefits?

I share your concern about welfare fraud and having immigrants become reliant upon federal tax dollars for their ability to survive in American society, but the fact is if the federal government does not meet its border security goals, does not make the current voluntary e-verify system mandatory for all employers, and does not fully implement the entry exit system at our airports and seaports, none of these people will be able to get green cards, which in turn means none of them will qualify for federal public benefits. Moreover, there are also immigrant visa backlogs that have to be dealt with before any of these people can get a green card. If those aren't dealt with in 10 years, the current illegal population won't be able to apply for a green card. Thus, to answer your question as forthrightly as I possibly can, if our border security and enforcement issues are effectively dealt with and our immigrant visa backlogs are taken care of in 10 years, then the current undocumented population can apply for a green card, but even then they still have to spend a certain amount of years in LPR status before they can apply for these benefits.

Question Seven (E): Under S. 744, when is the earliest that illegal immigrants who become legalized would be eligible for state and local benefits?

S. 744 is a federal law. Every state and local government can decide how to spend the money it wrenches from the hands of its citizens. Some will spend it wisely and some will spend it poorly.

Question Seven (F): Under S. 744, when is the earliest that a household headed by an illegal immigrant who becomes legalized would become eligible for federal benefits?

See the answer to Question Seven (D).