

ImmiGREAT

Thanks in large-part to misinformation and the rhetoric that accompanies protectionist legislation passed with the support of Big Labor and other rent-seeking groups, immigration has become a divisive topic. As was seen between East and West Berlin decades ago and the United States and Mexico today, this sometimes results in the construction of physical barriers to prevent the free movement of individuals. Yet, fortunately there are some reasonable voices in this discussion, helping to point out how immigration restrictions only further entrench governments and negate individual rights, not to mention severely hampering the economy.

Why we support free and open immigration:

Immigration restrictions violate the natural rights of each individual. Restricting where a person can live or work based on the geographical location where they were born hearkens back to the days when governments imposed similar restrictions on another factor outside of an individual's control – their skin color. We should be concerned about the welfare of all persons, not just those who happen to be born within a certain arbitrary political boundary.

Immigration restrictions violate self-ownership. An individual has the right to reach an agreement with an employer, whether he happens to be born 50, 500, or 5,000 miles away. To allow the government to prevent such a contract violates each individual's rights. Because, if the government has the authority to say who can work for who, we are slaves.

Immigration, like free trade, improves the economy. Robust immigration helps to raise the standard of living. Any limit on the potential pool of mental and physical labor only diminishes the market's potential for wealth creation. Free and open immigration allows for the dynamism and entrepreneurship of the market to be more-fully realized as individuals are free to specialize in areas that they excel, found businesses, and innovate. And they provide a positive externality, creating jobs and goods and services. A rising tide raises all ships.

Allowing for immigration is a peaceful way to pressure tyrannical States to shape-up. Rights are not granted by the government. An individual born in North Korea, Brazil, the United States, Germany, and Nigeria all have the same rights. But, since governments usurp rights, those living under the most repressive regimes often move to less-restrictive areas, seeking a better life for themselves and their families. If the best and brightest from a particular country are emigrating elsewhere, even the most authoritarian of governments realize the loss of talent and are forced to become less-burdensome – something that helps individuals still living in those countries.

Immigrants internalize the ideas of freedom. They know firsthand the stifling effects of burdensome, corrupt governments. By uprooting their family and moving to a new area, they have demonstrated that they value individual liberty, personal responsibility, and markets. They have, quite literally, voted with their feet. They remind each of us of the importance of liberty, and of the importance of preserving that liberty

