

Did Madison Give Us a Logical Solution to Immigration?

In the days after Britain's vote to leave the EU, general consensus seems to pin the exit on the public's concern over [immigration policies](#).

But the British aren't the only ones concerned about immigration. According to a [new survey](#) released by the Public Religion Research Institute and the Brookings Institution, immigration is one of the leading issues in the U.S.'s 2016 presidential election.

As the chart below shows, 62 percent of Americans believe that the immigration system is broken. Only *six percent* of Americans believe that the immigration system is working just fine as it is.



For many Americans, the issue of immigration is a sensitive one. Many have concerns that loose immigration policies will harm the country. On the other hand, many also recognize that they themselves enjoy America's freedoms since their own ancestors were once immigrants. Is it hypocritical to deny the rights and privileges of American citizens to others that we were once given?

The answer to that question may lie in the words of one of America's founders.

In February of 1790, America's newly formed Congress was also wrestling with the issue of aliens settling in the United States and becoming citizens. James Madison [framed the dilemma](#) in the following way:

"When we are considering the advantages that may result from

an easy mode of naturalization, we ought also to consider the cautions necessary to guard against abuses. It is no doubt very desirable that we should hold out as many inducements as possible for the worthy part of mankind to come and settle amongst us, and throw their fortunes into a common lot with ours. But why is this desirable? Not merely to swell the catalogue of people. No, sir, it is to increase the wealth and strength of the community; and those who acquire the rights of citizenship, without adding to the strength or wealth of the community, are not the people we are in want of. ...

I should be exceedingly sorry, sir, that our rule of naturalization excluded a single person of good fame that really meant to incorporate himself into our society; on the other hand, I do not wish that any man should acquire the privilege, but such as would be a real addition to the wealth or strength of the United States."

Madison's argument in brief? Welcome newcomers to America with open arms, but only if they demonstrate a willingness to contribute and become supporting members of American society.

Do Madison's words seem like a logical, balanced solution to an issue which has become an emotionally charged landmine in today's society?

Image Credit: Mr. Nixter bit.ly/1eBd9Ks