

Who Is for Middle America?

The late Edward Abbey, an irascible and irreverent American environmentalist, [took aim](#) at the immigration ideologues in terms still relevant for our time: “The conservatives love their cheap labor; the liberals love their cheap cause.” In other words, if the Republican Party and the Democratic Party can silently agree on one thing, it is that immigration is good, and more is often better. But the [latest report](#) from the Federation for American Immigration Reform reveals just how costly inviting the world can be.

The FAIR report reveals that “our economy is hemorrhaging much-needed cash each year as a result of money sent to other countries” – that is, remittances – “primarily by foreign-born workers in the United States,” to the tune of \$150 billion. “The \$150 billion a year sent out of the country each year is money that does not circulate through our own economy, support local businesses, create new jobs, or generate revenues for local, state, and federal governments.”

But that massive figure, combined with the [\\$50.1 billion](#) in taxpayer dollars doled out as foreign aid by the U.S. government, is just the tip of the Third World iceberg. The line between charity and masochism has been long since crossed.

In my hometown of San Diego, California, [untold thousands](#) of illegal aliens live in public housing. San Diego is home to the nation’s [largest population of homeless veterans](#); and, while [homelessness in general](#) continues [to grow](#), the Golden State spends [\\$23 billion](#) in tax dollars on services consumed by illegal aliens annually. Meanwhile, across the country, hundreds of thousands of American citizens are forced to wait months or years for a room. The loss of tax revenue in remittances could be used to pay for the public services consumed by aliens in the United States, the total cost of

which FAIR estimates to be [\\$116 billion](#). Oklahoma taxes remittances at 1 percent – the only state to do so – generating a revenue of \$13 million. But this is chump change compared to what foreign countries are taking to the bank on the backs of Americans.

Remittances account for between 11 and 20 percent of the GDP of Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador – the countries sending caravans of their own to the United States. Indeed, radio advertisements in Central America [encourage locals](#) to flee to the United States illegally. Long before then, the [Mexican government](#) published pamphlets with instructions for locals on how to enter the U.S. illegally and live here without being detected.

For banana republics whose chief export is cheap labor, remittances mean never having to say you're sorry for their dysfunctional political, social, and economic systems. "Rather than remaining at home and invigorating local economies," FAIR notes, "these citizens put their expertise and labor to use in other countries, like the United States." But unsavory types, too, benefit from this scheme.

Human smugglers transporting people from Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras also do well for themselves, raking in between [\\$200 million to \\$2.3 billion](#) in 2017. The only people not cashing in, of course, are the American people.

Abbey's shot at "liberals and conservatives," of course, was not aimed at everyday Middle Americans, but at the ideologues of political parties, for whom immigration is merely a means to an end. The "American Dream" cannot come to immigrants at the expense of existing Americans and their dreams; immigration should benefit the American people first and foremost. And yet clearly not everyone agrees.

Fox News host Tucker Carlson took up the issue in his typically salient way in a recent [monologue](#). "The overwhelming

majority of Republicans want a secure border and less immigration. That's why they voted for Donald Trump," he said. "Two and a half years later, the border is more porous than ever. A tide of humanity is flooding in illegally. Republicans in Congress have done almost nothing to help. Why?"

The obvious culprit here might be the Democratic Party that has, to be sure, undermined every attempt to secure the border and enforce immigration laws. After all, Democrats have just introduced of the [Homeland Security Appropriations Act](#), that, if enacted, will cut border security funding, reduce detention capacity, and eliminate the procedure of detaining "family" units. Carlson, however, sets his sights on big capitalism and its Republican Party enablers who, in reality, have reached a consensus with the Democratic Party when it comes to immigration.

It was big business that provided the driving force behind [Senate Bill 1747](#), nicknamed the "Green Light Bill," that will require the New York Department of Motor Vehicles to issue drivers' licenses to illegal aliens. Polls repeatedly have shown that many in the Empire State oppose issuing licenses to illegal aliens, and now some clerks in upstate New York are [refusing](#) to do it, even though Gov. Andrew Cuomo has signed SB 1747 into law. The Business Council, a corporate special interest group, was among the bill's most powerful [supporters](#).

On the other side of the aisle and on the national level, about 140 Republicans co-sponsored [H.R. 1044](#), the "Fairness for High-Skilled Immigrants Act of 2019." H.R. 1044 is a green card giveaway for roughly 300,000 Indian contract workers; who will, of course, take those jobs from middle-class Americans. Though the bill is Democratic Party legislation and backed by Silicon Valley – not exactly a region known for smiling on Middle America – congressional Republicans don't seem too bothered about lining up to put their names on it.

Carlson specifically called out Charles and David Koch, the GOP's wealthiest powerbrokers. Amnesty, Carlson notes, is a top legislative priority for the Kochs, and a policy that they consistently pressure Republicans in Congress to enact – against the will of the majority of Republican voters. “America first? The Kochs find the very notion absurd, if not fascist,” says Carlson of the libertarian duo. But if congressional Republicans and Democrats have achieved a pro-immigration consensus, who, then, is for Middle America?

The economic hemorrhaging incurred by remittances, the immense cost of foreign aid, the burden of services consumed by non-citizens, and green card giveaways that hurt American workers, all these things help us put a number on the otherwise unquantifiable damage that is being done to our communities, towns, cities, and country by immigration. But these staggering figures are ultimately symptoms of a political environment in which regular Americans have lost control of their own country – this is the real cost of immigration. There is no better visual cue of this fact than the [tearing down](#) of the American flag by militants at an ICE detention facility, and the hoisting of the Mexican flag on American soil.

The reality is, as long as we place ourselves beneath the yoke of “cheap labor” and the “cheap cause” of ideologues, the immigration status quo will continue to hollow out what little already remains of our way of life.

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