

House Budget Committee Holds Hearing on Economic Benefits of Immigration

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Body

House Budget Committee Holds Hearing On Economic Benefits Of **Immigration**

June 26, 2019 10:00 A.M.

SPEAKERS:

REP. JOHN YARMUTH (D-KY.), CHAIRMAN

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REP. HAKEEM JEFFRIES (D-N.Y.)

REP. BRIAN HIGGINS (D-N.Y.)

REP. BRENDAN F. BOYLE (D-PA.)

REP. RO KHANNA (D-CALIF.)

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REP. LLOYD DOGGETT (D-TEXAS)

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REP. JOSEPH D. MORELLE (D-N.Y.)

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REP. ROBERT C. SCOTT (D-VA.)

REP. SHEILA JACKSON LEE (D-TEXAS)

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House Budget Committee Holds Hearing on Economic Benefits of Immigration

REP. PRAMILA JAYAPAL (D-WASH.)

REP. ILHAN OMAR (D-MINN.)

REP. ALBIO SIRES (D-N.J.)

REP. SCOTT PETERS (D-CALIF.)

REP. JIM COOPER (D-TENN.)

REP. STEVE WOMACK (R-ARK.), RANKING MEMBER

REP. ROB WOODALL (R-GA.)

REP. BILL JOHNSON (R-OHIO)

REP. JASON SMITH (R-MO.)

REP. BILL FLORES (R-TEXAS)

REP. GEORGE HOLDING (R-N.C.)

REP. CHRIS STEWART (R-UTAH)

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REP. CHIP ROY (R-TEXAS)

REP. DAN MEUSER (R-PA.)

REP. WILLIAM R. TIMMONS IV (R-S.C.)

REP. DANIEL CRENSHAW (R-TEXAS)

REP. KEVIN HERN (R-OKLA.)

REP. TIM BURCHETT (R-TENN.)

[*]YARMUTH: The committee will come to order. Good morning and welcome to the Budget Committee's Hearing on Building a More Dynamic Economy: The Benefits of Immigration.

June is immigrant heritage month, so it is a great time to recognize and celebrate the cultural and economic contributions immigrants make to our country.

I want to welcome our witnesses here with us, today. This morning, we will be hearing from Mr. Tom Jawetz, Vice President of Immigration Policy at the Center for American Progress. Glad to welcome Mr. Jawetz back to his old stomping ground. Before joining the Center for American Progress, Mr. Jawetz spent seven years working under Ms. Lofgren as the Chief Council for the Immigration Subcommittee, the House Judiciary Committee.

We also will be hearing from Mr. Abdirahman Kahin, one of Ms. Omar's constituents and the owner of Afro Deli in Minnesota.

We'll be hearing from Dr. Sari Kerr, Senior Research Scientist at Wellesley College and the Honorable Douglas Nicholls, the Mayor of Yuma, Arizona.

Welcome to all of you and thank you for being here, today. We appreciate you taking time out of your schedules to testify for the committee.

Now, we will have opening statements. I yield myself five minutes for my opening statement.

House Budget Committee Holds Hearing on Economic Benefits of Immigration

Every day that we wait to fix our broken immigration system, more families are separated, children face horrendous conditions in detention centers, businesses face uncertainty and we miss out on new economic opportunities.

I spent most of 2013 as part of a bipartisan group of eight House members meeting privately every day for seven months, working toward comprehensive immigration reform. And despite the current climate that makes it seem like there is no room for agreement on this issue, we were successful in forming a bold bipartisan package we were confident would have passed the House, had it been brought to the floor.

It was a true bipartisan compromise, one that would have kept families together, protected our borders and provided pathways to citizenship. And it was shelved because of politics.

By holding this hearing and pointing the spotlight on the economic benefits and opportunities of comprehensive immigration reform, it is my hope that the Budget Committee can restart the process, that we can establish some common ground and help set the stage for bipartisan compromise that my experience tells me Democrats and Republicans can find.

We all share a desire and a responsibility to improve our economy and our budget outlook and we have a great opportunity to do that through an immigration system that brings hard-working and creative people to our country. Without question, our economy needs it.

The Congressional Budget Office released its long-term budget outlook yesterday, and it confirms some of what we already know. Working-age Americans will account for a smaller portion of our total population.

The cost of stalwart programs like Medicare and Social Security are increasing as our elderly population grows and deficits continue to rise.

One way to improve our economic and strengthen our fiscal position is by passing reforms that recognize both the cultural and economic contributions of the people who seek to make a home here.

Welcoming more immigrants to the United States would boost GDP, increase business dynamism, enhance our ability to compete globally, shrink our deficits and improve our long-term fiscal outlook.

It is also the only realistic solution for addressing the slow growth of our labor force and alleviating some of our demographic challenges that put even greater pressure on federal budgets.

Immigrants, both documented and undocumented, have already helped extend the solvency of Social Security and Medicare, two of the biggest drivers of our long-term budget challenges.

Increasing immigration would continue to improve the financial outlook for these vital programs. And there's more.

America would not have its reputation as a nation of innovation and entrepreneurship without immigration. That's not just my opinion. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce and business leaders across the political spectrum would be the first to point out that first generation Americans create 25 percent of all new businesses in the United States, with the share rising to as much as 40 percent, in some states.

Almost half of the companies in the Fortune 500 and more than one in four small businesses in the U.S. were founded by immigrants. Many of these industry shaping entrepreneurs immigrated to the U.S. as children or as students.

So, it's clearly an economic priority to make sure our current young immigrants and dreamers can remain here as important contributors to our society. That also happens to be the right thing to do.

Aside from invigorating our economy, immigrants also strengthen our fiscal health. The CBO estimated that, had Congress enacted the bipartisan legislation that the Senate passed in 2013, we could have boosted real GDP by more than 5 percent and reduced the deficit by nearly \$900 billion by 2033.

House Budget Committee Holds Hearing on Economic Benefits of Immigration

Today, immigrants and their descendants already contribute billions of dollars in much-needed revenue, each year, putting far more into the system than they get back through social programs.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services found that refugees strengthen federal, state and local budgets over the last decade, bringing in \$63 billion more in revenue than public service is used, a finding the Trump administration tried to suppress.

Comprehensive immigration reform is not optional. It's necessary and it's urgent. By failing to reflect our true national needs, current policies hurt our economy and prevent us from addressing some of our biggest fiscal challenges.

And let's not lose sight of who wants us to enact reform legislation. Everyone from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce to labor unions, law enforcement, the faith community, the agriculture community and countless other organizations and interest groups agree that immigration reform is key to our nation's future.

Today, with compelling evidence of the economic benefits of reform, I hope we will be able to add more of our colleagues to the long list of supporters.

And before I recognize the Ranking Member, I have a couple of unanimous consent requests. I ask unanimous consent to submit full reports from the Bipartisan Policy Center entitled Culprit or Scapegoat, Immigrations Effect on Employment and Wages, Recent Immigration has Been Good for Native Born Employment, Don't Neglect the Benefits of Lesser Skilled Immigration and Worsening Labor Shortages Demonstrate Need for Immigration Reform.

I ask that all four of those be placed in the record. Without objection, so ordered.

I also ask unanimous consent to submit a statement for the record from the National Immigration Forum. With objection, so ordered.

And finally, I ask unanimous consent to submit two reports from the New American Economy on how diversity raises wages and the contributions of immigrants as entrepreneurs. Without objection, so ordered.

I now yield five minutes to the ranking member, Mr. Womack, for his opening statement.

WOMACK: I thank, I thank you Chairman. Thank you for your leadership on this Committee.

My colleagues across the aisle have called this hearing, today, to talk about the budgetary and economic impacts of immigration. I welcome the opportunity to explore bipartisan solutions that will improve our immigration policies and further strengthen our economy.

Unfortunately, we must first address the crisis at our southern border, a crisis that both sides acknowledge has to be managed.

For those who have questioned the seriousness of the situation, I want to quickly recap what's been happening.

Over 100,000 migrants are trying to illegally enter the country, each month, placing enormous pressure on customs and border protection agents and communities, along the border.

Last month, 144,000 migrants were apprehended by CBP agents, a 32 percent increase from the previous month.

To put these numbers in perspective, the number of apprehensions in April of '19 is 591 percent greater than April of '17, 591 percent.

At this rate, a total of over one million migrants are projected to have illegally crossed the border, this fiscal year. The systems and infrastructure we have in place are terribly insufficient to handle this level of migration and as Mayor Nicholls of Yuma, Arizona, will tell us, today, it's our local communities that are having to pay the price.

House Budget Committee Holds Hearing on Economic Benefits of Immigration

I, too, was a mayor, once upon a time and even though I was not in a border state, the effects of this phenomenon were felt even in my city.

Our majority has had several opportunities to advance bipartisan solutions that would provide relief to these communities and begin to address the crisis at the border. For nearly two months, they've refused to act.

I fear that last night's vote was an unfortunate loss of precious time. This is a situation where Congress clearly needs to come together and act swiftly. I'm sorry to say, we're falling short of the basic obligations of our jobs, here.

Another costly partisan proposal they've championed is H.R.-6, a bill that failed to address the immediate challenges facing communities like Yuma and is expected to cost at least \$30 billion in new mandatory spending, over the next 10 years, according to estimates from the Congressional Budget Office. Another \$30 billion of federal mandatory spending. That is spending that is set to auto pilot.

How do my friends on the other side of the aisle plan to pay for it? Well, they don't. It did not include a single offset in H.R. 6, as they waive their own pay as you go rule to pass it.

Further, I expect to hear, today, the false claim that immigration reform can improve the financial stability of the Social Security trust fund, projected to become insolvent by 2032. The problem with this notion, you are only looking at half the equation, those who would pay into the system.

When you consider the other half of the equation, those who would receive benefits, the math doesn't add up. In fact, the Social Security Administration's chief actuary testified in 2015, granting amnesty to five million illegal immigrants would only extend the solvency of the program by 90 days. That's it, hardly the Social Security savior some of our friends like to claim.

The truth is, I believe immigration reform, done right, can have a positive effect on the economy and on the federal budget. Immigration, after all, is what our great nation was built on.

I'm particularly interested in how we can improve our visa program to meet the demands of our growing labor market and create even more opportunity for hard-working families.

I know this is a priority for job creators in my district and across the country.

The same goes for USMCA, a modernized trade agreement with Mexico and Canada that cities on the border and across the country are counting on. As Mayor Nicholls explains in his written testimony, USMCA is critical for Yuma's economy and creating jobs for current and future visa holders.

In April, I spent an entire week back home talking with local workers, entrepreneurs and business leaders about the need to finalize this important pact which will create more than 100,000 jobs, alone, in my state.

If this Committee truly wants to build a more dynamic economy, we should focus on the benefits of the USMCA, which will strengthen trade with two of our largest trading partners and make American businesses more competitive around the world.

It is clear we have a lot of opportunity to strengthen our economy and the federal budget. But before we can deliver meaningful reforms, we must ensure our communities are safe and our borders are secure.

I look forward to discussing how we do that, today.

And with that, Mr. Chairman, I welcome the witness testimony and I yield back my time.

YARMUTH: I thank the ranking member for his opening statement. And once again, I want to welcome all four of our witnesses. Each of you will have five minutes for your opening statements.

And by the way, if any other member of the committee has an opening statement, they may submit it in writing for the record.

House Budget Committee Holds Hearing on Economic Benefits of Immigration

But each of you have five minutes for your testimony. And your written remarks have been entered into the formal record. And so, I will first recognize Mr. Jawetz for five minutes and you may begin when you're ready.

JAWETZ: Chairman Yarmuth, Ranking Member Womack and members of the Committee, thank you for inviting me to testify, this morning.

So, when I think of the contributions that immigrants of all backgrounds, skills and levels of educational attainment make to our country, I'm often reminded of my former boss and your colleague, Representative Zoe Lofgren, describes immigrants as people who have enough get up and go to get up and go.

While people often think about immigrants in traditional gateway places like New York, Chicago, San Francisco in recent years, recent decades, immigrants have found new opportunities for themselves and their families in new gateways like Atlanta, Charlotte, and Nashville, as well as in suburbs.

Immigrants are breathing new life into rural communities. Late last year, the Center for American Progress did a new study that found that immigrants ameliorated population decline in nearly four out of five rural places in this country and were entirely responsible for population growth in one out of five rural places.

Instead of hospitals closing, schools consolidating, businesses drying up, in these communities, immigrants are opening small businesses. They're providing essential healthcare services, rejuvenating downtown areas and both filling and creating jobs.

Immigrants are also contributing their food, music, culture and language. Immigrants also will help to ensure our continued shared prosperity in the years ahead. As baby boomers retire, immigrants will disproportionately work as their doctors, nurses and home health aides.

Immigrants and their children also will fill enormous holes in the workforce left behind, as they retire. Over the next ten years, without immigrants and their children, the country's working age population would plummet by seven million people.

These immigrant's payroll taxes will shore up the country's social safety net for years to come and help to ensure we honor the commitment we made to older Americans, now turning to us for support.

Refugees also are making important contributions, particularly, in places like Utica, New York, Clarkston, Georgia, and Fargo, North Dakota. Although the image of a refugee we are often presented with, and this is equally true of asylum-seekers now requesting protection at the Southwest border, is that of a person who comes with little more than the clothes on their back.

This fails to capture the drive and perseverance that it takes to leave everything you've known to find safety someplace else and start again.

Despite the obstacles, that drive is what helps to ensure that refugees thrive in America.

They have high labor force participation rates and become a net economic positive for the country within just eight years of arrival.

I've been speaking, so far, about all immigrants, both documented and undocumented. But I want to focus, now, on the ten-and-a-half million undocumented immigrants in the country, paying particular focus to the seven million who are in our workforce, today.

According to CBO and JCT, the comprehensive immigration reform bill that passed the Senate in 2013, which would have provided a path to citizenship for these individuals, would have decreased federal budget deficits by approximately \$1 trillion in increased federal budget, increase the nation's GDP by 5.4 percent, over 20 years.

Average wages for all workers would have increased by ten years. By contrast, in 2016, CAP work with two leading economists to find that removing undocumented workers from our workforce would, in the long run, reduce the

House Budget Committee Holds Hearing on Economic Benefits of Immigration

nation's GDP by 2.6 percent, and reduce cumulative GDP over ten years by \$4.7 trillion. Some industries would see workforce reductions up to 18 percent.

In my testimony, you'll see a table showing that the 23 states represented by members of this Committee would experience GDP losses, totaling more than \$350 billion, annually, for such a policy. Each state would experience key losses in key industries, including a 13 percent loss in GDP from North Carolina's construction industry and a 12 percent loss in GDP from Texas' leisure and hospitality industry.

With respect to dreamers and TPS and DED holders, earlier this month, the House did pass H.R. 6, the Dream and Promise Act, which would offer protection for Donaldo Posadas Caceres.

Mr. Posadas is a TPS holder and member of the International Union of Painters and Allied Trades who, for the past 20 years, has been working on some of the country's tallest bridges, helping to make necessary repairs and hanging larger-than-life American flags.

Attached to my testimony, is a table showing that nearly 240 people from your congressional districts would benefit from this bill. The individuals and their households pay billions, annually, in federal, state and local taxes and rental payments and home mortgages.

Everyone knows our immigration system is broken. Before joining CAP, I spent seven years working for the House Immigration Subcommittee and was involved in two major bipartisan efforts to try to come up with a solution for that system.

I think the chairman would agree that the negotiations that we were involved in 2013, were spirited. But members on both sides of the aisle genuinely thought they were coming together to solve a problem for this country.

What gives me hope that we will find our way back to those conversations in the years ahead, is that despite the deluge of negative attacks that we hear constantly on immigrants and refugees, more than three quarters of Americans now say immigration is a good thing for this country, the highest level in decades.

A greater share of the American public also believes that immigration levels to this country should increase or stay the same than at any time, since Gallup has polled that question in 55 years. Americans want real solutions and they want an immigration system that actually works and that works, as designed.

If we can do that, if we can establish a well-functioning, modernized, and humane immigration system that both lives up to our nation's past and works for our nations present and future, we can be true to the vision of this country as a nation of laws and a nation of immigrants and can begin to restore respect for the rule of law in that system.

Moreover, we can position this country to harness the full economic benefits that immigration holds.

Thank you so much and I look forward to your questions.

YARMUTH: Thank you for your testimony. I now recognize Mr. Kahin for five minutes.

KAHIN: (OFF-MIC)

Chairman Yarmuth, Ranking Member Womack and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak with you. My name is Abdirahman Kahin and I am the owner of Afro Deli and Grill, a fast-casual restaurant in Minnesota.

I'm here, today, to share my humble experience and my perspective on the positive impact immigrants have in every district in America.

Today, I share my personal story, but I wouldn't be here before you without the support of many others who have walked similar paths.

House Budget Committee Holds Hearing on Economic Benefits of Immigration

I **immigrated** to the United States in 1996 and I have been blessed to call the state of Minnesota my home since 1997. I came to the U.S. like many immigrants, to find safety and opportunity, as an asylum seeker, a young man from Somalia without much experience or skills.

In Minnesota, I found a rich immigrant community from all over the globe and an opportunity to create the life I always dreamed of. My first job was overnight parking attendant which was perfect because it allowed me to go to ESL classes in the evenings, before work.

After that, I was able to attend community college and learn the skills I needed to start my first business, a media production company. In the ten years after, I opened several other businesses before I found my passion in the hospitality industry.

My American dream evolved and now I wanted to open my own unique restaurant with a new concept, healthy with fresh ingredients, accessible African food and welcomes everyone.

I realized my dream in 2010 when I opened Afro Deli. In Afro Deli, I saw a vehicle to bridge cultures, build a successful business, and contribute back to my community in a meaningful way. We now have expanded to three locations and with a fourth location opening next month. We have over 60 employees and consultants.

Afro Deli's culture is rooted in the belief that good food has the power to bring people together. When we sit down to eat, we share a common connection to the world through the ingredients in our dishes.

Our staff is diverse as our customers. We often joke that Afro Deli is the only place in Minnesota where a Japanese American cooks African food.

We are so proud to offer good jobs in a supportive and inclusive workplace. The restaurant industry can be a challenging and I have been successful by focusing on supporting my hardworking staff.

This is why I championed paid sick leave, something Afro Deli has always offered to staff, to push other small business owners to support working families, improve working conditions and reduce turnover.

In addition, we have been able to provide other benefits, too, including vacation time and parental leave for new mothers and fathers.

We take in in pride in being diverse organization where Americans of different origins work together.

Afro Deli directly supports local initiatives and community organizations that do good. We offer donations of food, money, and time to a wide variety of good causes as part of our DNA. Whether it's spearheading an initiative like Dine Out for Somalia to raise money for the famine relief effort in 2017 or offering free meals to our furloughed neighbors as a small token of our appreciate for their public service.

Giving back is an important part of my company. Personally, I have been honored to serve on several local and national boards, and I encourage my staff to do so as well.

Our efforts to contribute to our local community don't end with nonprofit partners. Afro Deli is also a partner with local farmers and small business owners, where possible.

This means the majority of our meats, produce, or other ingredients are sourced locally from the locals, with most of them a minority or woman owned, as well.

Afro Deli is an integral part of the fabric of Minnesota. We are so proud to be part of--to be a product of Minnesota and we believe we represent the best our state has to offer.

My goal is to continue expanding and opening in every city across the state and across the country, becoming the first national African chain in the U.S. I want to grow so I can share our food, our culture, our values and create more jobs across the country.

House Budget Committee Holds Hearing on Economic Benefits of Immigration

I believe food has no borders and has the power to convene people in meaningful ways.

Thank you very much.

YARMUTH: Thank you for your testimony. I now recognize Dr. Kerr for five minutes.

KERR: Thank you, Chairman Yarmuth, Ranking Member Womack and all members of the Committee for inviting me to speak, today.

My name is Sari Kerr. I am a senior research scientist at Wellesley College. I am an economist and my research focuses on the labor market, immigration and entrepreneurship.

And today, I will tell you about my work related to immigrant entrepreneurs. As economists, we know a lot about immigration's impact in the labor market with many scholars having asked whether the increased labor supply displaces native workers or lowers wages. The answer is typically, no, or very little.

Instead, immigrants have been found to benefit their host economy economically and fiscally. However, we know rather little about immigrants as founders of new firms and creators of jobs as actors who actually increase the demand for labor and supply wages for local workers.

This distinction is rather important, as there are typically few concerns in the entrepreneurship arena that one startup would displace another.

For the last five years, I have studied the role of immigrant entrepreneurs in the U.S. and today, I would like to highlight some key findings from that research.

So first, immigrants start an increasingly large share of all new employer firms in the U.S. From 1995 to 2012, that share went from 16 percent to 25 percent. So just over one in four new employer firms have at least one owner who was born outside of the U.S., now. And that is twice the share of immigrants in the population of the United States.

The immigrant entrepreneurship has also boomed at the same time when the overall rate of business startups in America has been falling, making them even more important.

Second, the role of immigrant entrepreneurs is large in the high-tech sector but just as large in other sectors of the economy. The high-tech sector, 29 percent of new firms have at least one immigrant owner, whereas, in other industries, the share is 26 percent.

And we see that immigrant firms are, especially, concentrated in the service sector, accommodation and food, professional and technical services, healthcare and social services, as well as in retail trade.

Third, the U.S. states definitely differ greatly, in terms of the share of firms that are owned by immigrants but in all states, in all cases, immigrants start more firms on a per capita basis than natives do.

If we look at the least dependent states like Montana, the Dakotas, and Idaho, we notice that about 6 percent-or-less of the new firms are founded by immigrants, whereas, in California, New Jersey, New York, that share is more than 40 percent.

But wherever we look, immigrants are more likely to start companies than natives are. So, for example, in 2007, about 3 percent of Kentucky's population was born outside of the United States, but 9 percent of all new employer firms in Kentucky, in that year, had immigrant owners.

Fourth, the job creation share of immigrant entrepreneurs is also high. The average immigrant owned firm hires slightly fewer employees than the average native owned firm but, nevertheless, they account for about 23 percent of all jobs created in these young employer firms we looked at.

This is very important, as young firms tend to account for almost all of the net job growth in America.

House Budget Committee Holds Hearing on Economic Benefits of Immigration

And my final point is that the jobs that immigrant entrepreneurs create pay somewhat less and provide a little bit, somewhat fewer benefits, in terms of paid time off and retirement savings accounts and health insurance. And that comes largely from their concentration in those three key sectors that I mentioned.

If I look at high-tech sectors, then immigrant owned firms actually pay higher wages and offer relatively similar employee benefits than native owned firms.

And again, if I compare apples to apples where my apples are firms that are very similar, in terms of all their observable traits, then the jobs created by immigrant entrepreneurs look very similar, as those created by native owners of firms.

As a conclusion, I would like to say that the contribution of immigrant entrepreneurs to the U.S. economy is quite significant and often not fully recognized, even among the dedicated immigration and entrepreneurship scholars.

The U.S. landscape, in terms of firms and jobs, would look rather different without the immigrant entrepreneurs.

I am very happy to answer any questions you may have, today. And I thank you again for this opportunity to come and talk.

YARMUTH: Thank you, Dr. Kerr, for your testimony. I now recognize the honorable Mayor of Yuma, Arizona, Mr. Nicholls, for five minutes.

NICHOLLS: Thank you very much, Chairman Yarmuth and Ranking Member Womack and the committee members for this opportunity today, to speak to you about immigration and the impact on the Yuma community.

I am Doug Nicholls, the mayor of the city of Yuma, and just to give you a little background on Yuma, Yuma has 100,000 people, year-round.

Our location is where Arizona, California and Mexico meet. So, we're right on the southern border.

Our county has a GDP of \$5 billion with \$3.5 billion dollars associated with the agriculture industry. And that industry produces 50, I'm sorry, 90 percent of the leafy green vegetables you consume, the United States and Canada consumes, during the winter season.

That requires 50,000 agricultural workers to make that happen. They are comprised of 38 hundred H-2A visa holders, over 30,000 domestic workers, and 15,000 workers that cross the border, each day, to work in the United States and then return home each night to their homes in Mexico.

So, as you can see, the immigration system is vitally important to the Yuma agricultural industry. However, the guest worker program is cumbersome and truly doesn't meet the needs of the industry. Yuma lost 10,000 potential acres of fresh produce to Guanajuato, Mexico, and also lost \$2 billion worth of opportunity in building agricultural infrastructure to support that industry.

And that's because of the lack of consistent, sustainable skilled workforce, labor work sources.

On the medical front, Yuma is designated a health professional shortage area, so our hospital reaches out and utilizes the H1-B visa program,, the J-1 visa program, and the T-1 visa program, in order to fill up to five, or an average of five doctor slots, every year, for our community.

However, the most pressing situation that we have at this time is the release of migrant families in Yuma by the U.S. Border Patrol. When the crisis began in March, I brought together all the nonprofits to see how we could set up a temporary 200 bed shelter system, in order to address the humanitarian concerns of the migrant families being released and also address the public safety concerns with the community.

House Budget Committee Holds Hearing on Economic Benefits of Immigration

On April 16, the capacity of that shelter was exceeded, and I had to declare a local emergency. A few days later, we had over 300 people in the shelter and we had to close the door to new migrant families. That has happened three more times, since that first event.

To date, we have had 5,146 people come through that shelter system in three months. This is completely unsustainable.

In those three months, the NGOs have spent \$700,000, have provided 93,000 pounds of food and clothing and has contributed thousands of hours of volunteer time.

The hospital has seen 13 hundred migrant patients, since the beginning of the year at a cost of over \$800,000 and only one third of that cost is reimbursed by the government.

Our trade and port operations have been compromised. The reallocation of 37 temporary duty customs agents has reduced the San Luis port-of-entry from eight lanes to five lanes, which has increased border wait times an amazing 46 percent. That's 1.2 million trips through the port that no longer will impact our sales tax and tourism.

Border Patrol closed the checkpoints on the interstates to reallocate personnel at a time when our communities are experiencing a record level of Fentanyl and methamphetamine transportation through the communities.

With an unquantifiable impact, is the negative perception of the border communities in terms of investment and tourism. The Yuma County Chamber of Commerce reports that, since the beginning of the year, they've had a 50 percent reduction in relocation packet requests.

Our Greater Yuma Economic Development Corporation reports that two multimillion-dollar projects that were slated for Yuma were redirected to Mexico, due to the perception of port issues and timely movement of workers.

The status of immigration is a critical issue for Yuma and the humanitarian issues are real.

The community needs effective immigration policies for trade and commerce. However, the drain of resources and the strain on the community needs to stop.

Thank you for your time and your attention and on behalf of the people of Yuma, I invite members to come visit Yuma and experience the border, firsthand.

Thank you.

YARMUTH: Thank you, Mayor Nichols. Thanks to--once again, for all of your testimony. We will now begin our question and answer session. As a reminder, members can submit written questions to be answered, later in writing. Those questions and the answers of the witnesses will be made part of the formal hearing record.

Any member who wants to submit a question for the record may do so within seven days.

As is our habit, the ranking member and I are going to defer our questions to the last. So, I now recognize, as a matter of courtesy, the gentlelady from Minnesota, Ms. Omar, for five minutes.

OMAR: Thank you, Chairman Yarmuth. Thank all of you for testifying.

(UNTRANSLATED)

It's really wonderful to see you here. Thank you so much for accepting our invitation to come and testify and tell us about the wonderful successes immigrants are having in Minnesota. I'm a little disappointed you didn't bring us Afro Deli tea and some musas.

I was showing pictures to my colleagues of your restaurant and what it offers. It's one of my favorite places to spend time.

House Budget Committee Holds Hearing on Economic Benefits of Immigration

And so, I wanted to talk about the economic impact of immigrants. There was a project called Map, the Impact from New American Economy, which is a bipartisan research that showed how immigrants are having an economic growth, driving economic growth in every region of the country. Particularly, in our district, immigrants have paid \$760 million in taxes, last year.

We contributed \$2 billion in spending power. Again, this isn't just in Minnesota's fifth district. It's statewide. Immigrants paid more than \$4 billion in taxes and contributed \$11.5 billion in spending power.

In Minnesota, there are more than 22,000 immigrant owned businesses that employ more than 35,000 people. One of those entrepreneurs and people who are having successes is you.

When we think about the kind of saying that was used, you know, we get going, you became an entrepreneur just a few years after entering the United States and have been quite successful.

You've been featured in the New American Economy. There was a profile of you, last August, which I would love to enter into record.

YARMUTH: Without objection:

OMAR: You talked about the kind of opportunities that were afforded to you in Minnesota and how the Minneapolis community has contributed to your success. Could you talk a little bit about some of the policies that we have in Minneapolis that have impacted your successes in entrepreneur?

KAHIN: I think the most successful impact that we have in Minnesota is because of the people of Minnesota are very warm people and very welcoming people.

And especially they're coming from rural, from locals and state and county level is very encouraging people to do business.

And because of that, I think I maneuver the system and encourage most of my family and friends to start business because I think that's the easiest place to start business, I think across the country.

OMAR: I mean, we say in Minnesota, it's a cold place but the people have warm hearts. And that, certainly, has an emotional impact on all of us and allows us to have the kind of successes we've had. So, thank you so much for creating employment opportunities for so many Minnesotans and for being a shining example for what immigrants can do in this country.

Mr. Jawetz, I wanted to talk to you about the kind of impact the Muslim ban has had. Today is the one year in our anniversary of the Supreme Court ruling. And so, if you can tell us a little bit about the kind of impact, economic impact the Muslim ban has had on our economy.

JAWETZ: Yeah, so, thank you so much, Congresswoman. So, today is the one-year anniversary, since the Supreme Court allowed the third iteration of the Muslim ban, the travel ban, to go into effect.

And as you all may know, the case is still under litigation, right now. One of the things the Supreme Court relied upon in their ruling was this waiver process that had been set up by the State Department to grant waivers to people who are subjected to the ban.

We now know, over a year, that about 5 percent of those waivers are being granted. Consular officers say that they don't actually have authority to grant the waivers, they can just send them to headquarters where they get sent in to a black hole.

You've got people who are been waiting, now, for you know, a third of the people, basically, were in line, according to a new collection by Georgetown, shows that they've been waiting for two years or more for their visas to be adjudicated.

House Budget Committee Holds Hearing on Economic Benefits of Immigration

You know, Marketplace actually did a recent piece looking at small businesses owners who are seeing their businesses stifled, as a result of the travel ban and their inability to get workers.

You also, of course, see the impact on families, U.S. citizens around the country are being forced to remain separated from their family members. And one of the really nefarious effects of this, of course, is if you look at the impact on admission to this country from Muslim majority countries, it has plummeted, more that 90 percent drop over two fiscal years for people from Muslim majority countries.

In our refugee program, about a 30 percent drop in the immigrant visa program and about 20 percent drop in temporary visitors. So, across the board, we're reshaping what admissions and immigration and visitors to this country will look like.

OMAR: Thank you. I yield back.

YARMUTH: The gentlelady's time has expired. I now recognize the gentleman from Missouri, Mr. Smith, for five minutes.

SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I would like to submit into the record for Representative Bill Flores, who had to leave for the Energy and Commerce Committee, a letter that he has from the Mayor of El Paso?

YARMUTH: Without objection.

SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for holding this hearing, today.

Yesterday, CBO released its forecast for our nation's long-term fiscal stability. The numbers are shocking, \$80 trillion in new deficits over the next 30 years. Yet, we have no plans from the other side on how they would address this crisis.

It's time for them to step up with a budget. It has been 72 days, I keep counting the days, keep addressing the numbers at every one of our Budget Committee hearings, hoping the other side will present a budget.

We are the Budget Committee. We need to present a budget. We're 72 days past due. In order for us to address our priorities, we need to have a budget.

It's clear that we agree that legal immigration can have a positive impact on our economy. I said legal immigration.

We know how good our economy is right now. We've all heard the numbers about job openings. In fact, in April, the number of job openings exceeded the number of unemployed by the largest margin on record. One-and-a-half million more jobs available in this country than people seeking employment. One-and-a-half million more jobs available than people seeking employment.

We've had 15 months of unemployment under 4 percent, 15 straight months, ten straight months of wage growth, 5.8 million new jobs, since President Trump was elected.

Those are wonderful numbers. No one can deny the economy is doing very well, under this Administration.

In southeast Missouri, we know the positive impact of legal immigrants can have on communities and local economies. We have many examples-a specialty doctor in Poplar Bluff, Missouri, who helps the medically underserved, a restaurant owner in Farmington, Missouri, originally from China, who is not only a successful business owner but an incredible community leader who volunteers and helps out needy students.

In my district, we also have Missouri S&T a leading Stem University. Many foreign students who graduate from S&T go to, go on to great jobs here in America and advanced technology fields.

My office has helped many of these students pursue their career goals through obtaining visas.

House Budget Committee Holds Hearing on Economic Benefits of Immigration

Where we disagree, is on the issue and the impact of illegal immigration. But it wasn't that long ago that Democrats and Republicans seemed to be on the same page.

President Clinton deported 800,000 people. President Bush deported 2 million. President Obama deported 2.9 million people.

Right now, President Trump actually has a lower deportation rate than President Obama did at this same point in his administration.

What we need to understand, these deportations of the numbers that I just said our people that went through the courts. The courts ruled that they needed to be deported, after having their appropriate hearings or they are individuals that are criminals.

So, our system can function, in regards to that, if we just allow it to work.

I went to the border just a few weeks ago and saw, firsthand, what the men and women in our Border Patrol face every day. It's been 57 days since President Trump asked for emergency funding. HHS runs out of money next week. We have 19,000 migrants currently in custody for a system designed to hold 4,000 people.

Securing our border and enforcing our laws is the only way to help solve this problem.

The situation will only get worse, if we all don't come together.

Mr. Chairman, I see that my time is about to expire before I can even ask a question. So, I will yield back.

YARMUTH: Thank you, gentleman, his time has expired. And I just want to mention, in relation to your comments on the budget, as of tomorrow, the Democratic House will have appropriated 97 percent of all federal spending. So, there will be a very clear picture of what House Democrat's budget priorities and values are at that time.

I now yield five minutes to the gentleman from New York, Mr. Higgins?

HIGGINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I think one of the things that we've lost in this country is our national story because it's an exodus story. For more than 250 years, people fled persecution from all over the world. They crossed seas and deserts for the freedom found in the promised land.

This administration has made policy decisions that deny fundamental rights to migrants and has unjustly separated families for acts that are not criminal violations.

Nearly one quarter of all new businesses in the United States are started by immigrants. Almost half of the Fortune 500 companies were founded by immigrants to America creating jobs for Americans.

And over half of the patents filed in the United States are filled by immigrants.

Mr. Jawetz, despite the quantifiable economic benefits of immigration, why does this president, but in fairness, his predecessors, both Republican and Democrat, adopt an extreme hard line on immigration policy?

JAWETZ: That's a great question, I think, and it does get to something that Congressman, Mr. Smith, raised as well.

No one supports illegal immigration, right. Illegal immigration is a system of a dysfunctional system, right. It's also a reality. And it's a reality in response to what the country's actual, realistic needs are.

There's a reason why immigrants are not just contributing for those who come through legal channels, but also, and this is very real, the literature is clear on this, also people who are undocumented, who came without status, those who fell out of status. They're still economic contributors to this country in myriad ways.

House Budget Committee Holds Hearing on Economic Benefits of Immigration

So, the question for me is, you know, do we support legal immigration? Yes, everyone supports legal immigration. So then, we take a step back and say, well, how can we build a system that can be based upon legal immigration? How can we get out of the system we have now which for decades, has relied upon this dysfunctional, outside of the law, immigration system in which all of us rely upon the labor of unauthorized workers, undocumented workers, either directly or indirectly?

So, for me, if we want to think about how to restore respect for the rule of law in our immigration system, that means building a system that lives up to our values as both a nation of immigrants and a nation of laws and a recognition that we cannot be a nation of laws, if we don't have laws that are consistent with our values and ideals, as a nation of immigrants.

HIGGINS: Claiming back my time, so, in a political context, what we're doing then, is conflating legal immigration with illegal immigration, to create a negative perception of immigration, generally. Is that a fair characterization?

JAWETZ: Yeah, I think, I think, over time, basically, no one is proud of the system we have right now, basically. And so, you know, what you have is, as the system becomes increasingly dysfunctional over time because Congress and administrations have been unable to actually fix the system--

HIGGINS: --And that's a failure of Congress and the administration?

JAWETZ: Yeah, I think all of us, yeah.

HIGGINS: Moody's Analytics says that doubling the number of legal immigrants that we take in, each year, from one million to two million, would increase economic growth by 2 percent, each year, over the next ten years.

JAWETZ: Yeah, and I think, you know, Moody has also studied what happened in Arizona when Arizona adopted legislation that would try and drive immigrants, undocumented immigrants off the work force.

And what it ultimately did, basically, was decrease the job market, hurt American workers, as well, because jobs just left the state.

So, I mean, I think that's exactly right. And one thing I think, it's a really striking thing, I mentioned this in my oral testimony. But Gallup has, since 1965, been polling the question of Americans, whether the level of immigration to this country should decrease, increase, or stay the same.

And we are not at, it's been nearly 55-year highs in the American public saying that immigration to this country should remain the same or increase.

So, we can keep banging our heads against the wall with our broken system and be really angry about the fact that we have ten-and-a-half million undocumented immigrants, here, seven million in our workforce and you know, that number's going to, is going to continue to fluctuate around that amount, or we can fix the system and bring people within the legal immigration system so that our system can work as it is designed rather than through workarounds and us just turning a blind eye to what's going on.

HIGGINS: And with that, I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

YARMUTH: Thank you, gentleman. I now yield five minutes to the gentleman from Utah, Mr. Stewart.

STEWART: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and to all your witnesses, thank you.

It's often said, always said, we have a crisis at the border. I think that is an enormous understatement, frankly. I don't think we have a crisis at the border. I think we have three crises.

One that is obviously humanitarian, something that every one of us in this room cares about. One of them is security. And the third one is political, a political crisis here in D.C. and our inability to fix this.

House Budget Committee Holds Hearing on Economic Benefits of Immigration

And I think, frankly, the political crisis may be the more difficult of these to fix. And some of the rhetoric around this is, honestly, it's just cynical. Much of it is dishonest. And some of it is just intellectually lazy.

There's many of us who want to fix this. For example, from the very first day, I decided around some seven years, or so, ago I've always wanted to fix DACA. I think, if we had a DACA bill on the floor, we'd have 350 votes for it.

And we ask ourselves, would we rather have a cynical and a political tool and do what's right for these families, for these children, and ultimately, for the security of our nation or would we rather have a tool and use that as a bludgeon against some of our political opposition.

I'm a father, I'm a grandfather. I can't even begin to imagine the concern and the stress of these families and what they must feel and the difficulties of these individuals as they face this journey.

I've been to the border. I've been to the region many times and we see what's happening to the children and them being used.

It's truly heartbreaking. As a member of the Appropriations Committee, I have voted innumerable times to support the children and their parents, whenever possible. I'm pro-family. I'm also, as we've just said recently, I'm pro-legal immigration.

And there's one more reality, and I want to mention this just quickly, and that's human trafficking. It's where I'd like to focus my attention. Out of the many elements of this crisis, I really do want to spend some time on this.

We were recently told at an Intel briefing you can purchase a child to be used as a tool to cross the border for \$80--\$80 you can purchase a child.

And some of these--and as young as a few months, not a toddler, a few month-old baby. And some of these children have been recycled across the border 40 and 50 times.

And I just think it's our responsibility, as a member of Congress, to really, truly do something to fund DHS and HHS, something that we all know, here, is going to reach a crisis in the next few days, if we don't have adequate funding for that.

Mayor, I'd like to spend some time with you, if I could, and see your personal experience in the responsibilities you have in the city of Yuma. Have you seen, have your citizens seen elements of this trafficking of children or other, you know, sex trafficking or other human trafficking?

NICHOLLS: Thank you Congressman. We have seen some evidence of it through the shelter system where people have had plans to go to their host family with tickets purchased, and then, a truck pulls up and they get in the truck and they leave, which is not a usual thing you would do, if you're trying to get to a host family.

And that--that's evidence of trafficking that, the struggle on trafficking is it's--it's not something you can just walk into and understand that that's going on at that moment. It takes a lot of research.

And ICE, right now, is overwhelmed in the number of cases that they're researching. But there's--that it does go on and, as far as the recycling of the children, there's quite a bit of work done at the Border Patrol station to try to identify whether the children are associated with the parents, units that they're with.

Sometimes, by the time they get to the shelter, that still hasn't been determined. So, there's' always that concern. The--as people leave the shelter, we're not sure, really, where their ultimate situation is when they get to wherever they're going.

So, we--very, very few migrants actually stay in the Yuma community. They come through and they move through.

STEWART: So, let me ask you, as a mayor who's responsible for law enforcement in your community, do you have the resources that are necessary to combat trafficking, or do you need help from the federal government on this?

House Budget Committee Holds Hearing on Economic Benefits of Immigration

NICHOLLS: We do not. We need help from ICE and the different federal agencies.

STEWART: I mean, that's just obvious, isn't it?

NICHOLLS: Yeah, it's very obvious.

STEWART: This is beyond your capability. I hear that again and again and again in local communities. This is beyond our--the capabilities of our local law enforcement to deal with adequately.

NICHOLLS: And it reaches outside of jurisdiction because that kind of crime goes across boundaries.

STEWART: Do any of the panelists, anything you'd like to respond or add to the conversation regarding the tragedy of human trafficking?

JAWETZ: Sure, thank you so much, Congressman. So, I have a few things on that. I'd say, one, it's important to keep in mind that the legislation that many people have been talking about for the last few years, really since 2014, we want to make changes to the so-called asylum loopholes, are embedded in the trafficking victim's protection reauthorization act.

The proposed changes that many of you have voted for, over the last five years, would change that law and make it so that children who come without a parent or without a guardian, can be turned around, immediately, even if they don't comprehend--I mean, this is literally in the bill--if they don't comprehend the consequences to them of accepting a return.

They would allow kids who pass that threshold to remain in Border Patrol stations under law for up to a month. So, that's what the legislative changes that we've been driving toward for all this time would look like.

And the last thing I'd say, really quickly, is, I agree that we should be trying to protect children. That's critically important and protecting children who are victims of trafficking is important. But I also want to think about the child who died, you know, just a day or two ago in the Rio Grande, whose picture became, you know, ubiquitous on social media just last night, right.

This is a family that tried to come through the port of entry to request asylum and they were told the port was closed. And they looked at the river and the father said, it didn't look that bad. And so, they decided to try and cross just so they could avail themselves of the right, under our law, to apply for asylum.

STEWART: Well, and I'll conclude. Our time is over but that you--your point is the asylum and the legislation around that has got to be reformed to dissuade people from taking that type of risk.

JAWETZ: That is not my--my suggestion, I would say.

STEWART: Well, you and I may disagree on that. But we understand and agree that it's a real problem and that, if we do something, it's going to continue to be a problem.

JAWETZ: That I would agree with, yes.

YARMUTH: Gentleman's time has expired. I now recognize the gentleman from North Carolina, Mr. Price, for five minutes.

PRICE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And let me, too, thank all of our panelists for a very useful discussion.

I represent the research triangle area of North Carolina. And we're an area that has welcomed immigrants and benefited from the presence of immigrants in all aspects of our workforce, whether we're talking agriculture or construction or hospitality or healthcare or high-tech industry.

We have a large immigrant population and we are attentive, therefore, to national policy and to the trends that national policy may encourage.

House Budget Committee Holds Hearing on Economic Benefits of Immigration

What we see with the Trump administration is an array of national policies that are hostile and alarming and have spread panic in the immigrant community and beyond--the Muslim ban, the revocation of temporary protective status, the virtual cutting off of the flow of refugees, the betrayal of the dreamers, indiscriminate deportations, separating families at the border and on and on and on. There are those explicit policies.

Secondly, there is a widespread perception, justified or not, of bureaucratic slow walking, not just in the refugees. That is a reality but also in just the processing of visas and other bureaucratic procedures associated with immigration.

And then, there's the question of the optics. And that's what I want to get to, the message this sends, the conclusions that are drawn by people who may be thinking about, let's say, studying in this country or teaching in this country or undertaking entrepreneurial ventures in this country.

That's really my question and it is focused on a higher education sense we are a center of higher education. We have many, many international students, undergraduate, graduate, postdocs. We have talented, trained people who, hopefully, would stay in this country and lend their talents to our economy. And we have many examples of the kind of entrepreneurship that we've heard described here.

So, that's my question about the trends. What are the relevant policies, when we think about the kind of student and postdoc and entrepreneurial talent we want to attract, what can you tell us about the trends in terms of students choosing the U.S.?

I hear a great deal that we are losing students to Canada, Germany. I hear about incredibly difficult times just for the visas and with just processing the student and faculty papers, and so on.

That's my question, what do the trends look like and what are the relevant policies?

KERR: Thank you. I'll start to respond to that. So, you are absolutely right that the U.S. depends, heavily, on high skilled immigrants. And a lot of these immigrants don't, necessarily, arrive with high skilled kind of credentials. They arrive as students.

And they arrive under a student visa, which is, basically, of a fairly unlimited supply. Then they have to figure out what they can do after they graduate. And then, there's a more limited supply of visas, at that point, and then, eventually, given that they're high-skilled, they will probably like to stay and continue working on a work visa.

And there's, yet, another more limited supply of visas available, the H1-B. And I think that is a very difficult situation that we're facing.

U.S. is facing, also, some stiff competition from Canada, Australia, U.K, other immigrant destinations that have great university systems. And I think it would be very helpful, think through--how does this process of, actually, attracting and retaining these high-skilled individuals who are going to pay taxes and contribute to innovation.

PRICE: Do we, actually, have data on the--on the trends in this regard?

KERR: On The trends. So, my--what I have seen, and you surely can see, also, some anecdotal evidence out there is that there's a--definitely, increase has stopped. So, we don't see this ever-increasing supply of high-skilled students entering the United States the same way as we have before.

I think we need to wait a little bit longer to see, kind of, where the trend is turning.

NICHOLLS: Congressman, what we've seen in Yuma, is still a consistent desire to come into the United States from Mexico.

I do an extensive amount of engagement in Mexico. We formed a binational organization called Forefront ED. And one of the things we have done is sign an MOU with the three areas in the state universities, our local community college.

House Budget Committee Holds Hearing on Economic Benefits of Immigration

And at first, it was just seven Mexican universities. But it's now 17 Mexican universities that are interested in doing exchange programs and coordinating curricula and really working together on that.

In talking to the students and talking to the faculty, there is still a very strong anecdotal evidence that the desire to come to the United States, the desire to work in the United States, even after obtaining a degree at a Mexican university is still very much there.

And our economy, as I tried to describe in my remarks, is dependent upon that, from our hospital, to our agricultural industry.

And when I say agriculture industry, it's not just the skilled farm workers. It's the chemists and the--and all the researchers and those are frequently internationally sourced.

YARMUTH: Thank you for your response. Gentleman's time has expired. I now recognize the gentleman from Texas, Mr. Flores, for five minutes.

FLORES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I, also, want to thank Representative Smith for submitting my letter from the Mayor of El Paso for the record.

And I'll just talk a little bit about what's in that letter. Since January, 2019, more than 75,000 migrants have been released in El Paso, climbing from 7,800 migrants in January to 18,804 in April.

CBP facilities that are at capacity, excuse me, are at capacity and federal officers are spread way too thin to act appropriately handling the processing claims.

As a result, delayed processing and wait times on Northbound Bridge, the point of entry, in El Paso resulted in an estimated \$483 million loss of imports for the month of April, alone.

Cross-border spending and trade, also, coming from the border is a boon for the city of El Paso and the region along the border. It's unfortunate that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle are unwilling to adequately fund ICE and CBP to meet the increasing levels of migration we are experiencing and leaving open the prospect of dangerous individuals entering our country.

Mayor Nicholls, I'd like to begin my questioning with you if that's all right. And thank you for being here, today. You're giving a first-hand perspective of the crisis and what it's like on the southern border.

The statistics that we've seen, today, are undeniable. And your city is not alone. As I mentioned, El Paso has experienced the same increased levels of migration and seen the substantial impact reverberating through their local economy because of a lack of resources.

While legal immigration is important to all of us and to our economy, underfunding the humanitarian crisis on the border will have the opposite effect.

Yuma is home to more than 100,000 people, as you stated, but it's reported that you have seen more than 24,000 families cross into your city, over the past year.

The only shelter available is significantly overpopulated. CBP is understaffed and overworked, so when 13 hundred migrants were released into Yuma over the course of the last few weeks, you had no choice but to call a state of emergency.

My questions are this. Do the numbers you talked about add up to a crisis, in your opinion?

NICHOLLS: Thank you very much, Congressman, for the question.

They very much do. And just to kind of, maybe, put it in perspective. When you talk about 5,000 people, that I mentioned in my comments, maybe not seem like a lot when you live in a large city.

House Budget Committee Holds Hearing on Economic Benefits of Immigration

But if you translate that to a community of, say, four million people, a large city like the city of Phoenix, the proportional personality of that is 200,000 people. That would be 200,000 people coming through a community of four million.

That is a substantial impact. And so, there's' really--it's really no clear way to describe it exact, except for exactly that. It's unsustainable to continue to have that kind of flow through our community.

FLORES: So, the analogous impact on Phoenix, as you stated, would be, essentially, two times the population of Yuma.

NICHOLLS: Yes.

FLORES: Is that right?

NICHOLLS: Yes, that's correct.

FLORES: Can you expand on some of the positive impacts that come--that your city usually experiences from legal immigration and the benefits of cross-border spending for small businesses and the local economy.

NICHOLLS: Our economy is, definitely, based upon that international relationship. And just to kind of give you, maybe, a quick anecdotal story.

I met a gentleman 30 years ago who immigrated to this country at 18. He started a small business, raised a family, bought a home, sent his kids to college, really the true American dream.

He was engaged, still is, in--in that \$3.5 billion-dollar agricultural side of our economy. And he's become a real hero to me in a lot of ways, helped me start my own engineering firm and he is my father-in-law.

So, this is really a very personal, a very real, every day, thing for us. And this is not an unusual story. This is 60 percent of our community is Hispanic. So, this story occurs all the time.

And so, it's very, very well connected. And we've spent a lot of time promoting the region, not just--not just the city of Yuma but the region because, as we understand that the economies throughout the region benefit everybody.

FLORES: We see the same thing in Texas, also, and for several years, Congress has attempted but failed to address our broken immigration system that starts with securing the border. Securing the border requires an all of the above approach, which includes barriers, technology, smart infrastructure and, also, people.

What immediate resources are needed from a federal perspective, from the federal government so that we can start getting a handle on this crisis, the security part of the crisis?

NICHOLLS: From the security part of the crisis, it's all based upon having the resources complementing with the law. So, we've talked about a lot of the law changes.

But really, until we get a full complement of agents to enforce the law, and the law isn't enforceable, which is a lot of the problems right now in the process.

Also, access to judicial process. So, instead of waiting six months to two to three years, being able to get asylum claims processed. And when people have an asylum claim, they can get that protection right away, instead of waiting. It would also help with this whole process.

I think there's the ability to not, or the condition to not release in a community smaller than a million people would also, help that pressure that's created and would move the federal burden from just a local community to the greater country.

YARMUTH: The gentleman's time has expired. Sorry, I now recognize another gentleman from Texas, Mr. Doggett, for five minutes.

House Budget Committee Holds Hearing on Economic Benefits of Immigration

DOGGETT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and thanks to all of our witnesses. We have a markup of legislation concerning Medicare going on at the same time, next building over.

But I have had a chance to review your written testimony and appreciate it and your appearance here, today.

Seems to be that the Trump administration's immigration philosophy is sick in both heart and mind. His campaign of stoking fear and prejudice ignores reality, a reality you described this morning, and it lashes out against the most vulnerable. He relies upon authoritarian tactics to twist our laws and to inflict cruelty.

He's lashed out by stripping protections for dreamers, undermining the legal status of high-tech visa and green card holders and inflicting cruelty on asylum seeking children on our border.

We are all the worse off for these policies.

Let's talk about this failure of the Congress to address immigration because it is correct that there's been a complete failure of the Congress to address immigration. But it didn't begin this year.

Indeed, tomorrow, to be exact to the day, June 27, 2013, six years ago, the United States Senate passed by an overwhelming bipartisan majority, comprehensive immigration reform.

Only but for the obstruction of Republicans has that legislation been blocked. You will recall that Speaker Boehner first, after making many promises to the contrary, refused to let the House vote on that comprehensive immigration reform.

And after him, Speaker Ryan did exactly the same thing.

Our immigration system could and should have been repaired long ago but Republicans have stood in the way to prevent any comprehensive immigration reform.

Unfortunately, we now have a president who likes railing about immigration reform more than doing anything about it. He relies on imagined crisis that he created, himself, and people can see through that, no matter the cost of human life that we see at the border, today.

This is a president who, when presented with a bipartisan consensus bill option sitting there with him in the White House exclaimed that he wanted more immigrants from Norway and referred to Central African and Central American countries with an expletive that I will not repeat, this morning, but is well known and reflects his heart, which goes to the very core of bigotry around this policy.

So, what we're tasked with, today, is laying out a framework of what a president with the slightest sense of human decency and humanity, might be able to do the year after next and your testimony is important in doing that.

Meanwhile, this year, the House has already recognized that our dreamers who have cleared a criminal background check, are contributing in our country, they should not have to rely only on court decisions, which the Trump administration is trying to undermine, in order to be assured for them and for their employers and their schools, that they're able to continue, here.

Unfortunately, the situation again, when you talk about the failure of Congress, yes, there's a failure of Congress. There's a failure of now the majority leader in the Senate doing exactly the same thing that House Speakers under Republican control did in the past, refusing to even let the Senate consider protection for our dreamers, the easiest and most direct piece of immigration legislation that we might approve.

And then, there is the claim of the president, recently, that his solution to the immigration problems that we face is to deport a million people from this country. Fortunately, the president, because we have now an acting Homeland Security Secretary, a vacancy for the head of customs and border protection, an acting head for citizenship and immigration services, has given us an immigration policy with many tweets but with no leadership, with a lack of organization and with general incompetence.

House Budget Committee Holds Hearing on Economic Benefits of Immigration

And so, many of our immigrants and the businesses and industries that depend upon them, are protected, in some cases, by our courts and, in other cases, by just the incompetence of this Administration in carrying out its policies.

All objective economists who have looked at this recognize that giving our dreamers legal status, that stop tearing families apart and let those who have been here, legally, in our country contribute to our economy, will aid us greatly.

The irony in Texas is so great. We face worker shortages, right now, particularly in construction, in agriculture, in the service industries. Those are the industries that will be hurt the most, if this heartless policy of deporting and separating families is allowed to develop.

I have confidence in the lack of leadership of this Administration and its total incompetence that that will not occur.

But I appreciate your testimony about what a brighter day in America might hold, not only for immigrants but for all of our country and that the Statue of Liberty was calling out, not just to Norway, but to all the world.

And I yield back.

YARMUTH: The gentleman's time has expired. And now, I yield five minutes to another gentleman from Texas, Mr. Crenshaw.

CRENSHAW: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and thank you for holding this hearing. I appreciate that we're talking about the immigration issue.

And I wish we'd been able to talk about the supplemental bill in this Committee, as well, and in the other Committee that I'm a part of, which is Homeland Security to unfortunately, we hardly ever talk about immigration.

So, I appreciate that we're doing it, here.

But we have to be clear about something. We were talking about the costs and benefits of immigration. And it is this. We cannot conflate illegal and legal immigration. That is often the case.

Every time we point out the issues with illegal immigration and the abuse of our asylum laws, well, the response is always, but immigrants are good. Yes, done, absolutely, immigrants are good. We like immigrants.

And if we want to have a really reasonable conversation about increasing quotas for legal immigration and more streamlined work visas, all of that would be great. That is not something we are opposed to. Legal immigration is good, period.

Illegal immigration is bad, period. We should be seeking to diminish one, almost in its entirety, as much as possible. And we should be seeking to streamline the other, meaning, the legal immigration.

Illegal immigration is infringement on our sovereignty is as abuse of our rule of law. And you have to be deliberately naive, right now, to believe that what is going on at the border is just typical rule of law, that 144,000 people apprehended, last month, is not an abuse of our asylum system. Of course, it is. Of course, it is.

The word has gotten out how easy it is, as long as you bring a child with you to cross our border. And then, you'll be caught and released inside the homeland.

This is not fair to our citizens and their sense of sovereignty. This is not fair to our rule of law. This is not fair to the basic notions of personal property rights that our country was founded on. This is not fair to legal immigrants waiting in line to do it the right way.

This is not fair to those children who are trafficked. This is not fair to them. This is not moral. This is not sustainable, to use the words of the Mayor. That is a word we have to use more often, sustainability. We cannot sustain blatant abuse of our rule of law.

House Budget Committee Holds Hearing on Economic Benefits of Immigration

Let's talk about the cost, too. Yesterday, when we passed the supplemental bill, over \$4 billion, that is the direct cost of illegal immigration, direct cost, right there, over \$4 billion.

In Texas, we have to deploy a thousand National Guardsmen down to the border. That's not free. It costs something. Communities are stretching their resources to absorb illegal immigrants. The Mayor was talking about this. That has a cost.

We can slice and dice the numbers however we want, but the fact is that illegal immigration disproportionately impacts communities that are already struggling. It just does.

Just last week, we had a hearing about stretching scarce federal resources to impoverished communities, talking about Americans. Another good hearing to have.

But last week, also, Ways and Means, Democrats voted for an amendment that will allow illegal immigrants to claim an additional \$6,000 in refundable tax credits. I don't understand this. We have American citizens, we have legal refugees, we have green card holders in poverty and we're extending generous tax benefits to illegal immigrants.

In Texas, we spend over \$50 billion on education. We also have 158,000 illegal immigrant children in Texas. This costs \$3.5 billion. There are real costs, here.

And to put this into perspective, a local school district, which already has to finance the education of their own children, now has to raise taxes on their own community to pay for the education of people who came here, illegally.

I don't understand how this is possibly fair, or more importantly, sustainable.

Mr. Mayor, can you tell us the impact of illegal immigration on being able to provide an education for local children in your city?

NICHOLLS: Well, the--I don't really have the statistics with me on the immigration--

CRENSHAW: --Just generalities.

NICHOLLS: Right. But there is, definitely, a big burden when it comes to young families that come across. And that's what we're seeing through the Yuma area, is young families.

Most of these families do move on to their host communities. And so, they don't stay. But being close to the border, it's one of those things that we, currently, have a growing educational system which is important. But the impact of the exact--of illegal immigration's a little bit tougher because most migrants don't stay in Yuma. They do move on.

CRENSHAW: Okay, they go on through. What about emergency room use? I'll tell you what. We have a low-income hospital in Houston, LBJ Hospital. I've toured it. It is for low income Americans who don't have insurance.

A quarter of their costs go to illegal immigrants. Do you see anything similar in Yuma?

NICHOLLS: We do, in our hospitals, just this year, alone, has saw 13 hundred patients from the illegal immigrant process, whether it's through the Border Patrol or through ICE.

And that's netted a, over a half a million-dollar cost to the hospital because those costs aren't 100 percent recoverable. And to be a community type hospital, they have to pass that on, somewhere. And so, it gets passed on and we do have a higher cost of healthcare in Yuma and that's one of the elements that causes that.

YARMUTH: Gentleman's time has expired. I now yield five minutes to the gentlelady from California, Ms. Lee.

LEE: Thank you very much. Let me thank yourself and our Ranking Member for putting together this very important hearing.

House Budget Committee Holds Hearing on Economic Benefits of Immigration

First of all, let me just say that I was born and raised in an immigrant community, El Paso, Texas. And I know from personal experiences the contribution that immigrants make to our diverse and economically prosperous and, frankly, making America a better place.

Our communities are immigrant communities because every person, quite frankly, in this nation is or was an immigrant.

Now, as a mother, I have been horrified and outraged by the actions taken by the Trump administration to deliberately separate families in our country, to cage families at the border and to really see this, really overall, inhumane immigration policy and policies.

Like any immigrant mother, I love my children and cannot imagine having been separated from them when they were children. And when I was down at the border, and I go to El Paso, periodically, and I was in Brownsville and McAllen, last year.

And I saw the prisonlike conditions that these children were kept in. There were kids sleeping on concrete floors with only fed emergency blankets. I think they are called mylar blankets, to keep them warm. And no family should have to endure this.

In my own district, the 13th District of California, Northern California, Oakland, Berkeley, California, we have heart-wrenching separation stories for the last two years. So, I hope that this hearing is, yet, another wake-up call to all of us because we owe it to our families, to the Constitution in our country, to fix our broken immigration system without delay.

Now, I guess, let me direct this question to anyone who would be able to answer it, maybe, Mr., yeah, you know, President Trump renewed his pledge to deport millions he called--his language is illegal aliens. They are undocumented men and women and children, in my opinion.

But he decided that he was going to do this. And these policies, quite frankly, are inhumane and threaten the fundamental rights of millions.

Now, in terms of the economics, though, something the president likes to say that he understands, what, how do you see this move toward deporting millions of undocumented immigrants? Can you see what contributions they could make to our economy, or not?

NICHOLLS: Thank you, Congresswoman, for the question. There is, definitely, as we talked about immigration, there is, definitely, a lot of positives that people can bring.

However, being in an undocumented type status makes that very difficult because of a lot of the different situations that you end up in.

For instance, the 50,000 people that are used in the agriculture industry, for the harvesting all the way through the research and development, a very, very high percentage are all legal working individuals, they have either their American residence, are citizens, or have a guest worker program that they're in through.

LEE: Well, let me ask Mr. Jawetz a question. I was, you know, I'm coming from California, it's is an agricultural state. I was with Congressman TJ Cox in the central valley and meeting with farmers and workers.

And it's my understanding that they are very limited, now, agriculture workers and the impact on our economy, of course, will be sooner or later, the increased cost in produce and in food. And the argument always is that, you know, I know this Administration tries to pit black workers against immigrant workers that, you know, the availability of workers exists in the African-American community.

Can you talk about that a little bit, in terms of the ag industry and ag workers and how that dichotomy and that pitting against immigrant workers and black workers plays out from your perspective, in terms of the jobs.

House Budget Committee Holds Hearing on Economic Benefits of Immigration

JAWETZ: Sure, so I'll say a few things on that. One is different crops and different parts of the country rely in different ways on the, these are programs that may be available like the H2-A program for agricultural workers.

And so, it may be the case that, in Yuma, you know, they have greater success with H2-A and with cross border crossers for work. In a lot of other places, California's a great example, there is a very, very heavy reliance on undocumented workers, many of them have been in the workforce for a decade, two decades, where they are skilled workers who have managerial responsibilities.

And if you look, actually, what the California Farm Bureau and the American Farm--all these folks, basically, when they look at the--the need for immigrant workers in their businesses, that is really the reason why, over the years, Congress, one of the major reasons, even when Republicans controlled the House, they couldn't put a mandatory nationwide E-Verify bill on the floor.

Because growers came out and said, very, very clearly, you're going to kill our industry. And if you're going to kill our industry, the consequences are going to be greater food imports from Mexico and elsewhere.

It's going to mean losing jobs in trucking and grocery lines and packing that are often held by American workers. And so, it would be greatly disruptive to the entire food economy.

LEE: And then, the availability of the workforce in America. You know, oftentimes, again, this Administration says that they can't, you know, that immigrant workers are taking away jobs from other workers.

JAWETZ: We had an actual experiment with that in Alabama and Georgia when they passed legislation to try and drive immigrants out of their states, essentially. And what you found was you growers saying repeatedly, farmers, I cannot find workers.

When I go and try and recruit, workers come work for me, now I'm getting, you know, very, very few are actually taking these jobs. And those who do can last a day, maybe, in the fields.

Now, we need to work on improving wages. We need to work on improving conditions. That's the reason why the United Farm Workers have been a part of any real negotiation over the years for how we can fix immigration system and provide a steady and humane and responsible flow for agricultural workers who are in the fields doing this work.

But the response can't just be to plug our ears and pretend that there aren't undocumented workers who are doing this work. One thing, really quickly, just to finish something that the--

YARMUTH: --Gentleman needs to conclude.

JAWETZ: Oh, I'm sorry. I want to say, you know, on terms of data that came up earlier, you know, there are about 25 hundred people in the county, in Yuma County, who will be eligible for relief under H.R.-6.

This is the number of kids, you need kids and TPS, DED holders who would benefit from that bill. They live with about the same number, 25 hundred U.S. citizens in their households. They pay millions of dollars in federal, state and local taxes in the county. They hold tens of millions of dollars in spending power, annually.

So, even in the county where there are great positive contributions of legal immigrants the way you described, there is a thriving and significant population of undocumented immigrants who are contributing to that community.

And I'm sure they, you know them, and I'm sure, you know, the folks in your--in your city know them, as well.

YARMUTH: Gentleman's--gentlelady's time is expired. I now recognize the gentleman from Oklahoma, Mr. Hern, for five minutes.

HERN: Mr. Chairman, thank you so much. I'm glad we're having this conversation, today. It's interesting, as my colleague from Texas said, next to me, here, that we devolved this whole conversation into an illegal conversation.

House Budget Committee Holds Hearing on Economic Benefits of Immigration

There's not a person in this room doesn't think we need more legal immigration. In fact, we have a lot of legal immigration every year, about 750,000-757,000 people that were naturalized, last year, 716,000, the year before that.

So, that process is working for those who want to do it the right way. It's averaged that for decades, now, 600,000 plus.

Is it enough? Probably not for the robust economy that we have, we could fill jobs a lot, if we could get more folks here.

We heard the great conversation, here, from our restaurateur. I've been in the restaurant business for a long time. It's tough work. I applaud you.

You know, what we're looking at here, though, is an immigration system that I think we all agree, every one of us in this agree, if we could take the cameras out, take all the recording out, we probably could find a solution in about 30 minutes.

We could all go, and we could vote quietly. We'd have an immigration policy. As a person who's only been in Congress about seven months, it is amazing to me that we can't fix something as simple as the problem we have, right now.

I've seen it for years. It's been very frustrating.

We should, you know, we've talked about the various level of folks that are allowed to come in this country. People are still wanting to come to this country. They still see it as the greatest nation in the world, the freest.

And yet, we argue that it's not free and that it's a bad place to live. And you know, folks that come here disagree with us, disagree with the politicians.

You must be, if you're, you know, sir, if you're on the immigration policy team and you've been doing this for a long time, our friends across the aisle, you've got to be extraordinarily saddened by the fact that the previous Administration, the one you had, as part of their campaign, to fix immigration issue, had the first two years of their Administration, a super majority in the Senator, filibuster proof, you had the House, that no immigration policy was taken up.

So, while we're sitting here degrading and demeaning the current Administration, I think there's plenty of political opportunities have been there for every Administration.

You know, we also talk about what's happened in illegal immigration. Since we're going to go there, we've had over, year to date, we'll have about 750,000 apprehensions in this country, which is about the size of our congressional districts.

So, if you want to put it in perspective, to impact that, in a half a year, we're going to apprehend a congressional district. In the whole year period, two congressional districts of folks coming here, illegally, seeking to come to the country that's the greatest in the world.

You know, based on the national academics, Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine Data, illegal border crossers create an average fiscal burden of, approximately, \$75,000 during their lifetime, excluding any cost for the U.S. born children.

In order to pay for the president's previous \$5 billion border security request, we would only have to prevent about 60,000 crossings, less than 3 percent of expected legal crossers in the next decade to warrant that cost.

I've been there. Three weeks ago, I was in McAllen, probably the worst of the worst places on the border, right now. It is a travesty, what's going on.

House Budget Committee Holds Hearing on Economic Benefits of Immigration

We need to fund the opportunity for these children. You know, we could go into, and I could digress and talk about what my colleagues have talked about, of why that we have so many children here, unaccompanied children, people that are coming the way they're coming in is terrible. There's no question about it.

There's not a soul in this room--I am a father of three, grandfather of one. If anybody believes that it's okay, but the reality is, we do have a rule of law, so. And we have, again, 750,000 people that are using that rule of law appropriately, just as the gentleman did from Minnesota, to come here and seek out the American dream.

That's all we're asking. Let's just do it the right way. You know, as we talk about Mayor Nicholls, as a person who, again, is in charge for--charge of the law enforcement of the city, and you're responsible for the safety and health of a lot of citizens in the Yuma. You have this every day.

Can you--can you tell us what our current conflicting message of immigration policy, how it impacts cities along the--on the border?

NICHOLLS: Thank you, Congressman. The conflicting message is really one like this. There's a lot of different angles I could--I guess I could take with that question. But one that really comes to mind is we--we are dealing with a very large population coming through, and it is definitely a national issue.

But it's not being funded nationally. It's on the backs of our communities, on backs of our nonprofits, in order to deal with the release of these people into the communities and helping them get to their ultimate destination.

So, that--there's a dichotomy there. And then also, we've given the job to our DHS to enforce the law, but they don't have enough people, they don't have enough resources, they don't have enough facilities to adequately do that. And so, at the same time, we bring forth a criticism of how the process works, but there handcuffed on how they--

HERN: --So, my time is short--

YARMUTH: Your time is--

HERN: Can--can I just ask a follow-up question. My colleague just went over two minutes. I promise I will be two minutes.

YARMUTH: Go ahead.

HERN: Just--just as a follow-up to that, what I've seen, interesting enough, is that we've had, you know, a lot of people go ask CBP agents, mayors along the border, and you give them these facts, the naysayers, but that must not believe you because they are still saying it's the president wanting this when the request are actually coming from the mayors and the CBP agents up and down the border. I mean, how do you--that's got to be mentally frustrating.

NICHOLLS: It is. You know, I stay in my lane as the mayor and not as telling Congress exactly what needs to get done. But there is the fate of our humidity in this area is at the hands of those that do set those laws and that is Congress and the administration.

HERN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

YARMUTH: The gentlemen's time is expired. I now recognize the gentleman from New York, Mr. Morelle for five minutes.

MORELLE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman for bringing this important conversation to the forefront today. I applaud the folks of this hearing on facts rather than fear. For far too long, our national conversation on immigration has stoked panic that immigration is stealing jobs from hard-working Americans and making our communities unsafe.

House Budget Committee Holds Hearing on Economic Benefits of Immigration

The reality, backed up by data, is very different. Immigrants, like my great-grandparents, our job creators, not takers. First-generation immigrants start one quarter of all in the United States and are twice as likely as native born Americans to become entrepreneurs.

Moreover, the evidence shows that immigrations and immigrants do not reduce overall employment levels or working hours do not drive down the wages of working Americans. In my own district, new immigrant communities have revitalized Rochester when population decline threatened our livelihoods.

Thanks to those new arrivals, our cities population is stable, and our economy has the opportunity for growth and innovation. Today, almost 10 percent of the Rochester population was born outside the United States. They are our friends and neighbors, our coworkers, our customers and our family members.

I appreciate the opportunity to discuss how immigration policy can best nurture the economic power of hard-working families that are eager to bring their expertise and drive to America to build a better future for our nation.

Again, Mr. Chairman, I think you for this opportunity. I'd like to ask Dr. Kerr, President Trump has claimed that our country is full, how can that be accurate when the Census Bureau showed that 44 percent of American counties lost population last year?

KERR: Thank you for the question. I think it's interesting that it's happening elsewhere, as well. We have this increasing concentration of population into specific growth centers. And that can be problematic, both, for the places where population is rapidly increasing, the cost of living is increasing, the congestion is increasing, as well as, due to areas that are actually losing population.

So, I think certainly not the case that the country is full. In fact, other places use immigration policy to specifically try to attract people to declining regions. There are examples in other countries where that is one part of the immigration policy, for example, setting up firms and the declining regions or just placing the individuals into these declining regions and try to alleviate the loss of population.

MORELLE: Yeah, I'd like to follow up just--economics is obviously your expertise. Just curious, and those regions, in particular, where there was a reduction in population, population levels actually declining, can you talk about the economic consequences of that?

KERR: Yeah. So, that can be very problematic. If the economic activity to population is declining, that means it's harder to maintain services like good public schools. It's harder to maintain many programs. It's harder to provide economic opportunities for the young individuals residing there.

And that can lead to these vicious cycles where areas become less and less attractive, and the young individuals will leave because there's nothing much for them to do. And those kinds of situations can be very hard to correct.

MORELLE: The--if I might in the last couple of minutes, there's not a lot of conversation in my region, particularly, Rochester New York has a long history of manufacturing. And as we are transitioning to--from manufacturing industrial base to a knowledge-based economy, one of the things we continue to pursue his advanced manufacturing.

And much of that involves defense industry and other important manufacturing that's critical to the United States. And there's been a lot of concern expressed about the supply chain and the lack of skilled workers, and in some cases, unskilled workers to take jobs in that supply chain.

And there's a lot of talk about how some immigration involves highly skilled and highly educated workers, but what about immigrants that come here without an advanced stem degree or even a college education. Can they participate in that supply chain, in our efforts to promote advanced manufacturing? Could you talk about that and how important that might be to us over the next decade or two?

KERR: Yes. So, I think everyone seems to like highly skilled immigrant, but it is--it's a false notion that less skilled immigrants or immigrants without a college degree don't provide something for the economy.

House Budget Committee Holds Hearing on Economic Benefits of Immigration

In fact, if you look at the entrepreneurs, immigrant entrepreneurs in the U.S., it's about half of the entrepreneurs who have a college degree and the other half don't. It's the same, actually, for American entrepreneurs, as well. So, the both types of entrepreneurs skilled and not create a lot of jobs.

In fact, their firms are often more similar than different on any of these metrics that we have studied. And also, noncollege educated workers are very important, as we mentioned, for many local economies, for American businesses in different sectors. They are economic powerhouses, as well as, the skilled immigrants, as well.

MORELLE: Thank you, again, Mr. Chair. Thanks, so much for this important hearing, and I yield back.

YARMUTH: Thank you. Gentlemen's time has expired. I now recognize the gentleman from South Carolina, Mr. Timmons, for five minutes.

TIMMONS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate you holding this hearing on immigration. It is critically important that this juncture in our country's history, we have a major problem and I wish that we were talking more about how to fix that problem than about building a more dynamic economy that benefits immigration.

I don't think many people would say that we are anti-immigrant. I couldn't be more pro-immigrant. I just--I have a very strong emphasis on the rule of law. I think that laws matter. We have to enforce our laws. That's why people want to come here.

Our society is one of the freest and safest places in the world. And we have people traveling thousands of miles risking their lives and their family's lives. It is just a tragic situation that we are in.

I went with Mr. Hern to McAllen Texas. We had a bipartisan trip. It was eye-opening. Honestly, I've been here for six or seven months and we were arguing, here in Congress, whether there was a humanitarian crisis at the border.

And I trusted the administration. I trusted the president. And I trusted the secretary of homeland security. But it didn't seem that that was unanimous. A lot of people just didn't believe them. So, we've made progress here and Washington and that I don't think anybody thinks there's not a crisis at our southern border.

Having been there, it--it was probably the only time in my life that I felt shame as an American. There was the facility I was at in McAllen, is designed for 3,000 people. There were over 9,000 people. The detention cells where it was designed for probably five people, they had 40.

And I'm not faulting the Administration. I'm not faulting homeland security. I'm not faulting CBP or border patrol. We have failed as a Congress to fix the problem. And we are currently, now we're fighting over what to do about the humanitarian crisis at the border, and the answer is not just throw money at it. That is part of the answer. It is a critical part of the answer.

We need to send more resources to the southern border, but we also have to create a system that does not facilitate what is going on right now. Our laws are broken. I stood under a bridge, right, about a mile away from the Rio Grande River, and about 20 immigrants illegally crossed the border. They literally waded across the river, and they immediately, very calmly, and what would be described as, through relief, turned themselves into border patrol.

And they were then taken to processing. And weeks later, they're going to be an American citizen somewhere pursuing the American dream. They have a court date. They've got to go back. And it'll probably be for five years, but the vast majority do not show up.

So, we can't just throw money at it. We have to throw money at it and fix the problem. And that is to create an immigration system that encourages people to come here to pursue the American dream but do so in a way that it abides by our laws. Come through our ports of entry.

I guess my first question is to Mr. Jawetz. So, what can we do to change what is going on? What would you propose that we do to fix the onslaught of immigrants coming across the southern border, not going through our

House Budget Committee Holds Hearing on Economic Benefits of Immigration

ports of entry, crossing our border illegally, claiming asylum? And really, just it's a bad situation. So, what is the proposal from the ACLU?

JAWETZ: I used to be with the ACLU now I'm at the Center of American Progress.

TIMMONS: There we go. There we go.

JAWETZ: But between that, I was on the Hill. So, thanks very much for the question. A couple of things I want to flag first before I respond specifically. The first being the data on appearances and immigration court are being badly misconstrued. The vast, vast majority of people are appearing at their hearings on a regular basis.

Those, if you look solely at the data on closed cases, it is true that a large percentage of the closed cases are cases where someone didn't show up, but that's only because the cases don't close in just a matter of months, right.

And so, if you look at actually who is appearing as the process is going on, 90 percent of folks are appearing. And if they have counsel, the--it's even higher than that. So, just--

TIMMONS: --How many undocumented immigrants--what is the number that you're using in the United States currently? How many undocumented?

JAWETZ: There are about ten-and-a-half million people.

TIMMONS: Okay, so, enough people aren't showing up that we have a very large number.

JAWETZ: Oh, so sorry. If you're just being specifically about the southern border situation right now, that's the data referring to there. The ten-and-a-half million people we're talking about have been in the country now, on average, for about 15 years, right.

That is the result of a system in which, you know, you spoke earlier about the conflicting message. That was a really great framing for it. The conflicting message. When I was on the Hill, Richard Land from the Southern Baptist Convention used to talk about how there are two signs on the Southwest border, one says help-wanted, one says no trespassing. That's the conflicting message for 20, 30 years we've been sending to the world, right.

We as a country, as an economy, rely upon immigrants for their labor, further contributions, as consumers, they're to grow part of our current and our future economic stability. But we don't actually have pathways to facilitate that.

So, when we yell about legal versus illegal, and try and make that a really significant thing, we have to stop and say, well, why is the law what the law is right now? If the law is unenforceable, and we count upon it not being enforced in order to--to realize the exact economic gains that we're all pointing--that you all are pointing to in this current demonstration, right, you know, if that's what we're counting upon, let's try and harness the benefits from immigration within the legal system.

TIMMONS: So, you would agree that we need to create a legal system that actually facilitates immigration, and then enforce those rules?

JAWETZ: I would 1,000 percent agree with that statement. And I will tell you, I--I would love it if it was true, frankly, that as I've heard repeatedly today that every member on this side of the aisle, and the Republican side of the aisle, supports, not only legal immigration, but increasing legal immigration levels because I'll tell you that when I was in Congress, the most powerful voices who were lobbying on your side and on your issues were numbers USA and the Center for Immigration Studies who were setting aside their designated hate groups.

Their mission is to decrease legal immigration levels in the country. And Stephen Miller and President Trump who listens to them, their goal is not what you're expressing. Their goal is not support for increased immigration. Their goal is to drive down significantly legal immigration to like 300,000 people a year, maybe, and to massively deport everyone who already is here, notwithstanding the economic disaster that would cause.

House Budget Committee Holds Hearing on Economic Benefits of Immigration

TIMMONS: Yeah, I don't disagree with--

YARMUTH: --The gentleman's--

TIMMONS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

YARMUTH: The gentleman's time is expired. I now yield five minutes to the gentlelady from Washington, Ms. Jayapal.

JAYAPAL: Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman for holding this hearing. And I just want to pick up where my colleague across the aisle left off. I would 150 percent agree, or you set 1,000, I would agree 1,000 percent as well with the statement that we all are trying to create a legal system that allows us to bring in the immigrants that we need, that allows us to meet the values and the demands of our economy.

And it is not that we don't know how to fix that. And, in fact, in 2013, Mr. Chairman, you were a critical part of a very small bipartisan group of House members that worked on an immigration proposal. The Senate in 2013, is kind of--it's hard to believe this but 68 bipartisan votes for a comprehensive immigration proposal that would have fixed much of what we are dealing with.

And I think that the--what we have to understand is you presented it much more diplomatically, Mr. Jawetz, then I did. Maybe all those years on the Hill really helped. But I find it hypocritical as a nation, but from a political perspective, because I actually think you're right, the statistics of Americans across this country, Republican and Democratic and Independent, across this country who know that immigration is a good thing for this country, that want to see increased levels because they understand the economic benefits of immigrants to this country.

But the political hypocrisy of a nation that continues to rely on those benefits, and yet, has not fixed the system. And so, I wanted to go to that system question because one of my colleagues on the other side said why do you keep conflating legal immigration and illegal immigration. It's because the system is broken.

So, tell us, when was the last time last year when we did any kind of comprehensive reform to our nation's immigrations laws to update them to the needs of our economy?

JAWETZ: So, the last time we reshaped our legal immigration system was in 1990.

JAYAPAL: 1990.

JAWETZ: And since that time, of course, and 1996, Congress, notwithstanding the fact that the system itself still had deficiencies, layered on top of that a number of really serious and heavy enforcement provisions that only further, basically brought the immigration system out of step with the realities of the country.

JAYAPAL: We started to criminalize immigration and migration in 1996. But 1990 was the last time that we've actually had any kind of a positive contribution in terms of reforming our immigration laws. And when people say people should get in line, is there a line for people to get in to?

JAWETZ: Yeah. There's really not one line. There are lots of different potential lines. Some of those lines, if you look, for instance, at like if you are a--years ago when I was working for Congressman Lofgren, when you looked at like a U.S. citizen who was pushing for their siblings who was in Mexico, how long a Mexican sibling getting into the wait line would wait at this point. It was something like 120 years--

JAYAPAL: --Right--

JAWETZ: --based on the number of people who were in the line ahead of them, and there were visas given out each year.

House Budget Committee Holds Hearing on Economic Benefits of Immigration

JAYAPAL: And, in fact--and, in fact, I took 19 years on a whole alphabet soup of the visas to be able to get my citizenship. And I'm so proud to be one of only 14 members of Congress who is an immigrant myself, has gone through the system and seen all the ways in which it was broken.

Give us one or two very quick examples because I do have a question for Dr. Kerr, as well, very quick examples of where you see this out of step. We have a certain number of visas for a category, and yet, the number of workers that we need for that category is--is dramatically out of step. Just one example to help my colleagues.

JAWETZ: The most ridiculous, basically, is that we have an immigrant visa program on statute, 10,000 visas given out every single year to other workers. These are for like lesser skilled immigration visas, full-time immigration visas into the country.

And for two decades, we've taken half of those visas and used them for adjustments under NACARA. So, there are 5,000 visas available every single year for people who don't have college education or highly tactical skills who want to immigrate to the U.S. and contribute as workers.

JAYAPAL: So, that's kind of out of step, but it's across the board in every single category. I wanted to say, Mr. Kahin, that I hope we get to taste your food someday. I was looking at the beautiful pictures. And the National Association of Evangelicals has said that our refugee resettlement program is a crown jewel of American humanitarianism. And you are a perfect example of that. So, thank you so much for that.

And let me turn to Ms. Kerr for this question about labor markets and entrepreneurship. We've heard the incredible story of Mr. Kahin. It is not just Mr. Kahin that is in this situation. We are seeing tremendous entrepreneurship. Can you tell me what your findings have been, specifically, around immigrants, the composition of the labor force and then the entrepreneurship levels of immigrants?

KERR: Thank you. So, if you look at immigrants in the population and labor force immigrants are about 13 percent of the U.S. population, and a little bit higher than that in the labor force, around 16 percent. They are almost double that still in the entrepreneurial population.

And that's not just U.S. alone. I think, the immigrants are generally found to be a lot more entrepreneurial than natives in any immigrant receiving country. And that happened, both, and the self-employment, as well as, sort of employer entrepreneur arena. So, that's a very typical finding in the U.S.

JAYAPAL: Much greater than their share of the population--

KERR: --Much greater than their--exactly--

JAYAPAL: --in terms of entrepreneurship.

KERR: They're much more likely to start firms than natives are.

JAYAPAL: And it's part of the reason we've had so much support from the Chamber of Commerce. And back in 2008, I wrote an op-ed with the Pacific Northwest director of the chamber on the need for comprehensive immigration reform. Mr. Chairman, thank you so much for holding this hearing and for all of your work on this issue. I yield back.

YARMUTH: Thank you. The gentlelady's time is expired. I now recognize the gentleman from Pennsylvania, Mr. Meuser, for five minutes.

MEUSER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you all very much. I think it goes without saying, and it's undeniable, we have a border crisis, 144,000 illegals were apprehended in May alone. Of course, we don't know how many were not apprehended.

House Budget Committee Holds Hearing on Economic Benefits of Immigration

Yet, at the same time, no one denies, or at least and I think they should, that we are a proud nation of immigrants. The President and the Republicans here in Washington are trying. We now have engaged Mexico's help in controlling the border and their borders.

I do believe we follow a wide gate high fences concept. So, as we have orderly known entry into our country. And we do our very best to keep drugs and criminals from entering our country. We have spent a lot of money on expanding judges for asylum adjudication. And we are spending billions for care and trying to expand detention centers appropriately.

On the other hand, I think we have the Democrat side has provided no funding and has no interest in border security. They passed an amnesty bill in the House. They have a bill now that basically will institutionalize the idea of catch and release where 85 percent do not show up again. And no money for law enforcement, ICE or border security.

So, that's the situation here. Let's, Mayor, I'd like to talk about Yuma. Human trafficking, you touched on that a little while ago. You said it certainly, you know, one poor person being humanly trafficked in that manner, unwillingly, is a tragedy. Could you speak on that briefly?

NICHOLLS: It has a--thank you, Congressman. And has a lot to do with, you know, providing for the humanitarian aid. You know, I've been accused of taking really strong positions one way or the other, but at the end of the day when people arrive in the community, that's my concern is the humanitarian concern for them and the public safety.

So, human trafficking shows up in a lot of different ways. To me it shows up in recycling children so that people can cross the border. And whether or not they claim asylum, because, right now, only 7 percent migrant families that come through the Yuma sector, actually claim asylum.

But as long as they have that minor with them, they are able to enter the same process to see a judge and a weight in country. So, to me, that child, if it's not a family member, is part of that trafficking issue.

And then the trafficking starts in Mexico. I've talked to several officials there where they track it, but they don't have enough--the problem with trafficking is it moves across too many borders. So, there's not enough continuity in the local governments in order to have an impact. It's really a federal level issue to try to get our hands around that.

MEUSER: Right. I hope to hear from you, ideas on trying to correct this terrible situation.

NICHOLLS: I have a few.

MEUSER: Great.

NICHOLLS: Thank you.

MEUSER: Alright, costs to your budget, to your city, unsustainable, manageable?

NICHOLLS: As a community, it's a very unsustainable. Our city, right now, we don't have a line item for migrant support. So, we don't actually have dollars. But our community has experienced over a million-and-a-half dollars in the last three months' worth of impact for the different elements that it takes in order to support that--that effort.

Right now, this is the part of the year where our nonprofits are already stretched in trying to serve our homeless veterans, our--the different elements the community that need the--the support. Temperatures hotter, there's less work and now, our nonprofits, some of them are diverted to providing for the migrant families as they come through.

So, there's a real impact from a community level of just under a half a million--a million-and-a-half dollars from last--since the beginning of the year.

MEUSER: What about schools? How are your schools doing?

House Budget Committee Holds Hearing on Economic Benefits of Immigration

NICHOLLS: You know, the schools right now, because the migrant families are moving through and they don't stay, we don't have that dramatic of an impact. There is a constant presence just being close to Mexico. But there's no dramatic impact right now in the school system.

MEUSER: So, housing as well, housing?

NICHOLLS: Housing, it really has to do with that temporary housing and moving through the families. Our shelter has gone over capacity four times in the last three months. It's just not a sustainable situation where we can continue to bring people in because the numbers continue to grow.

MEUSER: Lastly, the farms. You mentioned how this is disrupting the ability for them to commit and do the work they've traditionally provided.

NICHOLLS: Right. So, there we have--a lot of the labor and comes legally through the port of entry. Well, because we've removed resources in order to support the family migrants that have come through, the wait times are getting dramatically longer.

As we enter into the winter season where we have the 15,000 people--15,000 workers coming through a day, they are going to be waiting in line an extra hour to an hour-and-a-half just across the border because the resources aren't allocated where they need to be for the legal part of the migration process every day.

YARMUTH: The gentleman's time--

MEUSER: --Mr. Chairman, I yield

YARMUTH: Thank you. The gentlemen's time is expired. I now yield five minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey, Mr. Sires.

SIRES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and Ranking Member, for holding this hearing. You know, I represent the district in New Jersey, which is 44 percent of the people in my district were born outside of this country.

I, myself, am an immigrant. I came to this country when I was 11 years old as a refugee, refugee from Cuba. And I always tell the story. When we landed in Miami, they took us to the refugee center. They knew that we were going to New Jersey.

They gave me a hat, glove and the coat. My brother also. And we went out to New Jersey. My parents also. I tell people that was a great investment for this country. I've been paying taxes all these years, my family, myself, I'm still paying taxes. So, as far as I'm concerned, I also created a business. I employ people. So, as far as I'm concerned, this country made a great investment in the Sires family.

Today I'm here, and the greatness of this country is the fact that I came as a refugee. I'm here in Congress and my vote here is as good as anybody that was born here. And I care for this country as much as anybody that was born here, probably more, because I appreciate the opportunity that was given to my family.

So, when I hear about all these things about immigrants, how bad they are, you know, I just don't buy it. Of course, everybody wants legal immigration. Nobody wants illegal immigration, because they should know that some of these people in these countries are so horrible that they may not have a choice.

But they do come and work. And one of my questions that I have is when people that are not legal here work, do they--some of them contribute taxes, right? Some of them contribute to Social Security, right?

JAWETZ: Absolutely.

SIRES: Do they get that money back?

JAWETZ: Not--not now, no.

House Budget Committee Holds Hearing on Economic Benefits of Immigration

SIRES: No. Do you know how much they contribute but they don't get the money back that they work for?

JAWETZ: I should have that in front of me right now, it's trillions of dollars basically in payroll taxes that are contributed into the system in the long run.

SIRES: And they don't get that back in Social Security?

JAWETZ: At this stage, no. I mean there's a way in which if you can--if you're paying through an I-10, you can sort of track that down the road. There are ways in which you could potentially do it, but most of that money right now is left on the table.

SIRES: Right, on a space, and the budget, wherever it goes.

JAWETZ: That's right.

SIRES: The other aspect is that we make it more difficult for people, even who are here illegally, to become citizens. You know, I do the ceremonies all the time, and I swear people all the time.

I just found out the other day that if you become a citizen, and you get the certificate that says, you know, which my father used to have in the living room, if you lose that certificate, now, they charge you \$500 to get a copy of that certificate, or if you misplaced it.

And it's now close to \$1,000 to become a citizen. We just keep making it more and more difficult for people to become citizens, even if you're legally. You know, we had a bill that came from the Senate, close to 70 votes in the Senate came here, and because a group of people didn't feel like they were going to support it, and were going to create hell, and never went through.

And that was a bipartisan effort for a comprehensive immigration bill. Mayor, I know, I was a Mayor for 12 years, 94 percent of the student body in the town that I represented were Hispanic. So, you can--and they didn't speak English, so, you can imagine the pressure on the budget of that community, pressure on housing, pressure on everything.

And you know, one of the things across the street from me there's a supermarket, and what this whole thing started with the president and people became fearful, the owner of the supermarket came to me and says, you know, my business is down 35 percent almost 40 percent because a lot of people became afraid and moved someplace else, and they didn't buy in that store.

You know, I had the same problems with housing, police, and generally, I find that immigrants are pretty respectful to teachers and police officers. This business that they all come here and somehow their criminals, I don't buy that. I lived it.

So, you know, we just can't keep making it more difficult for people who are here to become citizens. And it's all about the fear of the vote. Let's be realistic. They don't want 10 million people to become voters in this country. And that's the reality of it because you know which way they are going to vote, most of them anyway, except for the Cubans. Thank you, Chairman.

YARMUTH: Gentleman's time is expired. I now recognize the gentleman from Georgia, Mr. Woodall, for five minutes.

WOODALL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you for holding the hearing. I wanted to answer Mr. Sires' question about do you know how they're going to vote. The immigrants I know, and 26 percent of my bosses are first generation American families, they vote based on faith, and family and education and opportunity. So, to Mr. Sires' point, who's my good friend, I know exactly how they're going to vote in the great state of Georgia. And we will continue to--that--that--you are exactly--you're exactly right.

House Budget Committee Holds Hearing on Economic Benefits of Immigration

I took--I took offense to Mr. Jawetz, it was a side comment that that Georgia was passing laws to run immigrants out of that state. That's just nonsense. There is a rule of law conversation that has happened in the great state of Georgia.

And again, my immigrant population is growing wildly in the very best tradition of America. The vast of this country was based on robust immigration. The future of this country is based on robust immigration. And Georgia is no exception to that.

I wanted to ask Mr. Kahin, opening your fourth restaurant, can you just tell me, did the tax bill have any--did it help you at all? Did it help the family business at all when we passed the tax bill two years ago?

KAHIN: You know, lately it's been--it's been good. But I think I opened my restaurant in 2010.

WOODALL: The first one in 2010?

KAHIN: Yes, I opened the first one 2010.

WOODALL: And when the second one?

KAHIN: The second one, 2015.

WOODALL: And the third?

KAHIN: Two--this--this year.

WOODALL: This year.

KAHIN: So, it's equally--

WOODALL: I'm following that growth. I hope that growth--I hope that growth continues. We're having an economics discussion. I just wanted to ask is there anybody of economic thought that says that illegal immigration is more economically valuable to the country the legal immigration?

KERR: So, I can start with it. It's actually surprisingly hard. So, in many of the data sets that I use, and I use these large census Bureau collected data, we don't know whether someone is an illegal or legal immigration. We don't know anything much about the circumstances upon their entry.

So, the best case we can usually tell is whether they arrived as children or as adults. But there's nothing really in there that will tell us anything about the circumstances surrounding their entry. So, I would love to have data to be able to actually look at some of these questions regarding illegal versus legal. But that just--that sort of almost by definition is not there.

And even among the legal the different groups of immigrants whether you are--came under an age when babies or came under as sort of, your parents migrated, you are migrated with them, and they had a legal immigration, so I don't know.

WOODALL: I guess I wouldn't have thought it was that complicated.

KERR: Yeah, I wouldn't have thought either--

WOODALL: Dr. Kerr, I'm thinking--I'm thinking about the folks who are able to live out their very best American dream in my district. Those folks with papers are able to pursue that dream and ways that folks without papers can't.

Even in my district, we have so many H-1B and E2's, folks with H4 visas now are struggling to live out highest and best dream. And Ms. Jayapal and I have a bill to fix that. You see that in real life every day, Mayor, the wonderful benefits of--of legal immigration.

House Budget Committee Holds Hearing on Economic Benefits of Immigration

Tell me about the 15,000 folks that we always talk about H-2A's as if they're going to make a big difference. You said your legal immigration population that comes in every day and goes back home every night dwarfs the H-2A participants in your area.

NICHOLLS: That is--that is correct. There might be a little bit of crossover and that in the H-2A population. Some of them are American citizens who have just chosen to live in Mexico. And then some of them have different guest worker program participation.

WOODALL: We've talked a lot about a lot of topics that are not with the Chairman had on the agenda today. But I was surprised, as many of you were, when President Trump said in the State of the Union, I want people to come into our country and the largest numbers ever, but they have to come legally.

Again, economics discussion, does anybody take issue with that? I support that. I also want folks to come in the largest numbers ever. But I want them to come--to come legally. Mr. Kahin, I have in my district, folks on H-1B's, so they're brought their children here with them on--they're on H-4's. They've been in line for 15 years, in some cases, paying taxes, just as your family is.

Now, their kids are aging out of the system. DACA protects families who came without a visa, but it does nothing for families that came here legally with a visa. How long was the wait for you from the day that you decided to make your way to this--to this country? What was the wait time?

KAHIN: I think about eight months.

WOODALL: Eight months.

KAHIN: Yes, and it was Georgia, turned to Georgia.

WOODALL: Wait a minute, you flatter me by saying that. My question is, why couldn't we keep you? What could we keep you there? What led you to leave to head to Minnesota instead of sticking around in the great state of Georgia?

KAHIN: Maybe the snow.

WOODALL: I can--I can believe--I can believe that. Mr. Chairman, I hope we have a chance to do a round two, because the apples to apples comparisons that Dr. Kerr was making earlier to some of the dysfunctional legal system issues that Mr. Jawetz observed earlier, there's a lot more information to gather from this panel.

YARMUTH: We'll think about that. The gentlemen's time is expired. Now, recognize the gentleman from California, Mr. Peters, for five minutes.

PETERS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I've really enjoyed this. You've been a great panel. In San Diego, which I represent, we know that our community is vibrant and booming from immigration. And in my district, the fastest-growing racial group actually is Asian-American Pacific Islanders.

AAPL businesses have created over 50,000 jobs in San Diego County. I also think it's kind of amusing to sit here where we seem to agree on so much. We agree that the immigration system is broken. We agree that we are against illegal immigration. We agree that we are for legal immigration. But no one has acknowledged what maybe we should say out loud is that Congress has the power to decide what legal immigration is.

And if we don't like what it is today, why not--why don't we make legal what's good for America. And I would just ask Mr. Jawetz a question. If the--well, and this may be--say one more time that people have acknowledged that the Senate did take this up in 2013. That was my first year in Congress.

And I thought oh boy, we're going to solve this problem. And then I found out that the speaker, Mr. Boehner, at that time, could keep something off the floor from even being voted on, 68 votes in the Senate, very bipartisan, would have provided \$40 billion for border security, which was a big tough nut to digest for a lot of Democrats, but would

House Budget Committee Holds Hearing on Economic Benefits of Immigration

have solved a lot of the numbers problems, would have reunited families and done a lot of other things we all say we want to do.

So, that's before us again. We could do that. Mr. Jawetz, we hear often this notion from opponents of immigration that immigrants will take American jobs. Would you explain why that's not the case?

JAWETZ: Sure. And I think Dr. Kerr can get into that as well. But economists looked at this repeatedly, and what they basically do, is they talk about this in terms of whether immigrants are competing or if they're complementing the American workforce.

And by enlarge, and most aspects, immigrants are complementing the American workforce, not even considering the additional entrepreneurship of just straight creating jobs out of whole cloth.

PETERS: So, they're filling new jobs, not taking existing jobs. Is that essentially what it is?

JAWETZ: They're often filling new jobs and, frankly, because of the complementary aspect of it, by filling new introductory level jobs, they actually free up the opportunity for additional managerial jobs and other things for American workers.

We see some of the biggest gains actually among African-American--African-American workers who end up getting higher level, more managerial jobs often when the entry-level jobs are being tapered by immigrants, especially new immigrants who may not have the same need of language fluency as American workers.

PETERS: Right. And with respect to the 2013 bill, you mentioned that the CBO--CBO estimated a reduction in the federal deficit of nearly \$1 trillion over 20 years.

JAWETZ: That's right.

PETERS: How is that possible?

JAWETZ: I mean, it's two things basically. One part, and this sort of goes to the question that was asked earlier about whether--Mr. Woodall, whether legal immigrants or illegal immigrants are more economically productive.

There is an economic boon essentially from getting legal status. It's absolutely true that the wages of not committed workers are naturally suppressed and that it's not good for them or for anybody else.

And so, providing a path to citizenship for the ten-and-a-half million people who are undocumented right now, seven million of them are in the workforce, would actually result in an economic benefit to them and to their wages and to the wages around them.

But this separately, also, what that bill did was actually change the legal immigration system going forward to bring in those immigrants that it seems like we have general consensus, would be a good thing to have in this country, so we can stimulate additional economic growth.

And it's the economic growth and the dynamic scoring that was done on that bill, and the tax contributions made by those individuals over 10, 20 years that would end up paying down that deficit.

PETERS: So, legalizing people who are here today, ten-and-a-half million people, who are many--most of them are part of the economy, would actually help the Americans who are already citizens?

JAWETZ: Absolutely.

PETERS: Economically speaking.

JAWETZ: Absolutely, yes.

PETERS: Would not--would not take their jobs?

House Budget Committee Holds Hearing on Economic Benefits of Immigration

JAWETZ: No, that is--that is certainly--I mean, these are, first of all, for the folks who are here, they're already in the workforce.

PETERS: Right.

JAWETZ: So, let's be clear with that. They're already in the workforce anyway.

PETERS: Can you talk to me about how--how aging plays into this? So, the population is aging, how is--how is the addition of immigrants consistent with or helpful to dealing with that--that issue?

JAWETZ: Yeah, totally. So, immigrants who come into the United States today are by enlarge, they are working in reproductive prime of their lives. Unlike, frankly, the American, you know, workforce, which is aging and is reproducing at a lower and lower rate over time.

And so, when you think about sort of the growth rate curve, the growth rate for this country, and the prospects of not being country, that is skewed towards people who are no longer in the workforce and are counting upon retirement benefits and the like. Immigrants are breathing new life into that system and are helping to keep it solvent today and for years going forward.

PETERS: So, someone suggested that that was the cost of immigrants offset the benefits they were providing to buy paying into social benefits programs. Is that correct?

JAWETZ: No. The National Academy of Sciences did an exhaustive study literature review two years ago. And what they found is, yes, there are cost. This is actually relevant to the mayor, as well. There are cost of immigration to this country, particularly, the cost of children because surprise, surprise, I'm a father of two. Children are a huge suck on the economy, right.

They're pretty economically useless, at first, but they are investments. And then eventually, that investment pays off. And it pays off in spades, especially, for second-generation immigrants. And so, you know, also, there are additional cost in certain communities that have the largest populations initially.

So--so as part of immigration reform conversation, we maybe should have a conversation about some redistribution of support from the federal government to communities that have the largest shares of immigrants and immigrants who are seeing some--some impact to their housing market, in their schools and the like. But overall, immigrants are in economic boon for this country physically and economically.

PETERS: For all of us?

JAWETZ: For all of us.

PETERS: Thank you very much. Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

YARMUTH: Gentleman's time is expired. I now recognize the gentleman from Ohio, Mr. Johnson, for five minutes.

JOHNSON: Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I--important hearing today and I appreciate our panelist be here. I represent rural eastern and southeastern Ohio, where many small businesses rely on H-2B visas.

As you may know, the H-2B program is a small, but very necessary, part of the American economic landscape, helping to create and sustain jobs in my district and across the country.

I'm grateful to the administration for recognizing the unprecedented employer demand for H-2B workers and raising the cap by an additional 30,000 visas for the rest of fiscal year 2019, but this temporary relief does not solve the problem.

In fact, without substantial and immediate reform to this visa program, some of the small businesses in my district are at risk of losing everything because they can't get their workers. I think we can all agree that there is no reason

House Budget Committee Holds Hearing on Economic Benefits of Immigration

to have a visa program that puts American businesses out of business. And that was certainly not the intent of this program.

Mayor Nicholls, as the mayor of Yuma, where 175 different crops are grown year-round, can you talk about your business communities experience with this visa program? What kind of economic impact would immigration reform that allowed for a stable legal immigrant workforce have on seasonal businesses where you live?

NICHOLLS: Thank you, Congressman. Yeah, we've focused primarily on the H-2A program. And it's a very difficult program to enact. In order to--to have someone participate in that program, they have to go to a certain embassy in their country, sign up for a very particular workforce element, whether it's picking a specific crop during a specific time period for a specific employer, and then if there's an event that ruins that crop, that worker is in limbo.

The company is having a hard time figuring out what to do with that worker, so there's--there's those kind of constraints and there's a shared limit, a number of people that can be in the program in the region and that's limiting our workforce, which is part of what I talked about with the--the tens of thousands of acres of fresh produce that went to Guanajuato, Mexico. It's because they weren't enough workers and enough visas to service that--that area.

JOHNSON: Okay, well, thank you. Mr. Jawetz, in your testimony, you say, and I quote, "the contributions of foreign-born workers through the payroll taxes are shoring up the country's social safety net for years to come and helping ensure that we honor the commitment we made to older Americans now turning to those programs for support". When you say foreign-born workers, are you including the undocumented immigrants who would be given lawful permanent resident status under H.R. 6?

JAWETZ: Yes. So, in general, all--all foreign-born workers--

JOHNSON: --Yes?

JAWETZ: Documented or undocumented, yes.

JOHNSON: Okay, well then, let's take a look at the effect on social security with H.R.6. In your view, would H.R. 6 make social security solvent?

JAWETZ: Well, I mean, it's hard to say, right? So, right now, you're talking about H.R.6--

JOHNSON: --How much does it move the dial?

JAWETZ: So, that hasn't been calculated and CBO didn't (INAUDIBLE)--

JOHNSON: --So, we don't know. So, you say it's going to improve the economic status and shore up that safety net program, but you have no idea how much?

JAWETZ: There are sort of two different parts of the--of my testimony. I mean--you know--

JOHNSON: --Alright, well, let me, for the record, let me tell you that CBO has reported that H.R.6 would barely move the dial on social security. So, their--CBO's opinion is diametrically opposite to yours. Let me ask you another question.

JAWETZ: So, I'm not quite saying--

JOHNSON: --In your testimony, you mention H.R. 6, that if enacted that I quote, "the bill would have a positive social and economic impact on states and communities all over the country". So, do you endorse H.R. 6?

JAWETZ: We fully endorse H.R. 6.

JOHNSON: Okay, great. Do you know the impact that H.R. 6 would have on the federal budget?

JAWETZ: Yes. So, when we look at the CBO score--

House Budget Committee Holds Hearing on Economic Benefits of Immigration

JOHNSON: --What is--what is your--what is your view? How much?

JAWETZ: So, when you look at the CBO score, what CBO did not do for H.R. 6, but they did do for H.R.--

JOHNSON: --H.R.--According to CBO--according to CBO, H.R. 6 would add over \$30 billion to the federal deficit over ten years. So, how would you recommend that we pay for H.R. 6?

JAWETZ: So, we did a study of the Dream Act, specifically just the Dream Act portion--

JOHNSON: --No, no, no. I want to know how you think we're going to pay for it.

JAWETZ: So, I'm going to try and answer this question. When you look at the Dream Act--

JOHNSON: --I've only 24 seconds. How do you think we're going to pay for--

YARMUTH: --I'll give the gentlemen more time if you allow him to answer the question.

(LAUGHTER)

JAWETZ: I think it'd be helpful for you to know, we did a study of just the Dream Act portion of--of the legislation, not H.R. 6 specifically, but the Dream Act generally a couple of years ago, and if you do, do essentially what CBO would do if they did dynamic scoring, you look at the long-term economic impact of the bill, we saw a gain of--of up to a trillion dollars basically over ten years in providing legalization for people who are dreamers, right? Because they--

JOHNSON: --But you're still not answering my question. How would you recommend that we pay for H.R. 6?

JAWETZ: I think, honestly, I mean, I wasn't here for when PAYGO was--was--I mean, I wasn't a member of Congress who voted for the PAYGO rules that exist right now, I would say that just like what I said earlier about children being an economic suck, but actually were an investment in our future. Passing legislation like H.R. 6, that would provide an opportunity for legalization for individuals who are already in our country, who we've educated here, who we've invested in, who want to contribute more fully, and unlocking that potential would be a great long-term investment for our country and we would reap the benefits of that in the long run.

JOHNSON: Okay, I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

YARMUTH: Gentlemen's time has expired, and I yield five minutes to the gentlelady from Illinois, Ms. Schakowsky.

SCHAKOWSKY: Thank you. You know, it's tempting to use a bunch of time just venting my theory about what I'm seeing and the heartbreak at the border, but also in my community where there's so much fear. Mr. Jawetz, you have a lot of experience working on issues related to immigration detention and you have even represented detainees challenging unlawful conditions of confinement. So, in your experience, what have courts found to constitute unlawful conditions of confinement and how does that compare to what we're seeing at the border today?

JAWETZ: So, under the 8th amendment to the Constitution, you cannot provide deliberate indifference to serious medical needs, for instance. That's just the general 8th amendment standard. The 8th amendment, though, isn't actually the relevant standard when looking at civil detainees like immigrants in custody who are not being punished. They can't constitutionally be punished. And so, really what it comes down to there, essentially is looking at their--their fundamental 5th amendment due process rights to protection.

And you know, the courts are different on sort of what that means in different circuits, but in the 9th circuit, certainly under a case called Jones (INAUDIBLE), if you treat a person who's in civil custody the same as you would treat someone who is in pre-trial criminal custody or certainly post-conviction custody, then that would be--that would be presumably unconstitutional under the 5th amendment.

House Budget Committee Holds Hearing on Economic Benefits of Immigration

SCHAKOWSKY: So, is it--is it safe to say that failing to provide children with soap and toothbrush and forcing them to sleep concrete floors in cold, overcrowded cells is not only inhumane, but unlawful--an unlawful condition of confinement?

JAWETZ: So, it's certainly unlawful with respect to the actual settlement agreements that govern the treatment of children in custody and that's just as enforceable, obviously, as the constitutional protections. You know, I would say overtime, courts in Congress have reduced the ability for individuals who are in custody to actually recover for violations of their rights.

I actually--the last time I was here, testifying back in 2007, I was sitting right next to a client of--of mine at the time, Francisco Castaneda, who had been in immigration custody for 11 months and from day one when he walked in the facility, they knew that he needed a biopsy in order to rule out cancer, and for 11 months, they denied it to him. And when he finally walked out the facility door after we did the demand letter, the doctor who walked him out said get yourself to an emergency room.

By that point, he already had metastatic penile cancer, testified before Congress, and a few months later, passed away. And the Supreme Court, frankly, did nothing actually ruled that because Congress, under the Public Services Act, ruled that the Federal (INAUDIBLE) Claims Act is the exclusive remedy for individuals who are mistreated by--by veterans--by the folks who are treating him--the public health service, he was not able to recover at all for the unconstitutional conduct that he was subjected to--

SCHAKOWSKY: --Let me ask--

JAWETZ: --Course that was of horrendous.

SCHAKOWSKY: What kind of impact will the administration's cruel and inhumane masked detention of refugees and asylum seekers have on the economy? I heard a woman on television last night say that there--that each child actually costs about \$750 dollars per night to keep in the--in an effective--in the inhumane custody that they're in right now, but we keep hearing about there's not enough money. We're spending a lot of money, aren't we?

JAWETZ: Yeah. No, we're spending a tremendous amount of money in the most expensive way of handling this situation possible. There--there were, at the time the administration took over basically, there was a program in place that allowed for pennies on the dollar basically to release families into intensive supervision programs basically, in which we were seeing actually phenomenal results of folks showing up for proceedings.

SCHAKOWSKY: Let--let me, also, I met with the U.S. tourism operators and they said there's been a 20 percent decline in tourists in the United States. What does that mean for us? And I mean, they attributed--I asked have these immigration policies deterred people from coming? And they attributed that to the decline.

JAWETZ: Yeah, I don't--I mean, this sort of goes to the earlier point--earlier point--you know, if it is in fact the case that the committee members on all sides of the aisle are supportive of immigrants and more immigrants coming into the country, I think that is not what the administration's official policy is and what their stated preference is. Stephen Miller's goal, and many people who he has brought into the administration who were influencing policy, the folks, again at FAIR, and NumbersUSA, Center of Immigration Studies--

SCHAKOWSKY: --Alright. Well, let me ask--

JAWETZ: --To reduce immigration into the country.

SCHAKOWSKY: Let me ask you one more question. The President has threatened to remove millions of Americans--deport them from the United States. How would mass deportation impact our economy?

JAWETZ: So, I certainly got to that in my initial testimony and I would refer folks to my remarks. But, if we were to pursue a policy of mass deportation and removing all of just the 7 billion workers in our economy who are undocumented, it would--you know, potentially lead to a reduction in cumulative GDP of up to \$4.7 trillion dollars over ten years, and reductions up to 18 percent of the workforce in certain industries. It'd be devastating.

House Budget Committee Holds Hearing on Economic Benefits of Immigration

SCHAKOWSKY: Thank you, I yield back.

YARMUTH: The gentlelady's time has expired. Now, I yield five minutes to the gentlemen from Texas, Mr. Roy.

ROY: Thank you, Chairman. I thank all of the witnesses for being here and taking the time to address the committee on this important issue. I don't--I realize the purpose of this hearing, of course, is to focus on the economic impact of immigration, illegal, legal, etc., and trying to figure out policies to address it. A number of times in this hearing, both sides of the aisle, we've been talking about the crisis at the border.

I would just like to bring to the attention when we're talking about pointed comments about this administration's handling of the border, that it was my colleagues on the other side of the aisle for the last five months who repeatedly kept saying there was no crisis at the border. There is public record over and over--no, it is true. It is true. There is statement, after statement, after statement by members of the democrat house of representative--democrats in the house of representatives making statements saying there was no crisis. Look at the public record. Go find it, because it's true. They called it a manufactured crisis, said it wasn't happening. And as a result, we have dead migrants.

We have pictures on the front of the newspaper showing a father trying to get his child across the Rio Grande, understandably, because we, the most powerful nation in the history of mankind, refuse to create a system and to secure the border in such a way that that father with his child knows how to get here, the rules to follow, and to do so safely rather than risking a difficult journey being guided predominately by cartels and not just cartels generically as if this is some sort of fictitious thing.

Very specifically, the gulf cartels, Reynosa faction. The cartel (INAUDIBLE), the Sinaloas, who are making hundreds of millions of dollars moving people through Mexico to come to the United States and not one of us on either side of the aisle takes anything away from the individuals who want to do that. It makes sense. We understand it, but it unconscionable that this body won't do anything about it.

And now, we have on the floor of the House of Representatives legislation that is alleged to address this situation but does not do anything to stem the flow or the pressure valve. It does nothing to create places where we can have detention facilities at ICE in order to push back on the numbers of people that the cartels are going to continue to drive across the border for profit and to use the facilities that we would create with this four and half billion dollars for border patrol to house people at the border, to process them, to then do what?

We're going to complete the cycle of the profit-making machine that the cartels use to move people across our border. When are we going to sit down around a table, on a bipartisan basis, and recognize that this problem needs to be solved? Last year, I heard one of my colleagues here talk about previous legislation that was rejected for one reason or another. I want to remind this body that last year in July, there were two votes on the immigration issue. One vote got 191 Republican votes. The other bill got 121 Republican votes.

Differences of opinion within the conference, not one democrat supported either of those bills. Bills that would reform this system to be a points-based system to help streamline the process to get people here so they can work and have a better immigration system. Another part that would have secured the border, dealt with the asylum issue, dealt with the Flores issue, dealt with the very magnet that the catch and release system is empowering the cartels to profit moving these people across the border in which they then die in the process.

It is the height of arrogance and hypocrisy for those who sat here ignoring this problem for months on end to then point to border patrol, to point to the people who are trying to figure out how to solve the problem when they've got facilities to house a few thousand and they've got three, and four, and five times that number of people to figure out what to do with. And to then point at them and say they are somehow violating the decency of how they're handling these people when border patrol is saving lives on a daily basis.

Unfortunately, they didn't get to save the life of that father and that child yesterday, or a few days ago, when that unfortunate tragedy happened. But when are we going to come together to solve this problem? We cannot, to the point of one my colleagues on both sides of the aisle made this point, at the same time have a help wanted sign

House Budget Committee Holds Hearing on Economic Benefits of Immigration

and a no trespassing sign at the border. And that is a bipartisan problem I will acknowledge. But, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle have been ignoring this crisis for a long time.

I'd like to talk about the cost issue. It's an important issue, but it is not possible for me to continue to listen to that kind of pointed testimony about this administration, ICE, and CBP when you go back, and you look at the previous administration and we talk about kids sleeping on floors? The pictures that were circulating around this week of kids sleeping on concrete were from 2015, and yet they were being said as if it was this administration. We've got to stop the hyperbole and actually figure out how to sit down and solve the problem. I yield back to the Chairman.

YARMUTH: The gentlemen's time has expired. I now recognize the gentlelady from Texas, Ms. Jackson Lee for five minutes.

JACKSON LEE: I thank the chairman very much and the ranking member for this important hearing and I feel the passion of my fellow Texan and understand his interpretation. Having been here a little longer than the gentlemen, I have the historical perspective of how we dealt with immigration and the question of immigration reform. For almost two decades, I introduced comprehensive immigration reform.

Most of my bill was incorporated in the 2010 McCain Gang of Eight effort that was almost at the front door of the president of the United States, but unfortunately, the republican-controlled Senate did not have the passion and capacity to pass the legislation. I say that to say so that the record can be established that the crisis was really created by the pointed remarks of the commander-in-chief, president of the United States, throwing immigration bombs, if you will. Mass deportation, blocking the bridges, setting policies for people to live in squalor on the Mexican side of the border.

And so, unlike those of you who seem to be presenting here we're having a lucid discussion, we lost all reason. Let me set the record straight, the tragedy of Mr. Martinez or the family of the gentleman and precious daughter, and precious wife actually presented themselves at the international bridge of (INAUDIBLE) and were told to seek asylum fleeing violence--and were told that the bridge was closed.

I am from Texas, so I know bridges cannot be closed and I know that there's no end to the amount of people that could get in line, although it would be a long line, to present themselves for asylum which is still not only the law of the United States, but it is international law which we've agreed to. I think it is important to set the record straight. Having been at the border during the time of Mr.--the gentleman's comments in 214, 215, having seen unaccompanied children come off the bus, I was there, I understand. At least in the previous administration, there was the effort to try to address it in a minatory manner.

So, let me--let me go quickly as my time, Mr. Jawetz, let me just get a number of how much the economy would be driven positively if comprehensive immigration reform was to be passed. We've had a variety of numbers. It would mean people would have access to citizenship. They would get in line--let me be very clear, the legislation would not put people who were undocumented in front of those who've been in line. But, what that--what would that engine be?

JAWETZ: Sure. So, when Congress, in 2013, passed S. 744, CBO and the Joint Committee on Taxation did a number of different reports, both a--a specific score of the bill and also, an economic impact report that was part of the dynamic scoring of it. And what they found was that passing that legislation would have decreased federal budget deficits by about a trillion dollars over twenty years, would have increased the nation's GDP by about 3.3 percent in ten years and 5.4 percent in twenty years, and the increased average of wages in American workers within ten years.

JACKSON LEE: And so, over a period of time, there would be constant growth in the budget, maybe to be able to have a more humanitarian response to those who would be possibly still coming, unfortunately, but maybe because of regular order, we would have a process for individuals to cross the border whether it's the northern border, the--the southern border, or otherwise. Is that correct?

House Budget Committee Holds Hearing on Economic Benefits of Immigration

JAWETZ: I mean, acting secretary of Homeland Security, Kevin McAleenan, just a couple of weeks ago testified before Congress that had that bill itself been enacted into law, we would have actually provided additional resources that could have helped to address the challenges they're facing now.

JACKSON LEE: I'm always seeking common, reasonable ways--common-sense, reasonable ways to address this question. Give me that trillion number again please. It needs to be in the record louder than--than ever.

JAWETZ: Sure. So, basically, if that legislation had been enacted into law, the budget deficit would have been decreased by about a trillion dollars over twenty years.

JACKSON LEE: (INAUDIBLE). Mr. Kahin--Kahin, let me thank you for your presence here. Tell me how you got here, sir.

KAHIN: I got here as an asylum--an (INAUDIBLE) asylum and I get here about 12-18 months and I went go in school--

JACKSON LEE: --So, you fled violence from Somalia?

KAHIN: Yes.

JACKSON LEE: And so, you understand it is reasonable that people could be sacrificing their lives to flee violence?

KAHIN: Actually, I'm one of the luckiest people on earth, but I know thousands of people in Africa and Somalia who are fleeing from the civil war and lying in the--you know, in the sea. Those are by thousands, I think, every month.

JACKSON LEE: And so, you have a business. Are you pouring into the economy? When I say that, is your business now turning back into the economy with employees? Can you tell me how many employees you have?

KAHIN: I have about 60.

JACKSON LEE: About 60 employees, and training young people or training others as well in--in your employment?

KAHIN: Yes, I have--you know, students who--you know, do--I mean, I employ during school year or--you know, they're off. And I also have a kid who started from dishwashing, but right now a chef. Some of them are also managers.

YARMUTH: The gentlelady's time has expired.

JACKSON LEE: I thank the gentlemen. I'm sorry, I didn't get to other witness. Mr. Chairman, I thank you and the ranking member for your courtesies, but I think we've made the record over and over again. Thank you so very much.

YARMUTH: Thank you, gentlelady. And I'll recognize the gentlemen from Nevada, Mr. Horsford for five minutes.

HORSFORD: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. This is a very important hearing to allow us to discuss the economic benefits immigrant families contribute to this country and certainly, in my home state of Nevada. Since the founding of this country until today, immigrants have made strong contributions to our society and culture, but they've also served as engines for economic growth and innovation, creating new economic opportunities for all of us. I'd like to focus my time today on temporary protected status holders. Households with TPS holders contribute \$2.3 billion dollars in federal taxes and \$1.3 billion dollars in state and local taxes annually.

They hold more than \$10 billion dollars in spending power. However, the Trump administration has worked to systematically dismantle our immigration system over the past two years in which he has ended TPS protections for six out of ten countries including El Salvador, Haiti, Honduras, Nepal, Nicaragua, and Sudan. That represents nearly 318,000 individuals from those countries alone and according to the national immigration forum, TPS holders contribute more than \$6.9 billion dollars to social security and Medicare over ten years.

House Budget Committee Holds Hearing on Economic Benefits of Immigration

That cannot even--these individuals cannot even access those benefits because they are not legal immigrants, but they pay into it for you, for me, and for everyone working to benefit. In my home state of Nevada, there are over 4,000 TPS holders from places like El Salvador and Honduras. They work in the hospitality, construction, and food and beverage industries, contributing over \$40 million dollars in federal taxes and over \$15 million dollars in state and local taxes. One of my constituents, Erica Lopez, came to the U.S. from El Salvador and has been a TPS holder for 15 years.

She's a member of the culinary union and works hard to provide for her family every single day. Now, when I met with Erica, she told me that when she heard about the Trump administration's efforts to deny the renewal of her TPS status, she felt scared and worried for her family. Her oldest two children who are 19 and 22 are also TPS holders, but her two youngest daughters, 16 and 12, are both U.S. citizens. And again, I want to underscore, these are individuals who are here as asylum seekers. They are legally permitted to be here. These are not individuals who have broken the law.

They have followed the law and now because of this administration's policies, they are risk of having their families torn apart, losing the homes that they built up, and the contributions that they make to our community. So, Mr. Jawetz, if the Trump administration has its way with crippling our immigration system, I want to know specifically, how would TPS holders be impacted? What would happen to our nation's GDP? What would happen to the housing market and industries such as food and beverage? and hospitality? And construction? That many TPS holders work in.

JAWETZ: Thank you so much for the question. So, as you know, for TPS holders right now who have had their protection terminated because of preliminary injunctions in place by trial courts right now. Those protections have been preserved. And so, people who had TPS, who have TPS, currently are able to hold on to their TPS. But that's just holding on by--by a shoe string, right? I mean, court decisions are going to come down at some point and we'll see what they ultimately decide. If courts permit the termination of TPS to go forward, then individuals will lose that protection. And unlike with DACA, which is interesting, DACA because--you know, how long you get your protection depends on--or the duration is two years, but when it expires depends on when you get your protection.

With TPS, it's all a single date, and so--you know, you'll see for 200,000 Salvadorans plus for 50-60,000 Hondurans, on a single day, they're all going to lose their ability to work lawfully in this country and to remain lawfully in this country. And then, I think, it remains to be seen. I mean, what happens to them in their--in their jobs, whether or not they'll be able to leave that current job and go to a new job, or they're going to have to go to another I-9 process and not have work authorization for that job.

I think that's going to be disruptive. If you look, actually, at TPS holders in construction, for instance, we did a specific paper looking at TPS holders in six states that experienced really, really devastating natural disasters over the last two years and the work that TPS holders in construction right now are already doing to help rebuild states like North Carolina, Texas, California, Virginia, et cetera, Florida.

HORSFORD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think that this is an important area that we need to understand more. I know that we're limited on time, but I'm thankful to have the opportunity to bring the perspective of many of my constituents who I am fighting for and we cannot allow their status to expire. They're contributing too much to our communities and to our community--to our economy to allow that to happen.

YARMUTH: Thank you. The gentleman's time has expired. I now yield ten minutes to the ranking member for his questions.

WOMACK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I'll try not to take all of my ten minutes. I was prepared to yield a little bit to Mr. Woodall, only because I like to hear him talk. And I do appreciate our panelists today and particularly, the honorable mayor of Yuma. Boy, us mayors, we've got to stick together, and I do appreciate the work you do.

I have often said that I think Congress would be a lot better off if a criteria for being elected was to having been a mayor once upon a time, where you had to balance competing interests and make decisions for the greater good of the group that you represent. And I think mayors pretty much do that routinely. And you know, we've--today, in this

House Budget Committee Holds Hearing on Economic Benefits of Immigration

conversation, we have, I think, remarkably, found that we agree on a lot of things. First of all, we agree that we have a broken immigration system. Everybody says that.

It rolls off the tongue pretty easy now because it's pretty true, and if you polled the average American out there, it would be an overwhelming result that the--the feeling border to border, across all political biases, is that this immigration system that we have is just simply not working for the betterment of the people. Probably so overwhelmingly in that way that the only thing that I can think of that might be a bigger vote in something broken is our budget process, but I'll

(LAUGHTER)

leave that to another--another conversation. Mr. Yarmuth and I happened to have serious agreement on--on those issues. As I said, we have agreed that we have a broken system, so here's--here's a question. Should we have open borders, Dr. Jawetz, or Mr. Jawetz?

JAWETZ: No, I think we can have a system in which we have borders, but we also have pathways. We heard earlier this idea that we should have wide--what was it? Wide gateways and tall fences, I think? But--you know, as (INAUDIBLE) actually pointed out, in the case of the father who died with his--his daughter just two or three days ago, they went to one of those gateways and that gateway was closed. And so, that's part of the dysfunction.

WOMACK: So, if--if we can agree that we definitely need some level of border security, we--in order to protect the sovereignty of our country. I mean, there's--I don't know how many people we have on this planet right now, 7-and-a-half billion? Something like that. I don't know that we really know, but it's a lot of people and a whole lot of them are living in abject poverty, read a lot those people would love to be able to come to this country and enjoy the benefits of the pursuit of the American dream.

So, the fact is we have to have a--some kind of a system set up to where people not from this country can actually come to this country. And--and I think it begins--that the ability to do that in a manageable way begins with having a secure border, would--I see you shaking your head in somewhat disagreement. So, disagree with me on that.

JAWETZ: Sure. So, I don't think it begins with the border. The border's too late. You already--you know, David Aguilar, when he was the chief of the border patrol testified before Congress in 2007 on the issue of immigration reform and essentially said, the best thing I could do to secure the border would be to pass comprehensive immigration reform and reform the legal immigration system because I want to get, in his words, the bust boys and nannies out of the desert and through the ports of entry so I can focus on the folks who can't come through the ports of entry, right? So, before you get to border security, and patrolling the border, and the walls, and the rest of it, you would reshape entirely what that flow--what the mission of security is--

WOMACK: --Okay, so, let's say for the sake of the agreement, that we did some kind of comprehensive immigration reform, we're probably still going to create lines. Are we not?

JAWETZ: Sure.

WOMACK: There's going to be a wait time.

JAWETZ: Yes.

WOMACK: People are impatient. So, if the border is not secure, what guarantee is there that the people who want to come to this country today, and don't want to stand in a line, are going to be willing to go stand in a line because we've done some kind of comprehensi--when there is a hole in the fence and they can just crawl through the hole in the fence.

JAWETZ: I guess a few thoughts on that. I mean, one is the Department of Homeland Security offer immigration statistics under this administration just two years ago reported that the border is more secure now and more difficult to cross than ever before in our history. So, you know, we often hear--and I was in Congress for seven years, we always hear about enforcement first and border (INAUDIBLE) first, secure the border first, all that discussion.

House Budget Committee Holds Hearing on Economic Benefits of Immigration

As you talked about with Congresswoman Jayapal, we haven't changed our legal immigration system since 1990. It's not only been enforcement first for the last 30 years, it's been enforcement only for the last 30 years. And so, we've--you know, we've got a broken immigration system, and it's the system that's broken.

You cannot enforce your way into fixing that system. More enforcement of that broken system will not improve it, and the policy proposals that were voted on last year that would shrink the legal immigration channels, that would eliminate the diversities program, that would make it harder for folks to have an opportunity that they can dream to come into the country will only increase detentions on coming illegally.

WOMACK: So, Mr. Kahin, you did this right? You came here as a refugee, sought asylum, waited in line, and you're the beneficiary of having done that. Should we have a--a very strong immigration policy in this country that would be respectful of the fact that people like yourself did do it the right way?

KAHIN: That's right, your honor. I think it's a good idea and I also think it's a good idea to legalize those who are already in the country and who are working for--for years and years--

WOMACK: --Even if they came into the country illegally or overstayed a visa, which makes them undocumented today?

KAHIN: I have no opinion on that, but I will say those who are not committing any crime who have been to--you know, this country and the economy, I think it would be best for our economy to--

WOMACK: --So my--so my argument against that is simply this, that if in fact there is a reward for somebody who has either entered the country illegally or overstayed a visa and is now in the country illegally. If the reward is we're just going to look the other way on the law and allow them to stay here, I think it reinforces my position on border security.

If that is the case, then you can all the comprehensive immigration reform you want to have and the interior changes that you want to make in this country, but if you can still come into this country across and unsecure border, I think it's not going to serve as the proper deterrent that it should. Now, I want to kind of switch over to my friend, the mayor. When did you do your budget for 2000 and--when is your fiscal year?

NICHOLLS: Fiscal year starts in July.

WOMACK: Alright. So, you started in July. And so, you're about to end a budget cycle and enter into a new budget year?

NICHOLLS: Correct.

WOMACK: Okay, so when did you do the budget that effects the spending up through the month of June?

NICHOLLS: For the fiscal year, we did last year in May.

WOMACK: So, early in the year, spring?

NICHOLLS: Spring--spring to early summer.

WOMACK: So, in your budget deliberations, you and your city council, what--how were you forecasting the allocation of taxpayer dollars to support the institutions effected by the crisis that we're facing today?

NICHOLLS: So, in the city budget, what our real struggles have been is with law enforcement, to make sure that we can supply for the protection of the community. So, that's really where our focus has been to maintain and grow our capabilities in that arena. So, the exact--working with exactly with the migrant situation didn't come into play except for in that arena because we've been dependent upon the non-profits to carry that burden.

WOMACK: So, have you--up here we call them supplementals, money that we have to allocate down the road because we didn't see it on the front end. Have you had to do supplementals?

House Budget Committee Holds Hearing on Economic Benefits of Immigration

NICHOLLS: We have not at this time because the salv--the different non-profits have come through with some funding.

WOMACK: Have you had to reallocate money from other programs in order to supplement the police? Did you do some internal transfers of money from line items to line items?

NICHOLLS: We actually approved the raise prior to the budget, but knowing that we were going to the budget, we were prepared for that. So, we've had some of that going on in year's past and--and were prepared with the timing on it this time.

WOMACK: Now, so you obviously, because July 1st is Monday, have probably completed your budget cycle for fiscal '20, correct?

NICHOLLS: Well, actually, the final approval is in July and there's some overlap there.

WOMACK: And what has happened to the budget deliberations for next year that begins on Monday that were influenced by what you've been dealing with here for the last several months?

NICHOLLS: Well, we actually lay a little bit into the fall before we start our next budget deliberations. So it kind of is a wait and see where does this go as an issue in our community to see how things are handled.

WOMACK: So, it's uncertain.

NICHOLLS: It's very uncertain, yes.

WOMACK: And--and so, how would Congress doing its job, and we can argue about--you know, what the outcome would look like, but at some point in time, the Congress, the right and the left, they have to get together, they have to hammer out their differences and come to some kind of a compromise to benefit you. So, how important is Congress doing its job to you?

NICHOLLS: It's extremely important and if I could comment a little bit on whether it's security or law, it has to be both at the same time, because where we sit, we are on the border. And while it remains unsecure, our community can remain unsecure. So, we can't wait for the law to catch up. It--it needs to happen now.

WOMACK: I want to thank the panelists, Mr. Chairman, thank you again for leading on this hearing. These are conversations that we need to continue to have, but we also need to be mindful that we've got a crisis that has emerged on our border that is still raging and has not been fixed and will not be fixed by what we did yesterday and I would admonish our Congress to get back to work and take the steps necessary to solve for that--that current crisis. And thank you, I yield back.

YARMUTH: Thank you, gentleman. I now yield myself ten minutes. You know, it's--it's, I guess, inevitable that this discussion would have focus to a significant extent on the current crisis, even though that was not the intent of the hearing. The hearing was a prospective look at how important immigration is and will continue to be for sustainability of our economy and our society.

And this was mentioned, I was part of the so-called Gang of Eight in 2013. We worked for seven months. We negotiated--in secret, we negotiated as normal human beings would negotiate--like you and I would negotiate, and we came up with a plan that was--we were convinced would have at least 260 to 70 votes in the House. Again, the Senate had already passed a bill.

We started with the premise that only two preconditions to the discussion. Number one is it had to fix the problems, two, it had to be able to pass both Houses. That was it. And we actually knew that, the four Democrats in the group, that we were going to have to come up with something that was at least perceived to be more conservative than what passed the Democrat-controlled Senate, and we did that. And I had no experience in immigration policy. People say why in the world are you on that panel, well, Kentucky was a border state during the Civil War.

House Budget Committee Holds Hearing on Economic Benefits of Immigration

But, I--I learned an awful lot, and one of the things I learned, and this mayor relates directly to what you just said, that the real problem in doing comprehensive immigration reform is that in today's world, republicans want to focus on border security, democrats want to focus on family reunification, the undocumented, and the dreamers. And the easy part is border security. That is the easier part. Put up walls, militarize the border, put up drones, do all of that stuff and yeah, you can pretty much shut the border down.

But you haven't solved the problem that this hearing was really meant to address, which is how do we get people into this country that we desperately need? And I've--I was astounded a couple of weeks ago, the Chief Technology Officer from Microsoft was in my community and she made a statement then that will blow everybody's mind. It was, over the next ten years, we will experience 250 years' worth of change. If she's 50 percent wrong, we're still talking about the same amount of change that we've experienced from before 1900 until now.

I talked to a chief--a top guy at IBM who said, in the next three years alone, artificial intelligence will eliminate or significantly change 120 million jobs around the world in the next three years. With this kind of activity going on, most of its technology related. Dr. Kerr, how critical is it that we have the best minds in the world, in this country to cope with the rapid change that we're going to be facing?

KERR: Well, I do think it's very important and we're not the only country who would like to have the best minds in the world to be thinking about some of these--some of these problems. I think we don't even know quite, research wise, know what's coming up yet.

We're trying to grapple with it. I've seen some studies that are trying to understand what the impact of artificial intelligence and robotization and all these things are going to be on our--on our jobs, but I think high skilled--high skilled immigrants, in general, just having some of the best minds thinking about it needs to be--needs to be there.

YARMUTH: And a huge percentage of our technology companies were founded by immigrants, isn't that correct?

KERR: That is correct. A huge percent--it's actually a little bit hard to think about sometimes because some of them migrated as children, some of them migrated as adults, some of them are second-generation immigrants. How do you even put a number on that? But--but most of them have immigrant founders as part of the founding team.

YARMUTH: Thank you. Mr. Kahin, I am touched by your story. I'm impressed by your story and I've seen it replicated in my community many times over. We have a very significant Somali population in--in Louisville, Kentucky, and they've become very productive, cherished members of our community.

And one of the things that occurs to me is that we have an economy basically, it may change--yeah, and if we're going to change 250 years in the next, it may change, but right now, our community--our economy is about 70 percent based, 70-75 percent based on consumption, consumer spending. You've hired 60 people who are spending money in your community.

You have people from your community spending money with you that enables you to pay them and provide for yourself. How--how important do you think that immigration is to actually just bolstering the com--if most of the growth in the economy and in population is going to be immigrant based over the next few decades, how important is that going to be to sustain your business, grow your business, and--and create a consumer base?

KAHIN: I think it's very, very important, and I just wanted to add into this discussion that not only immigrants are creating jobs, but they are also putting in new ideas into entrepreneurial spirit. I myself--I go to high school, elementary school, and college to tell my story so young American can be inspired.

Those who have never seen anyone look like them succeed in business. Not only that, but I also promote American entrepreneurship outside of (INAUDIBLE). I went to the UK, and went and saw Africa, Kenya, Somalia, and Djibouti just to promote how we do things in America and how this country is so pro-immigrant.

YARMUTH: Thank you very much. About 25 years ago, I was at a conference of some sort and I heard the speaker named John Naisbitt, who was a futurist, wrote many books. And one of the things he said struck me so

House Budget Committee Holds Hearing on Economic Benefits of Immigration

dramatically, and that was, he was talking about the birth rates of--in the United States of white women, African-American women, and Hispanic women, and how they were all different.

Whites being the lowest, African-American being next, and then Hispanic women being the highest. And he said, why should this concern white America? And his answer was, it should concern white America because we don't--if we don't make sure that brown and black America is as productive as it can possibly be and succeed as well as they could that white America would not be able to retire.

When I think about this whole discussion and--and just in the CBO's long-term budget outlook released yesterday, it projected that the immigrants will account for nearly 87 percent of U.S. population growth in 2049, up from 45 percent today. So, the base of taxes--the tax base that is going to support native-born Americans is going to be largely dependent on making sure that this immigrant population is part of our economy. Is that not correct, Dr. Jawetz--Mr. Jawetz?

JAWETZ: Yes. So, it's certainly the case that in the current decade that's about the end right now, immigrants are responsible for all of the growth that we've achieved in our working population. And like I said in my testimony, just looking ten years basically, but for immigrants and their children, we'd see the work age population drop of the country drop by 7 million.

YARMUTH: And if--if we were to take the steps that we've discussed in the hearing, deporting a large--millions of immigrants right now, and--and restricting our immigration numbers, that's going to make it very--a lot more difficult for those who are left in this country to have a safe, secure retirement. Is that not correct?

JAWETZ: Yeah. No, that's absolutely true and it would be disruptive up and down the economy you'd see impacts. One thing I mentioned, for the agricultural sector earlier, but you take out the undocumented workforce in the agricultural sector without doing the work you need to do to have an effective, meaningful replacement for those workers, and you're looking at--you know, greater food imports. You're looking at the people who have those jobs stocking shelves, doing the trucking, doing the inspections. All that work potentially can go away. Farmers who have been honing their--honing their farms for--you know, one, two, three generations losing their farms.

I mean, the impact spreads throughout the economy and it's a house of cards at the end of the day and one that's--going back to sort of the broken system, it's a house of cards built on a shaky foundation, but we've all just sort of allowed like spit and glue to hold it together through exercises of discretion, or just looking the other way, whatever. But it's not--it is not sustainable, and it degrades respect for the rule of law on every side of the debate and it feeds calls for more enforcement on one side and feeds calls for less enforcement on this side. None of it makes sense at the end of the day.

YARMUTH: I appreciate that. Well, I agree with my ranking member, my good friend, and everyone who has really testified today that we, as a Congress, we really have to deal with this subject. We can't put it off and there is one set of responses, probably, to the current crisis and crises, but there is another whole aspect of this problem that is much more significant in terms of our future.

And I thank you for contributing to what I believe, if people look at the record of this hearing, the testimony that's been submitted, which there's a lot of documentation--a lot of important information from all four of you, that it's probably one of the most significant pieces--collection of information about immigration and the future importance of it that exists. And I--I thank you for making a contribution and for your time and wisdom.

And before I adjourn, I do want to ask unanimous consent that the letter from the Coalition for Human Immigrant--Humane Immigrant Rights is entered into the record. Without objection, so ordered. Once again, thanks to the ranking member, thanks to all of the witnesses, and without objection, this hearing is adjourned.

Classification

Language: ENGLISH

House Budget Committee Holds Hearing on Economic Benefits of Immigration

Subject: IMMIGRATION (89%); IMMIGRATION LAW (89%); US DEMOCRATIC PARTY (89%); US REPUBLICAN PARTY (88%); PUBLIC POLICY (72%); IMMIGRATION REGULATION & POLICY (71%); CUSTOMS & CULTURAL HERITAGE (60%)

Industry: BUDGETS (89%)

Person: HAKEEM JEFFRIES (79%); BARBARA LEE (79%); STEVEN HORSFORD (79%); SETH MOULTON (79%); BRENDAN BOYLE (79%); SCOTT PETERS (79%); RO KHANNA (79%); RALPH NORMAN (79%); PRAMILA JAYAPAL (79%); JIMMY PANETTA (79%); GEORGE HOLDING (79%); JASON T SMITH (79%); BILL FLORES (75%); DAN KILDEE (72%); JIM COOPER (56%); DAVID E PRICE (56%); JOHN A YARMUTH (56%); LLOYD DOGGETT (56%); DALE E KILDEE (56%); ALBIO SIRES (56%); STEVE WOMACK (56%); JAN SCHAKOWSKY (56%); ROB WOODALL (56%); ROBERT C SCOTT (56%); ROSA DELAURO (56%); BRIAN HIGGINS (56%); SHEILA JACKSON-LEE (56%); CHRIS STEWART (50%); BILL JOHNSON (50%)

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