The Phyllis Schlafly Report

Trump Keeps Winning on Immigration

President Trump's approval rating jumped 10 points in January, rising to the highest level since soon after he was inaugurated. As Congressman Steve Stivers noted, "No president in their second year has seen their approval rating go up except this one."

Many were surprised that Trump has managed to break through the incessant opposition of a hostile media. Our explanation is that Trump lured the Democrats into a high-profile debate on the immigration issue, and the president won the debate because the public agrees with him.

Democrats proved they are so committed to the principle of amnesty for illegal immigrants that they would even shut down the government over it. To the surprise of many Democrats, the public is not buying it.

Immigration is a subject on which there is the greatest disconnect between what ordinary Americans want and what our government delivers. We allowed about 1.5 million immigrants a year to settle in America in 2014 and 2015, the latest years for which such figures are available, but a new poll shows that Americans think that number is way too high.

According to the respected Harvard-Harris poll, 72 percent of Americans think we should admit fewer than 1 million immigrants a year. Of those, 54 percent think we should have fewer than 500,000 immigrants a year, and 35 percent think the number should be 250,000 or even less.

"Americans are Dreamers too," President Trump declared in the best line of his superb State of the Union address. The president holds a winning hand, and the news on immigration keeps supporting him.

On Super Bowl Sunday, football fans awoke to the sad news that Edwin Jackson, a linebacker for the Indianapolis Colts, and his Uber driver were killed by a drunk-driving illegal immigrant from Guatemala, Manuel Orrego-Savala. The culprit, who had twice been previously deported, fled the scene on foot, but was later caught and found to have three times the legal limit of alcohol in his blood as he drove his pickup truck without a license.

Near San Diego last month, U.S. Border Patrol agents arrested two illegal immigrant Dreamers with DACA privileges who had been making a living by smuggling other illegals into the United States from Mexico. The 20-year-old Dreamer was caught driving two illegals in his car, while the 22-year-old was acting as a scouter to warn another smuggler when Border Patrol agents were sighted in the area.

While President Trump has been acting as "good cop" with his extremely generous offer of eventual citizenship for 1.8 million Dreamers, his essential "bad cop," Acting ICE Director Tom Homan, has been enforcing the law in sanctuary cities and states. Homan raided 77 businesses in Northern California this month, looking for employers who harm American workers by knowingly hiring illegal immigrants.

The Obama administration had essentially allowed San Francisco and other liberal areas to opt out of federal immigration law, but that is changing under Director Homan, who promised a 400 percent increase in workplace enforcement. "We've got to take these sanctuary cities on," Homan declared, even suggesting that local officials could be criminally punished for harboring illegal aliens in their jurisdictions.

Americans sympathize with immigrants who were brought here as young children (although that's not really true of many who would receive amnesty under the bipartisan Dreamer legislation), but not the adults who illegally brought them here. Still less do Americans want the Dreamers to import their distant relatives under the process known as chain migration.

How that works was explained by the eminent Harvard Professor George Borjas, himself an immigrant, in the *New York Times*. "Our current system lets a new immigrant eventually sponsor the entry of her brother, who can then sponsor the entry of his wife, who can sponsor her father, who can sponsor his sister, and so on."

Professor Borjas continued, "Does it really make sense for one entry today to eventually lead to a visa for the immigrant's sister-in-law's aunt?" Obviously not, which

is why Americans oppose letting new immigrants import relatives beyond members of their immediate family.

President Trump has insisted that any deal for DACA must include provisions limiting family reunification to an immigrant's spouse and minor children. Democrats have refused to accept that reasonable restriction, which means there likely won't be a deal anytime soon.

The Harvard-Harris poll shows that most Americans not only think total immigration should be reduced, but also that we should give preference to immigrants with something to contribute to our country, based on their education and skills. That opinion was shared by all demographic groups polled, and was especially high among African Americans.

That opinion used to be shared by Democrats, too, including Bill Clinton who praised the late Barbara Jordan during his 1995 State of the Union address. "It is wrong," Bill Clinton said then, "to permit the kind of abuse of our immigration laws we have seen in recent years, and we must do more to stop it."

Trump's Breakthrough Win Against Shutdown

President Trump proved the pundits to be wrong, once again, with his breakthrough victory against the government shutdown last month. Nearly all political experts pompously declared that Republicans cannot win in a shutdown, and yet Trump did exactly that.

Margaret Thatcher, the late British Prime Minister who was Ronald Reagan's ally throughout Reagan's two terms as our president, explained how she achieved her improbable success as Britain's longest-serving prime minister. Her pithy reply: "First you win the argument, then you win the vote."

Thatcher's motto explains how President Trump was able to win the shutdown showdown with the Democrats: first, he won the argument. Democrats, led by Chuck Schumer, turned the lights back on when they realized they were losing the argument with the American people.

In order to win the debate, though, Trump first had to frame the debate, which he did brilliantly on Twitter: "Democrats are far more concerned with Illegal Immigrants than they are with our great Military or Safety at our dangerous Southern Border."

U.S. citizens should not lose access to our own government in order to protect people who have no right to be here in the first place. By forcing the shutdown, as Trump said on Twitter, "The Democrats are turning down services and security for citizens in favor of services and security for non-citizens. Not good!"

Meanwhile, the *New York Times* reported that Senator Schumer's decision to end the government shutdown "enraged liberals, who accused the lawmakers of betrayal and threatened to mount primaries against some of the Democrats who voted yes. They accused Schumer of capitulating to protect senators up for re-election in November in Republican-leaning states."

"It's hard to overstate how disgusted many progressive leaders are," a *Times* columnist observed. Trump thus not only emerged victorious, he cut off the Democratic leaders from their own base which they will need for the upcoming midterm elections.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell's promise to hold a future vote on DACA was merely a fig leaf for Democrats, since a promise to vote on something unspecified is as meaningless as a promise to merely consider agreeing to something unknown.

Representative Luis V. Gutiérrez (D-IL), one of the Democrats' chief advocates of amnesty for illegal immigrants, bitterly observed: "It's the one word they know in Spanish: *mañana*." That word literally translates as "tomorrow," but in Mexico it really means "some day, maybe never."

President Trump has already properly rejected the so-called bipartisan bill floated by never-Trumpers Jeff Flake and Lindsey Graham, because it utterly fails to include three essential conditions of any immigration compromise: ending chain migration, eliminating the visa lottery, and building a border wall. That bill not only snuck in millions of additional Dreamers, it even protected their parents who brought them in illegally.

President Trump had been willing to extend DACA in exchange for new border controls, but *USA Today* reported that "There are 3.6M 'DREAMers' — a number far greater than commonly known" (and far greater than the 690,000 DACA recipients). "A number so large raises the stakes for both sides."

Not only did Trump win the first-ever clear victory for Republicans on a shutdown, he won it with the equivalent of a first-round knockout. Democrats were bewildered by the drumming they received, and how they had to capitulate to avert a disaster for their party.

Trump defined the issue and stuck with it, astutely declining to discuss DACA with Democrats until the government is reopened. In so doing, he taught his fellow Republicans a great deal about how to negotiate with the Democrats in the future.

Trump showed how he is not a Republican like the first President George Bush, who declared "Read My Lips" in promising not to raise taxes, and then famously broke his pledge as soon as Democrats pressured him on the issue. Trump is not like Republican leaders in Congress, either, many of whom have been trying to appease liberals on DACA and other issues.

The benefits of President Trump's forceful leadership on the shutdown extend far beyond immigration. President Trump has finally ended the stranglehold that liberals have

had over Republicans, by holding the government hostage to a shutdown unless the GOP caves in.

Instead, it was the Democrats who completely caved by ending the shutdown, and even the liberal media admitted their ignominious defeat. Reasons were floated as to why the Democrats lost this time when they are perceived to have always won the shutdown issue in the past, but much of the post-game analysis misses the point.

The real cause of this massive political blunder by the Democrats can be summed up in merely four words: they underestimated Donald Trump. By now, this is not a mistake that political experts should still be making.

Trump Should Stand His Ground on Immigration

The mainstream media have had a field day reporting on President Trump's alleged use of coarse language in a closed-door meeting at the White House last month. According to one tally, CNN repeated the offensive word 195 times in a single day, including 22 times in a single hour, not counting its display on the chyron at the bottom of the screen.

The initial report was denied by President Trump, and his denial was corroborated by two U.S. Senators and a cabinet secretary who (unlike the media) were present in the meeting. But all the fuss over coarse language has reinforced the point that Trump was making, that we should be much more selective about the immigrants and others we allow to enter the United States.

Whether or not Trump used a bad word to describe impoverished countries, which have been plagued by political systems that do not reward hard work, Trump is right that most of the people living there are not prepared to immigrate here without imposing a burden on Americans. Most of the people in the rest of the world just don't have the skills to support themselves in our high-tech society.

Too many Americans have been misled by the sentimental myth that our immigration policy is (or should be) based on a poem that includes the lines "give me your tired, your poor, the wretched refuse of your teeming shore." In fact, that poem does not reflect the purpose of the Statue of Liberty, and it was only hung in the visitor's lounge many years after the statue was erected and dedicated.

In 1883, when Emma Lazarus wrote her famous poem, America could accommodate millions of poor immigrants willing and able to work at low wages, but that's not true anymore. Such jobs are disappearing fast in our economy, and we've built a vast safety net so that our own low-skilled citizens can live in dignity without working.

On the day Donald Trump announced he was running for president, he vowed to change the way our immigrants are selected and screened. "When Mexico sends its people," he said about the country that has sent about 50% of our immigrants, both legal and illegal, "they're not sending their best. They're sending people that have lots of problems, and they're bringing those problems with us."

As Trump himself conceded in that June 16, 2015 speech, there are of course some "good people" coming from Mexico and other poor countries. His point, then and now, is that we're not selecting the best candidates for immigration from among the much larger number of people who do not share our values.

More than three-quarters of the 1.2 million people who legally settle in the United States each year never pass any qualifying test for their fitness to live and work here. Their average level of education is well below that of American citizens, which means those immigrants are doomed to a life of near-poverty supplemented by food stamps and other taxpayer-funded benefits.

Numbers from the U.S. Census Bureau tell the story. Immigrants from Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador have the least education (many never attended high school), the least command of English (most are "functionally illiterate" in our language), and live in households that depend on at least one major welfare program.

This is what happens under a system of chain migration under which immigrants are allowed to sponsor their unscreened, unvetted distant relatives for a green card. In effect, this year's immigrants are selected by last year's immigrants instead of by the American people as a whole.

President Trump said that any deal for DACA must include an end to chain migration, tweeting: "I, as President, want people coming into our Country who are going to help us become strong and great again, people coming in through a system based on MERIT. No more Lotteries! #AMERICA FIRST."

A group of leading House Republicans has just unveiled a bill to do just that. Called the Securing America's Future Act (H.R. 4760), the bill has support from all factions of the conference including two committee chairmen (Goodlatte and McCaul), the Puerto Rican-born Raul Labrador and the moderate Martha McSally, who's running to succeed Jeff Flake in the Senate.

The House bill extends DACA benefits while meeting the president's proper demand to end chain migration and the diversity visa lottery. It requires employers to use E-Verify, and it cracks down on sanctuary cities and those who overstay their visas or reenter after being previously deported.

In an effort to attract support from rural states, the bill unwisely allows more low-skilled agricultural guest workers, and the bill's definition of high-skilled work may not be high enough to protect our own engineering graduates from foreign competition. But Securing America's Future Act would help Make America Great Again.

How Trump Changed the Debate

When President Trump announced his decision to wind down DACA, which protects illegal aliens who came to America before their 18th birthday, Democratic leaders were secretly pleased. They thought DACA gave them a way to defeat the President, and compel him to cave in on the issue in order to avert a government shutdown just before Christmas.

The Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) was created by a stroke of President Barack Obama's pen in 2012, even after Obama said 22 times that he lacked the power to do that. DACA provided a two-year work permit with a valid Social Security number to around 800,000 illegal aliens, a number that has since dropped through attrition to about 690,000.

No one denies that Trump has the power to rescind an executive order by his predecessor, but many were misled by polls showing that DACA is a popular program. Depending on how the question is asked, polls show many Americans sympathize with the plight of young people who were supposedly brought here through no fault of their own.

But the real poll is on Election Day, and Donald Trump was elected president primarily because of his commitment to control our borders and reduce immigration. If Trump could be rolled by the media on his signature issue, it would undermine his presidency and make it that much easier for Democrats to defeat the rest of the Trump agenda.

Thinking they had Trump on the defensive, Democrats laid plans to expand DACA from a two-year work permit for 700,000 people all the way to permanent residency for some 4 million illegal residents. Democrats felt so confident that they would win on the DACA issue that they started posturing already for how to expand its amnesty to include many millions.

Democrats made similar threats about extending DACA as a condition for the budget deadline on January 19, but the terms of the debate have changed. Instead of DACA and the Dream Act, Trump has forced public attention on chain migration.

Between Christmas and New Year's Eve, Trump served notice via Twitter about the new deal that Democrats would face in the new year: "There can be no DACA without the desperately needed WALL at the Southern Border," he warned, "and an END to the horrible Chain Migration & ridiculous Lottery System of Immigration etc. We must protect our country at all cost!"

A helpful web page was created by the White House to elaborate on the president's tweet. According to whitehouse.gov, chain migration is "the process by which foreign nationals permanently resettle in the U.S. and subsequently bring over their foreign relatives, and so on, until entire extended families are resettled within the country."

The numbers are huge. On average, according to the White House, "every 2 new immigrants bring 7 additional foreign relatives to permanently resettle in the U.S." In just the last ten years, some 9.3 million people have been allowed to settle permanently in the United States solely because of their familial ties to another immigrant. That's more than the total population of Los Angeles, Chicago, Dallas, San Francisco, and Cleveland – combined.

"This system of chain migration – whereby one immigrant can bring in their entire extended families, who can bring in their families and so on – de-skills the labor force, puts downward pressure on wages, and increases the deficit," explains the White House website. The Trump administration is absolutely correct that low-skill immigrants increase the fiscal deficit by consuming more in benefits than they pay in taxes.

Chain migration "de-skills the labor force" because those immigrants, on average, have lower or fewer skills than the Americans who are already here and struggling to find adequate employment. While the vast majority of immigrant green cards were based on family ties, only 6 percent were issued on the basis of skills.

Despite low unemployment, as President Obama's chief economic adviser Jason Furman wrote in the Wall Street Journal, "some 9 million men of prime age – that is, between 25 and 54 – still are not working." Furman ignored immigration, but it's not just a coincidence that 9 million men exited the labor force during the same period that 9.3 million low-skill immigrants settled in the United States.

"The bulk of the decline in employment," Jason Furman continued, "has been for men with a high-school diploma or less, who have seen their employment rates fall from 97% in 1964 to 83% today." That's the same group that is most harmed by the policy of allowing low-skill immigrants to come here and fight for the same jobs.

For more than 50 years, America's immigration policy has been set by an unholy alliance between liberal Republicans, who seek to please their donors with access to cheap labor, and Democrats in search of more votes for their progressive agenda. Under the Trump administration, that corrupt bargain is finally coming to an end.