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BROOKINGS-PRINCETON "FUTURE OF CHILDREN" BRIEFING

POLICIES FOR CHILDREN IN IMMIGRANT FAMILIES

INTRODUCTION, PRESENTATION, PANEL ONE AND Q&A SESSION

Thursday, December 16, 2004

9:00 a.m.--11:00 a.m.

Falk Auditorium
The Brookings Institution
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Washington, D.C. 20036

[TRANSCRIPT PREPARED FROM TAPE RECORDINGS.]

PANEL ONE:

Moderator:

RON HASKINS, Senior Fellow Economic Studies, Brookings

Overview:

DONALD HERNANDEZ, Professor of Sociology, University at Albany, SUNY

MELVIN NEUFELD, Kansas State House of Representatives, Chairman, Kansas House Appropriations Committee

RUSSELL PEARCE, Arizona State House of Representatives, Chairman, Arizona House Appropriations Committee

FELIX ORTIZ, New York State Assembly

THIS IS AN UNCORRECTED TRANSCRIPT.

PROCEEDINGS

MR. HASKINS: Good morning. My name is Ron Haskins. I'm a senior fellow here at Brookings and also a senior consultant at the Annie Casey Foundation.

I'd like to welcome you to today's session on children of immigrant families. The logic of the problem that we're dealing with here is straightforward enough, and I think it's pretty interesting for both people left and right of center.

It turns out that we have a lot of children who live in immigrant families in the United States, and a large majority of them are already citizens, even if their parents are not. And again, a large majority of them will stay here for the rest of their life.

So they are going to contribute greatly to the American economy for four or five decades, once they get to be 18 or 21, whatever the age might be. And in addition to that, they are going to disproportionately contribute to Social Security and Medicare in the years ahead.

So they are a really important ingredient to the American economy and to major sections of American social policy. And yet, as a group, these children are considerably behind native-born children in many measures of performance and achievement and, when they grow up, in employment.

So this is an interesting policy issue. Should we do something extra? How should we handle this problem? Should we ignore it, or should we have policy addressed specifically to it? And that's why we're assembled today, to answer that question.

I want to point out to you that this issue stems from the last issue of the journal *The Future of Children* that was published by the Packard Foundation. Packard had decided to have another group publish the journal. And so, they had a competition, and a team from Princeton and Brookings won the competition and will be publishing the journal in the future.

And in that regard, the first issue will be out in late January or early February of the new group who will be publishing the journal, and that issue is on the achievement gap, and especially school readiness and the achievement gap.

The new journal--the editor-in-chief is Sara McLanahan from Princeton, and also Cecilia Rouse and Christina Paxson, our senior editors there at Princeton, and Belle Sawhill and I are senior editors here at Brookings. And there are several other people today from Brookings who will be involved in the publication, including Margy Waller, who will be the outreach director, Julie Clover, Anne Hardenbergh, and Brenda Szitty, who will be the managing editor.

So we're looking forward to that. We will have a public event probably in March on that first issue, and we'll be having a number of events over the years. We'll probably publish two issues of the journal per year.

Let me also say I notice that there are several people here from the previous journal. Margie Shields is here, who was actually a jack-of-all-trades for the previous group that published the journal. And we're glad that she was able to come all the way from California.

There are also a few issues of this--the immigrant issue, that last issue--that are available. They may be gone by now, but we had maybe 20 issues that were out there.

Let me tell you about how we're going to proceed today. First, we're going to have a brief overview by Don Hernandez from SUNY-Albany, who used to be with the Census Bureau and has the lead article in the journal, which is available outside there. And Don is going to give an overview of the status of immigrant children.

So we'll start by filling in the details that I claimed in the beginning that immigrant children are behind average in America. Then I'm going to do just a very brief overview of our welfare policy, which changed very substantially in '96. It changed a couple of times since then. But it's very different than it was before '96. We treat noncitizens very differently in our welfare policies than we do citizens.

Then we are going to have comments from a panel that you see up here, that I'll introduce at the appropriate time, of state representatives. And then we'll have a chance for questions from the audience.

Then we have a diverse panel--panel of diverse views on these issues of public intellectuals, scholars, and advocates who will address the issues, and we'll also give the audience an opportunity to question them as well.

Finally, let me say that we did a background brief on this, for any of you who might be interested on in a little detail, that I did with Mark Greenberg, who is here somewhere, and Shawn Fremstad. I saw Mark here. And that's available out back. If any of you want those, we have plenty of copies. Everybody could have one of those.

So I look forward to an interesting morning. Oh, let me caution you on one thing. When we switch from this first panel to the second panel, we hope you will not ask people questions unless you go outside because we're not going to have a break. We're going to switch quickly and go immediately into the second panel.

So, Don Hernandez, thank you very much for coming--State University of New York--for an overview of children from immigrant families.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Thank you very much, Ron. And good morning, everyone.

It's a pleasure to be here today to open this meeting with a demographic portrait of children in immigrant families. This morning, I'll focus--

[Laughter.]

MR. HERNANDEZ: I just need to find my arrow here. This morning, I'll focus on the immigrant and race/ethnic origins of children and on their family strengths and challenges experienced by children in newcomer and native-born families. Then I'll present results from an overall index of demographic risk factors. Finally, I'll close by noting important education and health issues.

And that was that slide. There we go. Okay. Slide three shows that during the past century, the proportion of children living in immigrant families. By the year 2000, 14 million children, or 20 percent of all children, lived in immigrant families. Between 1990 and 2000, the number of children in immigrant families expanded about seven times faster than the number in native-born families. Nevertheless, most children in immigrant families are U.S. citizens because they were themselves born in the U.S.

Slide four shows that 97 percent of all children in immigrant families in 1910 had origins in Europe or Canada. Today, more than 60 percent of children in newcomer families have origins in Latin America, and more than 20 percent have origins in Asia. This shift in the sources of immigration is a demographic revolution that's transforming America.

Slide five presents population projections from the U.S. Census Bureau. Driven by third world population growth and economic opportunities in the U.S., most future population growth in the U.S. will occur through immigration and through births to immigrants and their descendants.

Because most children in immigrant families are Hispanic or nonwhite racial and ethnic minorities, the proportion who are Hispanic, Black, Asian, or some other racial minority is projected to reach 50 percent within the next three decades. The emergence of racial and ethnic minorities as a majority of the population in the U.S. is occurring most rapidly and will become a reality first among children.

Slide six presents Census Bureau projections by age. By the year 2030, the "baby boom" generation born between 1946 and 1964 will be in the retirement ages of 66 to 84 years old. The Census Bureau projections indicate that by 2030, 72 percent of the elderly will be white non-Hispanic, compared to only 56 percent of working-age adults and 50 percent for children.

As a result, as the growing elderly population of the predominantly white baby boom generation reaches the retirement ages, it will increasingly depend for its economic support during retirement on the productive activities and the civic participation, which is to say voting, of working age adults who are members of racial and ethnic minorities.

Many of these workers will, as children, have grown up in immigrant families. Because the education and health of these children will be critical determinants of their labor force, productivity in adulthood, it's essential that public policies direct increasing attention to the circumstances and needs of children in immigrant and racial and ethnic minority families.

Historically, children in immigrant families were highly concentrated in a few states. But during the past decade, their number has grown rapidly in nearly every state. The most darkly shaded areas of this map are the traditional immigrant gateways, which have large proportions of children in newcomer families.

In two states with the next darkest shading, Arkansas and North Carolina, both in the South, the number of children in immigrant families more than tripled between 1990 and 2000. In 10 additional states, the number more than doubled. And in another 17 states, the number jumped by more than 50 percent. Thus, in most states, the number of children in newcomer families has mushroomed since 1990.

Immigrant families have major strengths, but also face difficult challenges. Slide eight shows that children in newcomer families are much more likely than children in native-born families to have only one parent in the home, at 16 versus 26 percent. Thus, children in immigrant families are actually more likely than children in native-born families to benefit from having two parents in the home.

Children in newcomer families also benefit from growing up in families with a strong work ethic. Slide nine shows that 93 to 95 percent of children in both newcomer and native-born families have a father who is employed in the paid labor market. Three of every five children in newcomer families also have mothers who work to support their families. This is somewhat below the level of children in native-born families, but it is a large majority nonetheless.

In short, most children in immigrant families benefit from living in strong, two-parent families with strong work ethics. However, many of these children live with parents whose educational attainments are quite limited. On 12 percent of

children in native-born families live with a mother or a father who has not graduated from high school. But this jumps to 40 percent for children in immigrant families.

Parents who have completed fewer years of schooling may be less able to help their children with schoolwork. Parents with limited education may also tend to command lower wages in the labor market and are therefore constrained in the educational, health, and other resources they can afford to purchase for their children.

Equally important, they may be less skilled at navigating the education, health, and social service institutions that are critical to the well-being of our children.

Limited proficiency with English is another major challenge. Children who are English language learners may have substantial difficulty communicating with and learning from teachers because the teachers are, in turn, limited in their ability to speak the child's primary language. Children in families who are limited in their English proficiency may also experience barriers in communicating with health and other service organizations that are not prepared to function in a variety of languages.

The Census Bureau defines a linguistically isolated household as one in which no one age 15 or older speaks English exclusively or very well. Slide 11 shows that 26 percent of children in immigrant families live in linguistically isolated households.

An additional challenge for these families is that parents with limited English often experience difficulty in finding well-paid, full-time employment. Given the limited educational attainments and English skills of many parents in immigrant families, it's not surprising to find high poverty rates among children in newcomer families.

Slide 12 shows that, according to the official measure, the poverty rate for children in immigrant families is substantially higher than for children in native-born families at 21 versus 14 percent. It's well known, however, that the official measure underestimates economic need in the U.S.

Recognizing the inadequacy of the official measure, major public programs for children are increasingly studying eligibility criteria at higher levels. For example, families with incomes ranging from 130 percent to 185 percent of the official poverty threshold are eligible for reduced-price meals through the school breakfast and lunch programs.

Similarly, states--several states have set eligibility levels for the State Child Health Insurance Program at 200 percent to 350 percent of the official poverty level. To take account of this problem, an alternative measure that is often used sets the threshold for specific families at twice the official level, that is, at 200 percent of the official poverty threshold.

According to this measure, which I'll refer to as the 2X poverty rate, children in immigrant families experience much higher levels of economic need than children in native-born families. Nearly one half of children in newcomer families, 49 percent, fall below the 2X poverty threshold, compared to 34 percent for children in native-born families.

Up to this point, I presented results separately for several demographic risk factors. But some children experience none of these risks, while others experience several. To provide an overall assessment of these risks, I've created an index of demographic risk factors based on the proportion of children whose mother has not graduated from high school, whose family income is less than 200 percent of the official

poverty threshold, who live in linguistically isolated households, or who live in one-parent families.

Slide 14 shows that 44 percent of children in native-born families experience at least one of these four risk factors, but this jumps to 67 percent for children in newcomer families. In addition, one in five children in native-born families experience two or more risk factors, but this more than doubles to 42 percent for children in immigrant families. These are very high levels of risk.

Despite the fact that most children in immigrant families benefit from having two parents in the home and from having parents with a strong work ethic, many experience one or more serious challenges to their current well-being and future development. These risks have many consequences.

Compared to children in native-born families, children in immigrant families are substantially less likely to be covered by health insurance. In addition, as they enter the education system, they are less likely to have access to and benefit from early education programs. And years later, as they leave the education system, they are more likely to drop out of high school.

Insofar as children in newcomer families are increasingly important to the future of America, it's essential that public policies devote increasing attention to children in immigrant families. I hope this meeting will help to foster such policies to assure that these children will become productive workers and effective citizens during the coming decade.

Thank you very much.

[Applause.]

MR. HASKINS: Now one more thing as background--if I had more adventuresome blood, I would try this myself. But I've done it before, and it took a half hour to fix what I did. So I think I won't do it. And I don't want to have everybody up here have to talk with the technician up here doing the computer. So we're hoping he'll be here in just a minute.

Okay. Now the only thing I want to do here, the policy, like many federal policies, you know, like Social Security and Medicaid and retirement, my very favorite, it's extremely complex, has lots of sub-rules and so forth. So all I want to do is just give you a brief idea of what our federal public benefit policy is like for noncitizens because it has changed so substantially.

The most important concept is that policy now distinguishes very sharply between citizens and noncitizens. There are categories within that. But roughly speaking, especially for the first five years--we'll talk about this in just a minute--noncitizens are not qualified for welfare benefits except under emergency circumstances. Now there are exceptions to that, but that's a very good thing to keep in mind.

Refugees are different. We treat refugees differently. The concept is that they left their homeland, often without their property. Often they leave under emergency conditions. So they are eligible for welfare benefits from the time they arrive, and they are eligible for seven years, and then their benefits end.

Secondly, affidavits of support. This is a concept that was put in the law originally, I think, in the 1970s. And the idea is that people who come to this country should have a sponsor and that there should be a legally binding document that says that they will provide support in case the noncitizen falls on hard times and needs support.

Taxpayers should not do it. A sponsor should do it. And so, these affidavits of support say that--it's a legal document that says a sponsor will, in fact, provide support.

And then the third point is that, in addition to that, there is something called "deeming," so that the sponsor's income is deemed to be available to the person as if it were their own income in calculating the eligibility for welfare benefits after five years, when the time for welfare comes. So these are--both the sponsorship and deeming are attempts to prevent taxpayers from having to pay benefits for noncitizens.

Now here is just a rough--again, there are some exceptions. But for the first five years, for SSI, food stamps, Medicaid, and TANF and Title XX, roughly speaking, noncitizens are ineligible with the exception of refugees. They're ineligible. For Medicaid, they can get under emergency circumstances. States can spend their own money, if they would like to, but federal dollars cannot be spent for welfare for noncitizens.

This was put in the law in '96. It's a huge change, and the concept was that people should not come to the United States for welfare. They should come for opportunity. And that was the by-word of Republicans who created these policies and passed them in the House and the Senate and signed in law by President Clinton.

After five years, though, there is eligibility, not for SSI. There is for food stamps, for Medicaid emergency, and there is a state option with deeming. So the states would have to pay part of the cost of this, but deeming is still in place. And then the same thing with TANF, the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, which is the nation's major cash welfare program in Title XX.

And let me say to you, since the law passed in '96, there have been several amendments, in '97 and in 2001. There were important changes in the first year

of the Bush administration that the President sponsored. But roughly speaking, the initial policy is still intact of the five-year bar for SSI and for most other benefit programs. The biggest exception, of course, is food stamps, where noncitizens became eligible for food stamps after five years. That was the biggest change in policy.

There are exceptions, which I've been mentioning. Here are some. Veterans are excepted. If you've worked in the United States for 10 quarters, and that includes if your relatives did, the person is eligible for benefits. I've mentioned emergencies before, and there are whole list of those.

And then the last one I call Horatio Alger. There was actually a certain logic to this policy. That the idea was that people come to America for opportunity, so they should be eligible and children should be eligible for programs that are educational or training or support their work in general. So, for example, the biggest program in this regard is earned income tax credit, which is about a \$35 billion program, and noncitizens are eligible. If they're legal residents, they're eligible for EITC.

Kids are eligible for Head Start. They're eligible for a whole host of programs that have to do with education and training, both the children and adults. Because, again, the idea is that people should come for opportunity, and taxpayers would support their education and training, which I think is directly addressed in a way to the topic of today's meeting.

And then, finally, these are data from the Census Bureau. Michael Fix is here, will be on the second panel. So any questions about these data, you can ask Michael Fix.

I can tell you that these come from the green book. They were done by the Congressional Research Service. And the only thing I want to show you is that the

policy of reducing participation in welfare programs that was adopted by Congress in '96 has been successful in that limited sense. There has been a very substantial decline in all of these programs in the number of noncitizens getting the benefits.

Now this question is much more complex. These data have a number of flaws. But I think there is general agreement that there has been a very substantial reduction in participation in welfare programs since 1996, which was the intent of the original policy. So, with that, we will go to the next part of our program.

Okay. We feel very privileged to have three state representatives here. I think it was especially appropriate that we invite people from the states because although we perpetrate all these laws here from Washington, these are the gentlemen that have to deal with the consequences of the laws that we dream up here in Washington. So we were very pleased to get a fine and diverse group of representatives from state legislatures.

So on my right is Melvin Neufeld from Kansas. Did you do that?

[Laughter.]

MR. NEUFELD: If you want me to take credit for it, I can.

MR. HASKINS: Let there be light. On the far left--I bet you love this. He never had an introduction like that--is Russell Pearce of Arizona state, of the State of Arizona House of Representatives.

And then in the middle, right square in the middle, is Felix Ortiz, who's an assemblyman from the State of New York.

Each of them have 10 minutes to make remarks about their views on these policies we've discussed and especially the issue of children. And we will begin with Representative Neufeld.

MR. NEUFELD: Thank you, Ron.

It's a real privilege to be here, and it's good to see a half dozen or so friendly faces in the audience. Don't make too many faces at me. Olivia, it's particularly good to see you.

I think it's a real honor for me to be able to be here and participate in this, and I think it's a major issue that all of us in the states are facing and need to work through it.

First of all, I'd like to say that I kind of have a little bit of personal feelings about this issue. All four of my grandparents were immigrants. My family was non-English speaking until about the time I entered grade school. And so, I know some of the feelings.

The fact is, my grandmother, one of the last things she told me before she passed away is, "Melvin, don't you marry one of those English girls."

[Laughter.]

MR. : You did it anyway?

MR. NEUFELD: Yes, I did. I want to kind of approach this a couple of different ways. First of all, I'd like to comment on the things that are working. And I think we have to look at this as more than just as a children's issue because it's really holistic, and immigration policy really affects what happens with the kids, and it's all tied together.

And I think the thing that's working best that we all forget about, no one pays attention to, that we do have something that works very good on immigration. And the populations that come through this are great for us and we have almost no problems, and that's the Foreign Worker Certification Program.

In my area, we have quite a few coming from South Africa, a few from Middle East countries, some from Europe. And that program is working extremely well. The problem is we don't even bother to try to use that program with our border countries. When you have something that works, maybe we ought to try to copy it elsewhere.

Another thing that is working, and probably the biggest thing we're doing in Kansas to help our immigrant children, is we're putting forth a serious effort on the part of the state to do ESL at the workplace, where you have high numbers of immigrant workers in the workplace.

Our community college system is involved with ESL. Then once we get them used to coming to those classes, then, of course, the next step is to try to move them into some GED, then step them into some of the college classes. Because if we fail to engage the first generation of immigrants in education and developing their own leadership, then the second generation is going to have a much tougher time.

If you do the model my family had, the first generation got involved and tried to better their education. Then the second generation went ahead and moved in. And by the third generation, although it may not appear like it, that I'd be part of them, you might say you've mainstreamed the immigrants.

And so, that first step of getting people to ESL early on I think is critical. And if you want the children to do well, you need to engage the parents in English. That's just--well, I think the data you showed proved that.

And the other thing that we're doing well is about half of our immigrant workers are in excess of 200 percent of poverty rate. And that's the good news, and that's the part we don't talk about much. And those families are doing pretty well.

What doesn't work? That's the things we usually emphasize. You know, we all like the negative better than the positive. Well, what doesn't work, I'll give you an example. There's a school in my legislative district out in southwest Kansas. Eighty percent of the students are immigrant children in that school.

I talked to one of the third grade teachers last year, and I said, "How are things going?" Well, she said, "There's three third grade classes in the school. We had an average third grade attendance for the year of 68, and we had three children from English-speaking, primary speaking homes."

But that's not the real problem and the problem we're ignoring with education is 80 percent of those immigrant children in that school are from illegal families, and we had a 240 percent turnover rate. That population is not stable. They do not stay.

Now the question is if you have virtually all of your students are various languages beside English, and you have 240 percent turnover, what are the children that are staying in the community going to learn in that school? It's a failed school.

It flunked on the No Child Left Behind testing. No big surprise. There's no education happening there. How can it happen? It's not a system that works.

We need to change the education system so that we actually find a way to educate both the native children as well as addressing what we do with these children from the illegal families that are in and out and this high turnover rate of students.

The biggest problem we have with children of immigrants is the citizen children of immigrants. They're eligible for benefits. Particularly if they're children of illegal parents, this moving around all the time, you try to put them in a child-only TANF case or a child-only food stamp, or whatever services--Medicaid--and you can't

track them. They disappear. They don't get services. I haven't found a way to address that, but I think that's one of our bigger problems.

And particularly in my area, we've got this tremendous problem with illegal German immigrants that's just driving us nuts because you've got these children of these illegals, and they're just impossible to keep track of them and to provide services. So we have high rates of tuberculosis and a lot of other things we don't want, which is--you know, creates some problems.

Other things that we need to do, to work on, and we're making a little effort, one of the things that doesn't work, for example, about 40 percent of our workforce in Kansas are not documented. As soon as they find out, they move jobs, of course. Buy a new set of fake IDs. If you need to know where to buy them, I can tell you.

Over half of them don't have bank accounts. We need to teach them how to do that, and that's part of our ESL program at the workplace. We need to work on that. And of course, another problem it creates for our communities, where you have this high community, like I was telling you about that school. With that exceedingly high percentage of undocumented, 60 percent of their payroll is sent back to the country of origin.

Every payday, there's a line at the grocery store buying money orders to send back. And that just destroys economic opportunity for small business in those towns. If that money was staying in there, we would see some of our immigrants starting businesses and moving ahead economically on their own. They'd like to do that, some of them.

That opportunity is not there because the money is not there. It takes away from the--you know, there's no sales tax collected on that. So it takes away from the local sales tax base, and that creates a problem.

I'm about out of time. A couple of things we've done that are controversial. Any child or any illegal student that's graduated or got a GED from Kansas, attended Kansas three years, is eligible for in-state tuition, provided they sign an affidavit that they're going to become--or they're working on becoming legal or becoming citizens. That cost a few people in the last election their re-election efforts because certain areas of the state, that wasn't popular.

Of course, we provide food assistance to blind, disabled, over 65, and under 18 for legally immigrants--for legal immigrants. And we're working fairly hard with our community college system for the children of the immigrants, as they move through the education system, to try to move them into community college classes, settings.

You have more luck getting them--while we have this program to give them tuition to the region schools, truthfully, you have more luck getting them in where they don't have to leave home, family, and their support system. And so, we have a program to try to do that. And my local community college, for example, now has 29 percent of the student body is from that demographic population.

Thank you.

MR. HASKINS: Thank you.

Felix Ortiz from New York.

MR. ORTIZ: Ron, let me move over there. That way, I can--

MR. HASKINS: Okay. Good.

MR. ORTIZ: Good morning. Let me just try to--like Melvin did, I'm going to try to personalize this with my own experience when I came to this country. And I think that that probably will cover a lot of the things that have been said here, and I will not get into the statistics. That was done already.

But I just--I would like to thank Ron for inviting me to be here this morning with you all. I think this is a very important issue. It's an important issue that we face in America. And it doesn't matter whether we come from Maine all the way down to Key West; from Seattle, Washington, all the way down to Laredo, Texas; or whether we come from Hawaii or Alaska, we're still human beings. That's what we have to remember, that we're still human beings.

And being human beings, I think it's very important that we--all who has managed to overcome a lot of obstacle and struggle in our life, and I'm talking now from my personal perspective. When I came here 18 years ago, I could not speak English at all. Just imagine now if I hadn't the opportunity to learn English, I mean, my early age, I probably wouldn't be standing right here at this microphone. I probably would be some place else.

But I learned English when I was 22. That was when I began to learn how to speak English. Then I've been in the New York State Assembly 12 years. So when I came to New York, I came to New York exactly about what Ron was talking about, with a dream of opportunity. A dream to have an opportunity for me to not just to learn how to speak English, but to have a great education and to also carry on my kids as they're growing up in this country.

Well, I'm the opposite of Melvin. Melvin is probably third or fourth generation. I'm the first generation of my family who decided to come to this country,

and that was a big fight between my father and myself because I was 22 years old, and he still thought that I--you know, because I was 22 years old, I could not leave the house. He want to keep me in the house.

And I said, "Dad, I'm already 22 years old. It's time for me to fly. So let me go." So I managed to leave and come to New York. That's when I arrive. I went to New York. And you know, although I came here to look for opportunity, unfortunately because of my problem with the language didn't give me that opportunity. And I already had a bachelor degree from the University of Puerto Rico when I came here, but I could not communicate.

And I was looking for a job just as a janitor. And let me tell you, immigrant workers, immigrant folks are very loyal workers. Very loyal workers. Very loyal. And they don't differentiate from one work to another. They will do whatever it takes to get the job done and to move forward.

Well, here I am. I'm trying to get a job as a janitor. I was not accepted to take the work as a janitor because when the guy saw my resume, he thought that I was overqualified. And then I tried to explain to him I cannot speak English. "No comprendo. No hablo Ingles." And I'm trying to make it through his eye that I need a job. That's what I needed. I needed just a job to make sure that I can move forward.

Well, the janitor job never happened. Then I decided to work in the car wash place. And now just what's going to make a big difference here because coming from Puerto Rico, we are U.S. citizens. Coming from Puerto Rico, we are U.S. citizens. So it was a matter of choice I decided to come to this country.

Well, I cannot get a job for my first three, four month. I decided to go to a place called welfare. I'm not ashamed to say that I'm part of the welfare system, but

I'm very proud to say that I was part of a welfare system who give me the stepping stone to be where I'm here today and to fight for those people who doesn't have the opportunity and the voice to fight for themselves.

Because I do believe, it's very simple, it's about dreams. It's about opportunity. But even some of those people who doesn't have a clue how to knock those doors to get those opportunities to make their dream come true.

While I was in welfare, you know, I told the lady, the social worker, that the purpose I wanted welfare is because I have two children, my wife, and we want to make sure that we can get some services. We got welfare. My wife and I decided to go back to college. So I went to study another bachelor degree. I did a master's degree. My wife decided to go for the DSW. She got a doctor's in social worker.

Then let me tell you, we was having fun at that point. Because every time that you go for revision, it was something else, that you went and looked for jobs. I said, yes, I went to look for job in the wrong place. I never went. I just want to make sure that I finish another education and get ready--to be ready for the workforce by becoming a little more proficient in English, the English language.

Then I got my first job, my first job with the Department of City Planning. Now I have a guy who is my supervisor, who comes to me and say to Felix, "Felix, I think you're a smart guy, but you have to get back to school and learn how to speak English."

Now I shared that with somebody next to me, and somebody next to me say, "Felix, do you know that that guy discriminating against you?" I said, "He's not discriminating against me. I do believe he's telling me the truth."

So through this guy who was my supervisor, then I went to Columbia University for a six-month extensive program in English. And I don't know if I still speak English, but I try my best. But you know, those six months were very, very enriching for me. And this is what we want. We want opportunity.

With the 1996 signoff of that particular welfare reform, believe it or not, I was very discouraged that Bill Clinton did that. Very discouraged. Very discouraged that he decided to make that step. So here we are in America. You know that song? "Here we are in America." Because we are in America, so we have to give and take.

I see some of the stuff that was taken away from these folks will be very hard to bring back again. But I will tell you this much, that as a state representative who represent one of the most diverse districts in the State of New York and probably throughout the country, who represent Russian, Asian, some Hispanic--because I do still have some Hispanic--and Arabic, one of the things that I decided to do in order for me to reach out to those community, to bring them to be part of my office and for me to be part of them, was to develop some program. And I'm talking about four different communities.

I developed there computer centers in my community. Things that Melvin talked about, GED, English as a second language was very important, very essential. Not only for their parents, but for our kids and for our kids' future because they are the ones who is going to be our workforce of tomorrow.

And those computer center get run by individuals whose native language happen to be Spanish-English, Arabic or Hebrew-English, Russian, Asian-English, so that way that they can get connected to each other, and that's the way we have to do things in America.

That way, the people will have the opportunity to trust, to believe that they do have a dream that can be fulfilled if we do the right thing for them. Nobody is locking them out by keeping them out and don't giving them the opportunity that they deserve.

Thank you. May God bless you, and I'm waiting for some of the questions that you might have.

[Applause.]

MR. HASKINS: Russell Pearce from Arizona.

MR. PEARCE: Like the previous speaker, maybe I'll stand up here and give me a podium to pound on. This is an emotional issue. And I'm grateful, and I appreciate Ron inviting me and the opportunity to be here.

This is a debate that is not going to go away soon. And again, I understand what mass immigration is. I'm 1 of 13 children. Every time we go out, somebody went someplace, they felt like that was mass immigration.

[Laughter.]

MR. PEARCE: So I guess, like my counterpart over here from Nebraska, that I'm appropriations chair in the State of Arizona, so dollars and balancing the budget is a big issue. And I suppose the reason that I'm the appropriations chair is because I am 1 of 13 children. I don't need any friends. So I'm not afraid to say no.

Just like the policy on immigration, I'm not afraid to talk about the things that need to be talked about. You know, we talk about America being a good place to live, and it certainly is. But you can't come here for freedom and then expect to be a welfare person and be a burden on the taxpayer. You have to have policies that assimilate you into society.

You know, I come from a very poor family. My dad was an alcoholic. We lived in houses that were condemned. Never took a penny from government. I'm not a believer in government programs, I can tell you. I think some of them do some good. But the bottom line is we're a country of freedom and personal responsibility. And one of the problems with immigration is we lure people into this country.

You know, to be poor in America isn't really poor. We don't let you be very poor compared to other countries. And we understand there are five billion people out there in this world that really suffer. We have some sad stories. And we start speaking from the heart, you know, we let our votes come from the heart, then we're going to make bad policies. We have to do things that are good.

It's like English only, you know? Twenty-six states have English only, and the reason is because we have this raging debate. You can't be successful unless you assimilate, unless you can fit in, unless you can communicate. And we do nobody any good when we don't force policies that bring about the ability to be successful.

And you can't hardly separate legal and illegal, and that's a difficult issue, too. Because we have about 79 different kinds of visas to come in this country, 1.4 million people who came to this country legally, legally, last year. We have three to four million folks that will come into this country illegally this year. So it is a huge policy.

When Ellis Island was in place and the Statue of Liberty with its arms out, we were a nation of 65 million people. Today, we're a nation of 290 million people. So we need to get serious about our immigration policies.

And education was brought up a minute ago. And I can tell you, in my community, Mason, Arizona--again, Arizona being one of the gateways for illegal

immigration as well as the immigration problem that we all are challenged with. We have many, many schools that are 95, 98 percent non-English speaking. And those that speak English are pulling their children out and sending them to other schools because they can't get an education in their own language because the emphasis and the resources and the effort is trying to bring those children that don't speak English into the mainstream America and allow them to assimilate and be successful.

It's a tough, tough issue. But we've got to change policy, and I'm grateful for the '96 welfare reform act. I think it was a start.

Again, you come to America. You have sponsors. You come here for freedom, and if that's the case, you need to be able to be successful. We need to have policies that force assimilation. And again, freedom requires Americans to share a common loyalty to the Constitution, to the principles of freedom, and there has to be more emphasis on that.

And I do believe that before one can be sworn in as a citizen of the United States that they must be able to speak and understand English, you know, at least reasonably well. And I think, yet again, when you create multicultural societies, and that's what you do when you don't require people to speak English, when you don't adopt the language. I mean, most countries have an official language. And actually, in the United States, we do, too. We just--because we're so concerned about the politically correct stuff, while we hurt America, that we're not forcing it.

And as a result, we hurt everybody when we don't assimilate or require policies, you know, that dignify the standards that we have. And because of this problem, 26 states have adopted English only, and that doesn't mean--I should say

English language. And that doesn't mean English only. It just means that we conduct official business as English.

And again, I have two boys that speak fluent Spanish, and they did that very quickly, and they did it by immersion. You know, immersion is a program that works. When we pander and don't force people to immerse and get involved, they can go on for years and years and years and not be able to do that. But that is the most successful.

California has passed programs to eliminate bilingual programs and deal with immersion only. Arizona overwhelmingly passed a program for immersion, and it is proven it is much, much more successful. In fact, the immigrant families agree with that and overwhelmingly endorse it.

In Arizona, we just passed a proposition, Proposition 200, that was, by some standards, very controversial. I guess enforcing the law is controversial on some standards. And if you'd listen to the opponents of that, because it dealt with elections-- and again, we just went through a very tough election throughout the United States, where there wasn't a day you could pick up the paper or listen to the news that there wasn't some concern over registration irregularities or voting irregularities.

And of course, in harmony with the welfare reform act, you know, besides dealing with the election piece in terms of trying to create a verification process that brought integrity to that process, we want the law enforced. Didn't change any eligibility, simply the enforcement of the 1996 welfare reform act, and that is you have to be eligible before you can get taxpayer dollars. And you had thought passing that initiative, that there was something hazardous to your health in order to require you to carry around some ID to prove who you were.

But anyway, this is a huge issue across America--immigration, both legal and illegal. And it's not going to go away. And we could debate, and again, it's always tough when we throw out the children issues. We do that to be--to get sympathy for our programs. And none of us, none of us, would do anything to harm children. But sometimes our policies, well intended, do much damage when we don't accept responsibility for dignified policies.

And again, this is the taxpayer. We're not listening to the polls very well. And that's why he talked about some folks who lost their elections. I can guarantee you poll after poll after poll in America, and we can cite the CNN poll, the GOP/USA poll numbers, Poll Project, USA poll, Ropers poll, and you can go on down the line, poll after poll after poll, that 85 percent of Americans want the laws enforced, the borders secured. They want us to do something, again, about policies that are hurting America, our failure to honor. We're a nation of law.

I don't have a problem with legal immigration. Every country is a country of immigrants. There's not a major country in the world that's not. America, we've benefited from immigration. But it has to be dignified. And when they come here, they have to come here because they're going to assimilate and not be a burden on the taxpayer. They're going to come here because they're going to be a patriotic American.

And so, we need to change our policies. We don't need immigration reform. We need immigration enforcement. And we need some policy reform where you come here, you're expected to be a loyal citizen of the United States of America and assimilate, not a clash of cultures, not--you know, which we're setting ourselves up for.

And again, it's an issue that we can talk for a long time in terms of what's going on, but because you've got those policies out around the country where they want to issue driver's licenses to folks in this country illegally. I mean, when are we going to wake up? You just can't continue to have a green light, but tell people it means stop. You can't put policies in place that lure people here or condone or, in some cases, encourage activity that is illegal.

And again, we can't continue to ignore the citizens who've paid the price for this. Again, we're a bloated welfare state. We understand that we have lots and lots of programs, and it's easy to buy votes with other people's money, and that's what we tend to do instead of dealing with the real issue.

America is teetering on the brink of bankruptcy, you know, program after program--entitlement program after entitlement program. Well, you know, we can talk about these things all day long, and I'll tell you, I don't--I'm not afraid to debate anybody on these issues. You know, enough is enough. You know, you can't continue to pander and have pathetic policies that hurt America, destroy the economy, give away other people's money with entitlement program after entitlement program, and allow people who come here illegally to benefit, illegally in this country, that's even worse.

But when you're legal, you still have to come here. You have a sponsor. You have somebody in the workforce, and the person that sponsors you must take responsibility for your economic status, not the taxpayers. And again, we need to step aside of these programs. We need to go farther than the 1996 welfare reform act went. You simply can't come here. You don't have a right to somebody else's money.

And I always use the statement, as a government, you don't have a right to have compassion. Your job--your responsibility is to treat every taxpayer and every

citizen equally, fairly, and the same, not decide who gets benefit and who doesn't get a benefit, you know? And that's government's role.

Government's role is to treat everybody fairly and the same. And policies that dignify that and put into place, again, an accountability process, personal responsibility. And if you want to come to America, boy, come the right way, and I don't think anybody's offended over that.

But then also come here for the principles of freedom and opportunity, not to take advantage of the taxpayer programs that were very generous, and we are a generous nation. But that generosity comes--should come with accountability, and get some reforms into place to make sure it's not abused and the taxpayer is not taken advantage of.

And again, big debate, and we can debate it all day long and, I'm sure, spend hours up here. But it's not a debate that's going to go away. And again, 85 percent of Americans want something done.

In Arizona, Proposition 200, which was touted as racist and everything, 47 percent of Latinos voted for it. You know, those that are Americans, those that understand the damage going on also want something done about the failed policies and heading down this road that is further hurting America and doing damage, I think, to this great country.

And again, nobody is against legal immigration. But you must come here with the right attitude. You must come here and be self-sufficient. If you're going to come here, you know, you've got to assimilate and be an American, and that means you've got to fit in and be patriotic. And we need to change how we do business in terms of that process.

MR. HASKINS: Thank you.

Well, I'd like to apologize for failure to get diverse views on this panel, but--

[Laughter.]

MR. HASKINS: --perhaps by the questions we can elicit some diverse views.

Okay. This is Washington, and I explained in the beginning what the federal welfare policy is. And I think it's at least somewhat fair to say that there was an attempt in crafting a new policy in the reforms in '96 to give something to each side.

And the idea was that people should not be able to get welfare benefits when they first arrive, but they should be able to get other public benefits that are-- whose intent is to help them in education and training so that they can advance and exercise freedom in the United States. So that was the attempt. It's somewhat of a compromise.

So my question to the three members of the panel is, if you were federal legislators or as state legislators, do you accept this compromise, or do you think that it should be changed further? And if so, which in direction should we go?

Let's begin with Mr. Ortiz.

MR. ORTIZ: Well, like I point out before, I think that it was a big mistake for the administration of 1996 to do that. And as a result of that, you know, we had to reallocate a lot of the TANF money to cover some of this damage that was created in Washington.

I would say that the federal government should go back and look to the demographics, how the demographics is changing. And that if they are really serious

about impacting positively to this demographic that is changing, that don't allow this demographic to impact the economy in the long run, I think they should begin to have some transformation rather than reform at this particular moment.

MR. HASKINS: What do you say to people who--a big point during the debate was that the welfare is not necessarily good for people, that, in fact, it could harm people. What do you say when people say that it's--we should not bring noncitizens in the country and get them used to welfare. What do you respond?

MR. ORTIZ: I don't believe that we're bringing them to get into welfare. I think they come here to try to look for exactly what you said before, that American dream. And I use myself up in example. I was not expecting to get myself attached to welfare when I came here. I was expecting to go on and go there and work.

But because of my lack of the language, so some other opportunity came. So I took the welfare, and believe that's a great opportunity. But you know what, I feel proud that I did it because that served for me as a stepping stone to go back to school to learn English and then get a better job.

And I think that we should give those opportunity to folks who come from other countries as well.

MR. HASKINS: So you reject the idea that people might get lured into welfare and become dependent on welfare? It would not halt their progress toward freedom and independence and self-sufficiency?

MR. ORTIZ: I don't believe people will become dependent to welfare. I think people need just that opportunity to move on, and that's what we ask for. We're not asking for us to stay dependent on the system. I think we would like to be independent somehow, somewhere.

MR. HASKINS: Mr. Neufeld, what would you say about the current federal policy? Would you want to change it?

MR. NEUFELD. Well, overall, I think right now, we have a pretty good balance as far as what we're doing with welfare and the federal guidelines, and I don't have much objection. I think most of the states thought that it was pretty critical to allow those children to get food assistance, and that was one of the big issues.

And I'll go back to the real issue here is we're not addressing the issue. The issue isn't TANF or food stamps eligibility. The issue is we've got a lot of undocumented workers coming in from across two borders, and we've got from every place else in the world, basically, that aren't coming across those two borders, they're coming in documented and are doing a good job, and we don't have a problem with that population at all that I can tell.

So I think we need to address the issue of the borders, and you know, the real issue is how do you stop illegal immigration because that's where virtually all of our problems are in Kansas?

MR. HASKINS: Russell Pearce, what do you think about current federal policy, and which direction would you want it to go?

MR. PEARCE: And again, good question. I think the 1996 welfare reform act was a good start. I think it had the right principles in mind. And that is that you have to come here for the right reason. And if you're--you know, you can't come here for the benefit of--because, again, we're a country with a big heart, and we have lots and lots of socialist programs out there and a lot of programs to get on, and we could go through a plethora of them.

[End of Tape 1, Side A, begin Side B.]

MR. PEARCE: --come here, you have to come here for the principles of freedom and opportunity, not to be a burden on the taxpayer. So I think it was the right start.

There are certainly lots of issues here, when you talk about children and education. And it's not an easy--it's not an easy minefield to wander through to try to identify policies. You try to be generous but, at the same time, be effective.

Again, I think it was a good start. But I agree with my good colleague down there that illegal immigration is really the challenge. I mean, they've got to assimilate, legal or--you know, legal immigrants must assimilate. They must come here. We must provide opportunity for them to assimilate, not provide opportunity for them not to assimilate, where they're not going to be successful or they're not going to have the opportunity.

And I think people need to understand. And when we talked about welfare, they're not addicted. The stats show that they do get addicted. They continue to stay on there. There are over twice as many as native-born foreign-born that are on welfare and those kinds of benefits, over twice. Historically, they continue generation after generation. So we have done damage, and we continue to promote policies that do damage.

But again, illegal immigration, you can't separate the two because of a bad policy such as anchor babies. The only civilized country in the world that allows you to come here illegally and have a child and call that child a citizen. It's bad policy.

And because of those policies and welfare policies, we lure people here. They come here for opportunity. They're taking jobs away from Americans. They're not

doing jobs just Americans won't work. They suppress the wages, keep the wages. And we could go on and on on this issue, and it's huge.

But we've started the right direction with welfare reform in 1996, but it doesn't go far enough because there's many, many other policies. They're not necessarily welfare reform. I think that's fairly decent. But many, many other programs where we continue to allow damage to go on to the taxpayer and the culture and America because of our unwillingness to deal with this, even though the polls indicate Americans want something done, support people who want something done, and are very frustrated that we're not doing something significant.

MR. HASKINS: So would you support the use of public dollars for programs that are intended to educate and train noncitizens so that they could get ahead?

MR. PEARCE: No.

MR. HASKINS: So you would not make them eligible for Head Start?

MR. PEARCE: No. I think immersion. Again, I've got boys that have gone to South America, and they learned the language. They did it by immersion. We continue to have feel-good programs that do more damage than they do good, and at a very high cost to the taxpayer and these programs.

And again, if you want something, you come here and you work on it and you get there. I'm telling you, I mean, it's just not necessary. I mean, they're good, if you think about it, for the heart side. They sound good. They feel good. But they do damage, and they're not good for America. They're not good for them.

MR. HASKINS: Even the programs that are designed for education and training?

MR. PEARCE: Well, again, there's a lot of programs out there. It's hard to just get general. I mean, there are some programs I think that probably do some good. But overall, our policies are pretty flawed and really do a lot of damage.

MR. HASKINS: Okay. Second question. And at least two of you, maybe all of you mentioned this in your presentation. Language is a crucial issue here, and you dwelled on it at great length.

What should the policy in the public schools be to deal with English as a second language or with foreign-speaking children? How should the schools deal with this issue? What is your recommendation?

MR. NEUFELD: Well, I don't know that I have a recommendation because there's too many things out there. I do know what appears to be working best, and that's actually English immersion.

But you know, I go back to the issue that we've got in our schools. It's because of the large number of children of illegals that move so rapidly, it doesn't make any difference what program you have in the school because they're only there four or five weeks. And with the inclusion policy of No Child Left Behind, you simply destroy education for the other kids in the classroom.

So you need to undo some of that policy and allow us to have education for the children that are stable, both the immigrant children that are stable in the community and the citizen children, or we're spinning our wheels.

MR. HASKINS: Russell Pearce, what would you do about English in the public schools?

MR. PEARCE: Again, you learn--children especially, they learn quickly. And again, English immersion does work. And again, that's a debate, and there's many

articles, much material on this issue. But just to deal with it simply, I think you have to have programs that move people into the mainstream quickly, and that's immersion.

Not allowing them to linger and linger and linger and not fit in, and it does damage to those who come here that do speak English, that were born here, because the mix isn't just immigrants. We use these terms "undocumented." They're illegal aliens. I mean, they're not undocumented, you know?

And we have to get serious about what the law is. We're a nation of law. And so, we're hurting ourselves because of these policies. It costs us over \$10,000 more for a child that is foreign born in our education system than it does when he's there. So there's a huge economic impact.

So if they're going to do this, you can't continue to funnel money into programs that are bad. Again, we have limited dollars, limited resources. In fact, Arizona, \$2 billion deficit--

MR. HASKINS: Would you be willing to spend some of those limited dollars on language immersion programs so that foreign-born children would or even children born here who have non-English spoken in the home, would you spend public dollars to get them immersion programs?

MR. PEARCE: First of all, I'd have to see how they're going to craft the program. I'm very cautious to say yes to that because the truth is, it doesn't cost a lot of money for immersion, especially if you limit it to those that are in this country illegally. I mean, there's a lot of things have to be done on the front end before you deal with that.

Are we going to continue to pay for people who broke into our country, enter illegally. You know, they're a huge drain on the resources. Like I say, Arizona has a \$2 billion deficit. Health care systems are failing. The education system has

imploded. The criminal justice system, 80 percent of the violent crimes in Phoenix are involving illegal aliens.

You can't separate the two because a lot of those who came here illegally then have children that are legal. So you've got this mix. And so, it's a raging battle that's got to go farther than just anecdotal kinds of things like "What am I going to do here?"

MR. HASKINS: Mr. Ortiz?

MR. ORTIZ: Let me just tell you what has been working in New York. In my particular district, I have one school that the kids speak close to 25 language, okay? So how can we help the parents of the kids to integrate or to immerse into the English language?

Well, we have the school program, the after-school program that has been working for the family, working together with the parents and with the kids to ensure that they can do their homework. And there will be more--

MR. HASKINS: You bring the parents in in the afternoon so they can learn English as well?

MR. ORTIZ: That is correct. And when I mention my free program that I have in my community, that's exactly what we do--from 3:00 to 6:00 in the afternoon, it's the kids and the parents together to learn how--to get English as a second language.

And in the evening, you have the program offered from 6:00 to 9:00 where the parent then come and learn not only English as a second language, but also GED.

MR. HASKINS: Okay. Questions from the audience. Let me caution the audience we'd like to have questions, not long statements. And please raise your hand. Tell your name and organization as soon as you get the mike.

All the way in the back? Wait until you get a mike.

MR. LEONARD: My name is Jim Leonard. I'm a former official of the U.S. Department of Labor.

I'm suffering from a case of disconnect here as between what Mr. Ortiz and Mr. Pearce said. Mr. Pearce seems to suggest that many people come to this country because they want to get welfare. Mr. Ortiz tells us that he was very reluctant to take welfare. He tried to get a job and he couldn't, and he was forced to. I don't know whether this means Mr. Ortiz is unusual.

My second question relates to immersion. Mr. Pearce tells us that his two children learned Spanish rapidly through immersion. Mr. Ortiz apparently also did, although it took him a long while to get into that six-month Columbia University program. And I don't know who paid for it, but how can you assure that people learn English without spending enormous amounts of money for some type of immersion or other English language training?

MR. HASKINS: Mr. Pearce just had an emergency call. He'll try to return as quickly as possible. Mr. Ortiz?

MR. ORTIZ: Yes, I guess I would like to respond to that because I'm not a very unusual case. I know more cases than mine of kids who have, believe it or not, who have been coming through the borders to this country and today not only they serve as a state representative or in the senate, or some of them are sitting in Congress.

As well as some of them are very fine attorneys and doctors who today are taking care of some of the people that are opposed to exactly what we are talking about here today. So in reality, it's not a very unusual case. You have many cases like that of people who come to this country and make it to the American dream.

MR. HASKINS: Next question. In the back. That's all right. Come on up here.

MS. CIFUENTES: Ines Cifuentes, Carnegie Institution.

What I've observed in D.C., as I look around, is that there are a lot of citizens who--and companies who hire people, a lot of families who hire women from other countries, a lot undocumented, to take care of their own children because they don't have a child care--we don't provide that. And construction companies who hire people who are undocumented as well to work in the construction companies.

So what I see as well is that our own country is looking for, we don't have that low-wage workforce. I don't see a lot of our citizens taking those jobs, for good reasons. I mean, they're very--they're long hours. They're hard work. They don't pay well.

So, you know, I'm a little bit confused if we're looking only at the cost that people who are coming here for that dream when, obviously, our country is benefiting. I don't know. I'm not an economist. I'm a seismologist. I don't know the numbers as to what our country is getting in terms of dollars.

I know a lot of them pay income tax even when they are undocumented. They buy houses even when they are undocumented. So, you know, if anybody here really knows the full picture on the economics of all these workers that we clearly seem to need and want?

MR. HASKINS: Do you want to comment?

MR. ORTIZ: I'm going to make a quick comment on that. Because I happened to be one of those undocumented workers, make-believe, that I went through the system in New York, and that came out on 20/20 and 60 Minutes because I discovered that some of these construction companies that you're talking about, not only they were taking the people to work, but they were taking them to work to Connecticut and New Jersey. And at the end of the day or the week, they would never get paid, and they also abused them, okay?

So I went undercover, and I discovered a lot of that, came out in the light. So the attorney general took over, and Pugh Construction Company got arrested.

Now regarding the economy, it's interesting because what's mentioned before on the driver's licensing issue, for example, I did a statistical analysis in New York, where we have close to 300,000 people who are eligible to get a driver's license, and they're undocumented or illegal aliens. If we produced that, that will generate close to \$44 million to the State of New York, just from driver's license issue.

So we're talking about the economic impact that that will have? We would have \$44 million revenue producer, number one. And number two, then New York state would not need to think about premium for insurance to go up because we would be able to have it down because we know where these people live and these people would not run away in case of an accident.

MR. HASKINS: One more question.

MR. ELLISON: I'm Allen Ellison with Reuters.

When you talk about combating illegal immigration--I'm referring here to Representative Neufeld--do you think it can be done by enforcing the border, or do you think it should be done by penalizing employers who employ illegal immigrants?

Is either one of those practically or politically feasible, or are we just going to struggle along with the status quo?

MR. HASKINS: Good question.

MR. NEUFELD: Great question, and the answer is yes.

[Laughter.]

MR. HASKINS: Yes, both?

MR. NEUFELD: Yes. The truth of it is we need to enforce our borders with the certified worker program for the temporary workers coming in, instead of having this constant--you know, I've got people that live three months in Mexico, the rest of the year in Kansas. But the three months is in two different stints with their families. The families move back and forth.

We've got this big problem coming from Canada with all these illegal Germans coming through with Canadian papers, showing up, going back, going to Mexico, going back to Canada. Roaming around.

And so, we need to get some control on our borders, and we need to remember that there is a good reason these people come here. It's called economics. The simple truth is, in my state, the State of Kansas, we've not had a birth rate equal to the worker replacement rate for 40 years.

Now if you don't raise your workforce, you will import it. We started importing them from Iowa. But we ran out of them from Iowa.

[Laughter.]

MR. NEUFELD: And so, we're importing them from somewhere else. But we need to go after the employers.

There's a joke, for example, down in my area that if there's a bad hailstorm, you can't replace a roof unless there's illegal Germans. And you know, it's kind of true.

But the problem is that we also have a number of people that are actually hiring people who are illegal who don't know they're illegal because there are very good fake IDs out there on the market. In Garden City, Kansas, you can buy very good fakes.

I have one constituent who called me, said you've got to help me. IRS took my house, my bank account because I hadn't paid my taxes, and I paid them. Here's the check.

We get the check, and there were 82 people using his Social Security number because somebody in Garden City had decided that since he had an Hispanic name that it made a good fit for certain individuals, and they just sold his Social Security number to everybody.

So you've got employers caught where they think they've got somebody that's actually legal because if you look up the Social Security number, they're a citizen, but it's using a fake number.

MR. ELLISON: If you went into even the Marriott Hotel, and you could bust--anywhere in the country, you could bust immediately dozens of illegal aliens. The same goes for any--

MR. NEUFELD: I'd bust the manager.

MR. ELLISON: Right. Fine. But, you know, immediately, the head of J.W. Marriott--I'm picking that at random. It would be the same for Holiday Inn--would

phone--who's a contributor to both political parties probably, will phone his state senator, will phone his federal representative, and pressure will come down and the policy will stop. That's just plain fact, isn't it?

MR. HASKINS: Say "yes" again.

[Laughter.]

MR. NEUFELD: Well, it's not the policy of this representative. I won't defend any of them.

MR. HASKINS: Okay. I hope you'll join me in thanking the panel.

[Applause.]

MR. HASKINS: And I also want to thank the National Conference of State Legislatures and Sherry Steisel, who helped us have at least diversity represented on this panel, and I'd like to thank you. I hope that phone call turns out all right.

Now we're going to move to the next panel very quickly. Audrey Singer from Brookings will introduce the members of the second panel. And if you'd like to talk to any representatives, you can go outside in the back.